

Friday 8 November 2019

Education Updates

Cut the disability red tape, says ISV

Independent Schools Victoria has urged the Australian Government to cut red tape that is impeding schools efforts to support students with disability. [Click here to read more...](#)

No school should pay rates, says Michelle Green

Independent Schools Victoria Chief Executive, Ms Michelle Green, has rebutted the Municipal Association of Victoria's call to impose rates on non-government schools, saying there is 'no reason why any school' should pay council rates. [Click here to read more...](#)

Independent schools welcome drought support

The Australian Government has announced more than \$700 million in additional support for drought affected communities, with \$10 million to support schools facing financial hardship. [Click here to read more...](#)

AISNSW joins forces with Catholic education to deliver professional learning

The Association of Independent Schools of New South Wales has partnered with the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta and Sydney Catholic Schools to collaborate on providing non-government schools with improved teaching and learning opportunities. [Click here to read more...](#)

Australia Post launches Pen Pal Club

Australian Post is calling on classrooms in early learning centres and primary schools to take part in a new letter writing program. [Click here to read more...](#)

Please visit the Independent Schools Victoria website for seminars for [Term 4, 2019](#).

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Perspectives](#).

Would you like to read the briefing every week? [Sign up here](#).

Cut the disability red tape, says ISV

Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) has urged the Australian Government to cut red tape that is impeding schools' efforts to support students with disability.

ISV Chief Executive, Ms Michelle Green, said government measures had 'improved the ability of schools to identify all students with disability ... and improved funding for many of them'.

She said, however, that the measures had also 'imposed an onerous administrative burden on school staff, who are frustrated by complex red tape and a lack of clear information about processes and obligations'.

Funding for students with disability has been linked to the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) since 2018. All schools are required to identify students with disability, categorise the type of disability, and determine the level of additional support students need to ensure they can participate in education on the same basis as their peers.

ISV has conducted a review of how its Member Schools support students with disability, [Meeting the needs of all students](#), which shows that the proportion of students with disability they educate reflects the incidence of disability in the wider student population.

Ms Green said the review disproved 'politically motivated claims made by sectional interests that Independent schools have over-stated data on disability to attract government'.

She said that, in fact, the research 'finds that the cost to schools of supporting students with disability is greater than the funding they receive'.

Despite half the students with disability at Victorian Independent schools having 'a level of disability that does not entail additional government funding ... the paper work in documenting and reporting on these students is the same as those who required much greater support'.

The research has informed [ISV's submission](#) to the National School Resourcing Board's review of the way disability funding is allocated to students. It calls for the government to:

- create a new body to oversee the NCCD so schools have clear, consistent and up-to-date information
- ensure government auditors overseeing school compliance properly understand the NCCD and the education of students with disability
- commission independent research to assess the costs schools incur in meeting NCCD requirements.

No school should pay rates, says Michelle Green

Independent Schools Victoria chief executive, Ms Michelle Green, has rebutted a call from the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to impose rates on non-government schools, saying there is 'no reason why any school' should pay council rates.

[The MAV's submission](#) to a Victorian Government [review of the local government rating system](#) says long standing rate exemptions for institutions such as universities and non-government schools should be revoked.

The MAV argues that community rate payers subsidise the schools, but students attending them come from homes outside the local community, and 'many private schools charge significant fees and lease out their facilities for hire or to commercial operators'.

The submission says it is unfair that the schools are exempt from paying rates and funding costs:

... imposed on the hosting LGA through traffic and carparking works and school crossing supervision on surrounding roads and use of public open spaces and sportsgrounds maintained by the hosting LGA.

It adds that 'private schools and universities need to have revenue exceeding expenditure' – to make a profit – or they 'will financially fail'.

Ms Green said she expected that the Victorian Government would promptly reject any suggestion that local councils be allowed to impose rates on non-government schools.

She said it was clear that the MAV did not understand that non-government schools were not commercial enterprises. She said that all schools – government, Independent and Catholic – were not-for-profit organisations, and ‘net contributors to society and the local communities they serve’.

If the MAV was consistent, she said, it would ‘advocate that government schools also be subjected to council rates’.

She said the MAV’s proposal was ‘completely at odds’ with the state government’s move to amend planning guidelines to fast-track approvals non-government schools.

Unlike government schools, Independent schools require council planning approval to build new schools and facilities. This can involve councils requiring that the new school provide all the necessary infrastructure and utilities, including water and sewerage, and access roads. Some schools have been denied council approval to build new schools on planning grounds.

Ms Green said that in the ‘unlikely event’ that the government acted on the MAV’s proposal – it would ‘further impede the ability of non-government schools to meet the needs of a growing population’.

- Push for schools, unis to pay rates. Jewel Topsfield, Royce Millar, *The Age*, 6 November 2019
- Municipal association calls for rate reform over exemptions. *ABC News* (online), 6 November 2019

Independent schools welcome drought support

The Australian Government has announced more than \$700 million in additional support for drought affected communities, with \$10 million to support schools facing financial hardship.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the government was ‘stepping up’ its response to the drought, and was working to support ‘communities feeling the strain as work dries up and spending in local stores slows down’.

The Independent Schools Council of Australia welcomed the package for schools, which includes fee concessions for boarding students, saying it would ‘help ensure that students from communities struggling to cope with drought will continue to be supported to maintain their school education’.

ISCA executive director, [Mr Barry Walleit, said](#) Independent boarding schools had a ‘long history of supporting rural families and communities through drought and natural disaster’ including providing fee relief.

He said Independent schools were the largest providers of boarding school education in Australia, ‘educating almost 16,000 students’ and that many of them come from ‘rural, regional and remote families affected by drought’.

AISNSW ‘joins forces’ with Catholic education to deliver professional learning

The Association of Independent Schools New South Wales (AISNSW) has partnered with the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) and Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS) to collaborate on providing non-government schools with improved teaching and learning opportunities.

The new partnership will see staff across the three organisations work together on providing services, professional development and helping schools meet the needs of their students.

AISNSW Chief Executive [Dr Geoff Newcombe said](#) ‘we recognise the unique services that CEDP and SCS provide and look forward to complementing these services and investing in further research and new partnerships’.

CEDP Executive Director, Mr Greg Whitby, said ‘every student deserves the best experience of school that we can offer, and collaborations like this help to make that happen’.

SCS Executive Director Tony Farley described the collaboration as 'a great step forward'.

Australia Post launches Pen Pal Club

Australian Post is calling on classrooms in early learning centres and primary schools to take part in a new letter writing program.

The program is linked to a book, *The Pen Pal Club*, which tells the story of four young Australian pen pals, and is supported by [online educational resources](#). Teachers register their classroom with Australia Post, which links them with other classrooms from around the country so that students can exchange letters.

The program includes:

- an online platform that connect students to their pen pals,
- free lesson plans and activities for Foundation – Year 6
- interactive whiteboard resources
- *The Pen Pal Club* book.

To learn more, visit the [Pen Pal Club website](#).