



# MEDIA STATEMENT

To News Editor/Chief of Staff  
From Garry Le Duff  
Ref **Gonski review and Government response**  
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## INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS 'CAUTIOUSLY POSITIVE' ON GONSKI

Independent schools in South Australia are "cautiously positive" on the findings and recommendations of the Gonski review unveiled today in Canberra.

Garry Le Duff, Chief Executive of the Association of Independent Schools of SA (AISSA), said the review provides a genuine starting point for productive reform in education and funding: "The Independent sector is cautiously positive with what it sees in the Gonski report.

"An especially positive aspect for Independent schools is the acknowledgement that disadvantaged students are found in all schools no matter whether they are public, Catholic or Independent. Such recognition is a major breakthrough for Independent schools and families.

"The report strongly acknowledges parental contributions in Independent school communities. That said, we still are concerned about a lack detail in the report and how these contributions will be taken into account to avoid punishing parents, particularly in low-fee schools."

Although the Government has made no commitment, Mr Le Duff welcomed Gonski's recommended boost of \$5 billion in education spending but warned that more money is no guarantee of improved education.

"More money does not automatically improve quality," Mr Le Duff said.

"The money must be well spent and must not be lost in new layers of administration and bureaucracy. Our commitment in Independent schools always is for money to be spent effectively at the pointy end – in the school."

For Independent schools, other key points arising from the Gonski review are:

- The report lacks detail that needs to be 'built in' during the promised consultation phase
- Proposals to centralise capital works funds is a concern because it could easily result in money being lost in administration and unproductive bureaucracy and a loss of local decision-making

- The proposed National Schooling Resource Standard would in the first instance be generated from NAPLAN data, which offers only a very narrow and potentially misleading snapshot. Gonski concedes this and calls for more variables to be used in setting the Standard. AISSA agrees with this
- There is a concerning number of proposed new centralised administrative structures. Independent schools will be highly resistant to being embedded in unproductive bureaucracy that forces up costs, erodes outcomes and restricts local autonomy
- Independent schools welcome the Government's commitment to continued and intensive consultation ahead of decision making. That said, the proof of that commitment will be in the detail and the performance of the Government
- AISSA finds some reassurance in the Gonski finding that 20 to 25 percent of National Schooling Resource Standard should be the minimum government contribution to the cost of education a student in a non-government school. The actual Standard needs to be declared before AISSA can give its support
- Recognition that some non-government schools will need to be fully public-funded because of their level of disadvantage

Mr Le Duff said the Association was heartened by the Gonski panel's evident understanding and recognition of the role and commitment of families who invest directly in education through school fees.

"What will create concern in the Independent sector will be any moves by governments that restrict a school's independence, its autonomy and its capacity to make local decisions in response to needs and aspirations in its local community," Mr Le Duff said.

"Local accountability to a school community is the indispensable essence of an Independent school."

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