Media Release

11 April 2011

Special Needs Students Require Equal Funding

Independent Schools Victoria’s submission to the federal government’s Review of Funding for Schooling says that all students who have special needs must be treated equally.

In addition to a fair and transparent funding model for all students, Independent Schools Victoria wants the review panel to focus on the needs of students with a disability, Indigenous students, those who are living in rural and remote areas and students whose first language is not English.

Independent Schools Victoria Chief Executive, Michelle Green, said today that any future funding model should incorporate nationally agreed definitions for each special need.

‘It is wrong and absurd that students with special needs attending Independent schools should be treated differently from students at government schools. We believe federal, state and territory governments should work towards developing funding parity for these students enrolled in government, Independent and Catholic schools.’

Ms Green said that students with a disability in Independent schools generally received much less government funding than students in government schools – and they are not eligible to receive government services provided free of charge to government schools.

‘Because funding for students with a disability does not follow the child, irrespective of the school they attend, choice of school is severely restricted,’ Ms Green said.

In 2010, the total average funding from the Victorian and Federal Government for each eligible student with a disability in an Independent school was $7500. But students at government schools can receive $30,000 more from the Victorian Government depending on their disability.

Ms Green said that all students with disabilities attending an Independent school receive less government funding than any student with a disability attending a government school.

To receive a copy of the submission, for more information, or to interview Michelle Green contact Brian M. Peck at brian.peck@independentschools.vic.edu.au on 0437 515 505