



Foreword



In the three years since the first issue of *Independent Schooling in Australia* was published there have been significant changes in the landscape of Australian schooling.

Most noticeable of these changes is the expanded role of the Australian Government in school education.

The Australian Government has supported the establishment of Australian Technical Colleges to link schools, community groups and industry with the provision of vocational and technical education and training; the Investing in Our Schools Programme allows government school communities to apply directly to the Australian Government for capital grants; there is a trial of a tuition credit voucher that allows families whose children are achieving below national benchmarks in Year 3 literacy to access tutors; there is now a raft of regulations attached to federal funding for schools covering issues as diverse as flying the Australian flag, student data collection, the style in which schools are to report to parents on student achievement and the ways schools are to report to the wider public on a range of school performance measures.

This level of federal intervention in school education provision is unprecedented in Australia's education history. In the near future we are facing implementation of national standardised testing, a common school starting age and the introduction of an Australian Certificate of Education.

The independent sector is characterised by the diversity of distinctive cultures among its schools, and by the way it serves the needs of particular communities while still meeting the public goals of schooling.

It is imperative that independent schools continue to inform politicians, business leaders and the wider community of the value of diversity in schooling provision and the importance of school autonomy. Schools need the freedom to be different if students are to find an environment that helps them become the best they can be.

There has also been a renewed focus on values in education. Community leaders want assurance that schools are contributing to the national good, and that young Australians are being educated in a way that makes them both able and willing to participate in and contribute to society. Independent schools are proud of their achievement in helping to develop good citizens, and the increased scrutiny of schools that has resulted from this interest in values is an opportunity to share with the wider community how we serve the public good.

It is in this spirit that I commend this publication to you. In the following pages you will see evidence of why diversity in schooling provision underpins the rigour and quality of Australian education, why parents need freedom of schooling choice and how independent schools contribute to the life of this nation.

Dr Ken Evans

Chairman

Independent Schools Council of Australia

Table of contents

Foreword	1
Overview of the sector	4
Independence and accountability	
The importance of independence	8
The essential elements of school autonomy	11
Accountabilities of independent schools	14
Independent schools and the common good	18
Parents and school choice	
Diverse school choices by parents across Australia	20
Funding	
Funding principles for students in independent schools	25
Private sources of funding	27
Government funding of independent schools	29
Capital resources	38
Teachers, students and learning	
Teachers	43
Students with special needs	47
Students from rural and remote areas	50
Future directions for boarding schools	52
Curriculum initiatives	55
Boys' education	55
Middle schooling	56
Vocational and technical education	57

Information and communications technology	59
Overseas students	61
Sector information	
Enrolment trends in independent schools: past and future	63
Structure of the independent schools sector	66
Key contacts in the sector	67
Registered independent schools	70