Media Release

EMBARGOED until 1.00 pm

Wednesday 21 June, 2006

Independent Schools Council of Australia

ISCA launches booklet to celebrate independent schooling in Australia

The Independent Schools Council of Australia today released its latest publication, *Independent Schooling in Australia 2006-08*. The booklet both informs readers about independent schools and celebrates the contribution of the independent sector to quality schooling in Australia. It was officially launched at Parliament House by the Treasurer, The Honourable Peter Costello.

"Independent school communities flourish because of the commitment and inspiration of students, parents, teachers, staff, principals, school governors and their wider community of supporters," said ISCA chairman, Dr Ken Evans. "Governments also play a key role in the life of independent schools, and the ISCA booklet describes how the contributions of all these partners combine to produce high quality educational institutions that meet community standards and public goals for schooling."

Dr Evans said that the board of the Independent Schools Council of Australia, which is made up of representatives of the independent sector in each state and territory, hopes the booklet will serve to counter the common stereotype of independent schools as serving only a narrow social spectrum.

"This stereotype masks the true diversity of the independent sector and misleads the public," said Dr Evans. "There are 1100 independent schools in Australia, including day schools and boarding schools, single-sex schools and co-educational schools, Christian schools, Jewish schools, Islamic schools, indigenous community schools, Montessori and Steiner schools and schools for students with special needs. These schools – and the 480,000 students they educate – reflect the full diversity of Australian society in socio-economic status, educational philosophy, religious faith and ethnic and cultural background."

Dr Evans said that diversity in schooling provision was essential to help all young Australians achieve to the best of their ability.

"The independent schools sector is a great example of how Australia achieves unity through diversity," said Dr Evans. "Australians believe in the freedom of the individual and they also believe in a common national good. All independent schools are committed to the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century."

Dr Evans said that independent schools are proud of the excellence and innovation they demonstrate in the education of young Australians.

"We are also very proud of the way we are helping to grow good Australian citizens, able to fully participate in and contribute to the life of this nation and the wider world," said Dr Evans.

ENDS.

CONTACT: Lyndal Wilson, ISCA Media Liaison Officer, mobile 0409 981 275

12 Thesiger Court Deakin ACT 2600 • PO Box 324 Deakin West ACT 2600
Telephone: 02 6282 3488 • Facsimile: 02 6285 2926 • Email: isca@isca.edu.au • Website: www.isca.edu.au
ABN 83 005 118 927