



# Media Release

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## Warning on Government School Funding Proposal

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Michelle Green, Chief Executive, Independent Schools Victoria

Independent Schools Victoria cannot recommend at this stage that Member Schools accept the federal government's proposed financial model in response to the Gonski review of school funding.

Our policy is not to accept or reject any new funding arrangement without a full disclosure of all relevant data.

We are telling our 210 Member Schools that the government's modelling is deficient because:

- it is based on 2011 information, which has inaccuracies or uses 2010 data
- it does not provide indexation and transition arrangements for the years after 2014 when funding agreements normally cover five-year periods
- the federal government has indicated that the model might be changed before it comes into operation
- there is no formal proposal from the federal government prepared for signing
- no arrangement can be finalised until after state and territory governments reach agreement at the 19 April meeting of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

We believe that current funding arrangements should be extended for the next two years and the time used for open discussions between all parties – federal and state governments and the Independent and Catholic sectors.

Projections beyond next year indicate an in-built long-term negative bias for Independent school funding. Our analysis of data from the federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) indicates that schools will face substantial funding shortfalls totalling millions of dollars.

While Victorian Independent schools will gain funding in 2014, 38 will receive less than if the arrangements had stayed the same.

Schools affected include those with the least ability to compensate for the loss of funds because they charge low fees, are in low socioeconomic areas, catering for students with special needs or religious schools providing education for less well-off communities.

Under the proposed model, and allowing for transition funding, Sirius College (formally ISIK College) would lose \$76,386 in 2014 compared with what it would have received if arrangements remained the same.

Other big losers would be:

- Al-Taqwa College – \$56,232
- Darul Ulum College – \$35,223
- Adass Israel School – \$23,659
- East Preston Islamic College – \$25,105
- Yeshivah College and Beth Rivkah College – \$25,268
- St Mary's Coptic Orthodox College – \$24,000

It is particularly unfortunate that schools that can least afford to lose funding are the worst affected.

Transitional funding will help to minimise loss but to compensate from the impact of the new arrangements 16 schools in Victoria would have to increase private income from fees and other sources by more than 10 per cent, and seven by more than 20 per cent.

It has been suggested that the modelling has been framed in the context of the federal election campaign and is intended to cover only the year after the election. I have been asked whether this is a 'pea and thimble trick'.

The current funding arrangement finishes at the end of this year and legislation is required for a new agreement no later than 27 June. It is important to know next year's likely figures because schools are having to budget in the dark. Urgent clarification is needed.

We will continue working with the Victorian Government and the Catholic Education Office, Victoria on a joint position in negotiations with the federal government.

In the meantime we are recommending to our Member Schools that they write to the Prime Minister and Minister for Education expressing their concern, and that they tell their local federal and state Members of Parliament they are worried about future funding.

For more information, or to interview Michelle Green  
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