

Structure of the independent schools sector

The independent schools sector contains the following key groups of organisations:

The schools

Independent schools are not-for-profit institutions that are set up and governed **independently** on an individual-school basis. Boards of governors or committees of management are the key decision-making bodies for most independent schools and are responsible for issues such as the school's educational provision, current and future development, and staffing.

Associations of Independent Schools

Almost all independent schools in most states and in both territories choose to become members of their Association of Independent Schools (AIS). AISs provide a range of services to member schools. In addition to representing the views of the independent schools sector at a state and territory level, they administer funding provided by the Australian Government on a range of targeted programmes, as well as providing professional development, advice and information. Many AISs also offer industrial relations services.

School systems

Some schools with common aims, religious affiliations and/or educational philosophies also belong to systems within the sector. This means that some operational functions are carried out by the system on behalf of all schools within the system. Individual schools may choose to be both members of a system and their state or territory AIS.

Independent Schools Council of Australia

The Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) is the peak national body representing the independent schools sector. ISCA's board of management comprises a chairman and eight members, each representing a state or territory AIS. ISCA's major role is to bring the unique needs of the sector as a whole to the attention of the Australian Government and to represent the sector on national issues.

ISCA National Consultative Group

As the peak body for independent schooling in Australia, ISCA also consults with representatives of the sector's various national school organisations through the ISCA National Consultative Group. The Australian Parents Council (APC)** is also part of this consultative group.

The group meets twice a year to discuss issues of national significance and to share information. These meetings provide an opportunity to strengthen relationships across the sector and create a greater understanding of the different ways in which schooling issues have an impact on the various school groups.

ISCA also communicates regularly with these school groups on an informal basis to keep them informed of current activity, to seek feedback and advice, and to provide support. These activities aim to strengthen the voice of the independent sector through a united approach, while recognising and respecting the diversity within the sector.

**The APC is the peak body for state and territory organisations of parents of non-government schools students.

Key contacts in the sector

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