

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Independent Schools
Council of Australia

Additional Australian Government grants for capital projects in schools welcomed by independent sector

‘The Prime Minister’s announcement that the Australian Government will allocate an additional \$181 million under the Investing in Our Schools Programme is good news for all Australian schools,’ Mr Bill Daniels, Executive Director of the Independent Schools Council of Australia said today.

Mr Daniels said there is a high level of demand for capital investment in the independent schools sector due to sustained enrolment growth in the sector over the past two decades. Other factors affecting capital costs are curriculum change, the move to a common school starting age, the push for smaller class sizes and rising building costs.

‘Around 90 per cent of the capital investment in independent schools comes from parents through fees, fundraising and donations,’ said Mr Daniels. ‘While the contribution of governments is much lower than parental contribution, it is still a vital component of capital development in the sector.’

Mr Daniels said the independent sector is the fastest growing and accordingly has the greatest need for capital funding. However its share of the available Australian Government funding is less than its enrolment share. In 2003-04, students in government schools received on average \$110 in capital funding from the Australian Government; students in Catholic systemic schools received \$78; and students in independent schools \$62.

All grants available to independent schools under the Australian Government’s capital funding programme are distributed according to need. The bulk of funding assists school communities that have limited capacity to finance capital development through increased school fees.

‘Families of students in independent schools are contributing significantly to Australia’s expenditure on education,’ said Mr Daniels. ‘They contribute around \$3 billion annually in operating costs and close to \$800 million per year in capital expenditure. The additional capital grants from the Australian Government are a welcome support and incentive for these families.’

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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