

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Independent Schools
Council of Australia

Independent Schools Council of Australia welcomes shift in ALP's schools policy

The Independent Schools Council of Australia welcomed confirmation by Opposition Leader Kim Beazley today that the federal ALP is to drop its "hit list" of independent schools.

"All young Australians have a right to reasonable government support of their school education, irrespective of the school they attend," said Mr Bill Daniels, ISCA Executive Director.

Mr Daniels said a "no losers" funding policy is helpful to families who juggle their budget to meet the cost of their children's schooling.

"Schools also need stability in funding arrangements to ensure they can maintain the quality of their education provision," said Mr Daniels. "Mr Beazley's announcement today signals to families and schools that their need for certainty when planning ahead has now been recognised."

Mr Daniels said that while a no losers approach to funding is welcome, schools and families still need details of the allocation model the ALP intends to use. "The independent sector will be looking for a continuation of the current indexation arrangements which are an essential feature of schools funding," said Mr Daniels.

"The continued growth of the independent schools sector shows that parents are prepared to dig deep into their own pockets to contribute to the education of their children," said Mr Daniels, "but they also expect governments to contribute a fair share, too."

Mr Daniels said under current Australian Government funding arrangements students attending independent schools are eligible for general recurrent funding grants of between 13.7 and 70 per cent of an index based on the average cost of educating a student in a government-owned school.

"The current funding model is a needs-based system in which need is determined by the relative socio-economic status of a school community," said Mr Daniels. "Students attending high-SES schools get the lowest level of government support for their education, and students in low-SES schools get more support. There is general acceptance that the SES model is a socially just way to distribute public funds to schools without discouraging parental contribution, but social change is putting pressure on this model."

Mr Daniels said no child in an independent school receives the same level of government support for their education as a child in a government-owned school, and that more and more families are asking why government support for their child's education depends on who owns the school they attend.

"We are now moving to a situation in Australia where diversity of school ownership is creating a demand for student-centred funding," said Mr Daniels. "Today's shift in the ALP's policy can be seen as a recognition that education services to the Australian public are now delivered by a mix of government and private providers."

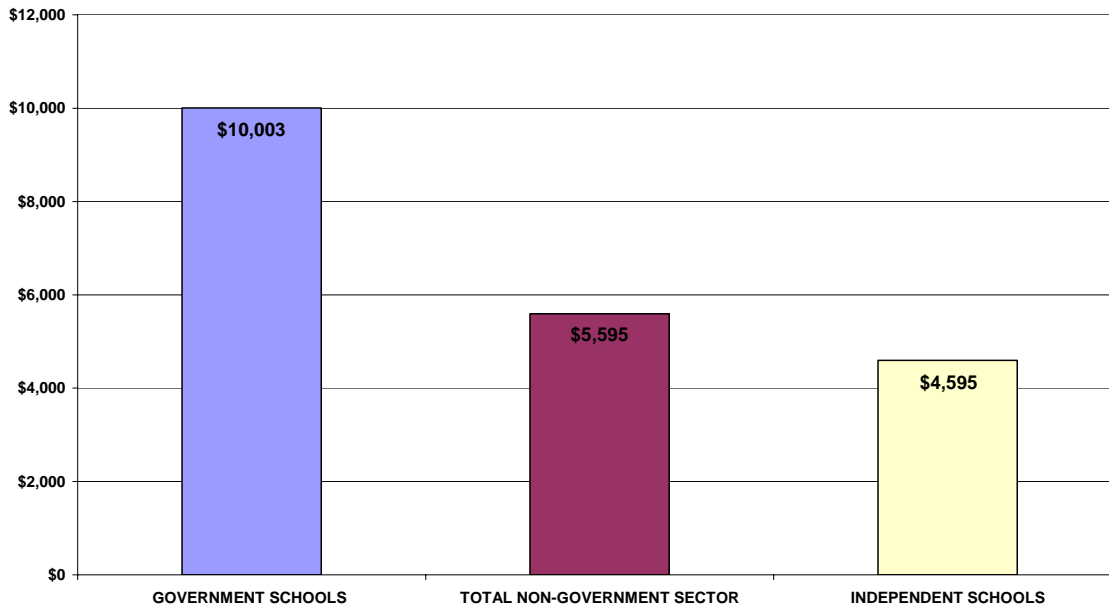
Mr Daniels said the Independent Schools Council of Australia was happy to consult with all political parties in the development of school education policies.

ENDS. PAGES 2 AND 3 OF THIS RELEASE CONTAIN FUNDING AND ENROLMENT STATISTICS.

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1. Students in independent schools get the least government support for their school education.

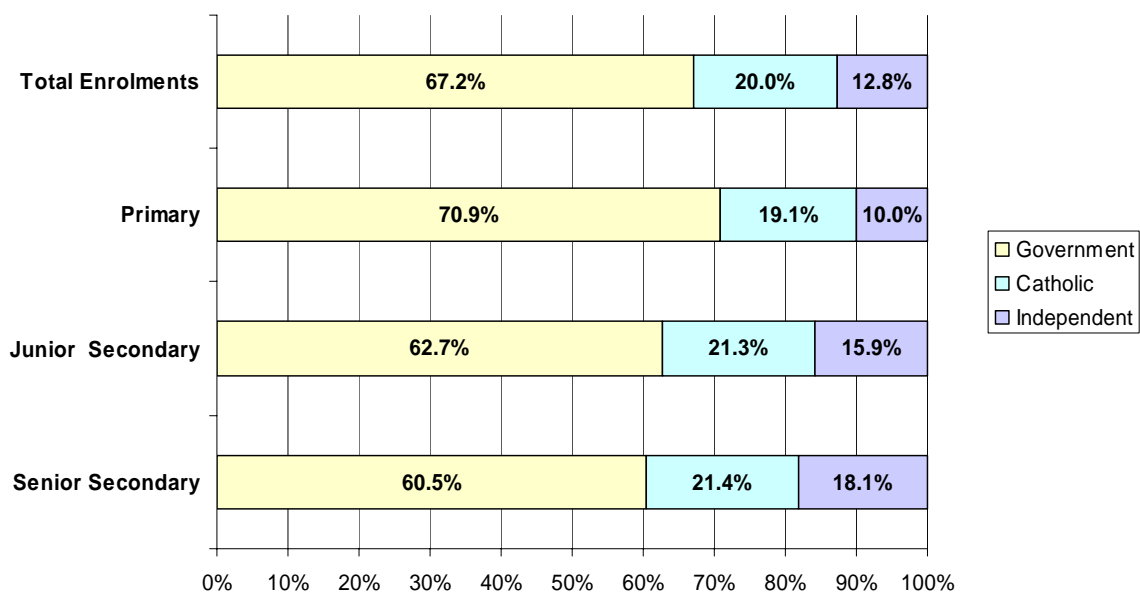
Average total government recurrent funding per student 2003-04



Sources: Productivity Commission Report on Government Services 2006 and DEST Financial Questionnaire Data 2003 and 2004

2. Two out of every five Year 12 students in 2005 will have received at least part of their school education in a non-government school.

School enrolments by sector and level 2005



Source: ABS Schools Australia

3. Enrolments in the independent schools sector are growing steadily.

Enrolment change by sector 1970-2005

