ENROLMENTS INCREASE ALONGSIDE RESPONSIBLE RISES IN FEES

Up to 90 percent of South Australia’s Independent schools report that 2009 enrolments are either increasing or are stable.

Fees at Independent schools will on average rise next year by 6.2 percent or $357 for the year.

In all, 88 percent of schools will raise their fees by between 5 and 8 percent, with 7 percent raising fees by more than 8 percent and 5 percent raising fees by less than 5 percent.

These are the findings of a survey of enrolments and fees at Independent schools by the Association of Independent Schools of SA. Two-thirds of the Association’s 96 member schools have so far responded to the survey. Some schools are still to decide on their fees for next year.

The Association’s Executive Director, Garry Le Duff, said all schools work hard to balance the need to maintain sound financial management and be sensitive to pressure on family budgets.

Responsible increases in fees ensure continuous improvement in education to meet parents’ expectations and return benefits such as retaining and attracting the best available teaching talent.

“Schools tell us that the main cost drivers this year are increases in staff salaries, information and communication technology upgrades, escalating government compliance costs and, in some instances, a loss of public funding,” Mr Le Duff said.

“The loss of public funding is caused by a rise in the socio-economic status (SES) measurement of a school’s population, from which the level of public funding is calculated.”

“All Independent schools are not-for-profit and fees are spent to the benefit of students,” Mr Le Duff said.

Mr Le Duff said individual schools would adjust their fees according to specific circumstances, costs that may be unique to that school and the needs of their students. Overall, South Australian fee rises are again well below those of the eastern states.

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