

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday 19 March 2007



Independent Schools
Council of Australia

Independent Schools Council of Australia welcomes ALP's commitment to parental choice

The Independent Schools Council of Australia welcomed the statement by Kevin Rudd and Stephen Smith today that an ALP government would maintain funding support for all students in 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.

“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,” he said, “but they also expect governments to contribute a fair share, too.”

The ALP has recognised that often parents make these decisions at considerable personal financial cost. “Parents of students at independent schools are currently contributing \$3.5 billion each year to schools costs. This is a considerable investment in education in this country and it is pleasing to see that federal Labor recognises and is prepared to support this investment,” Mr Daniels said.

“There are almost 500,000 students in 1,100 independent schools across Australia. These schools offer high quality education for students from diverse backgrounds. These schools include schools with a wide variety of educational philosophies and programmes, religious affiliations and cultures. Families have made decisions on the basis of seeking to maximise their child's potential and to give them the best start in life.”

Mr Daniels said that while a no losers approach to funding is very 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.

“We welcome the commitment by Mr Rudd and Mr Smith to consult widely when developing their detailed funding policies,” he said.

ENDS.

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