



INCREASING ENROLMENTS

There is a place for schools of all sectors in the Australian education landscape – including government, Catholic and Independent. Enrolments have increased in all school sectors over the last 40 years, with no decline in government school enrolments.

According to 2008 ABS data, there are 2,729 non-government schools, catering for 1,169,740 students.

These enrolments account for:

- 30.2% of all primary students
- 39.2% of all secondary students
- 34.1% of all students

DIVERSE NATION, DIVERSE EDUCATION

If Australia is serious about nation building and ensuring an equitable education for all, a good public education system is vital. Governments should provide high quality, well funded public schools in every community. Equally, there should be high quality non-government schools well funded according to need to ensure that every child in Australia receives an education of the highest quality.

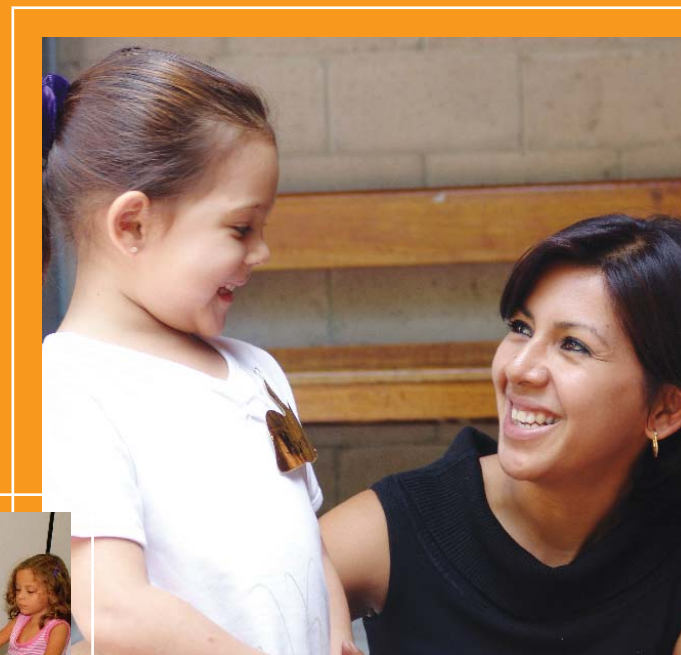
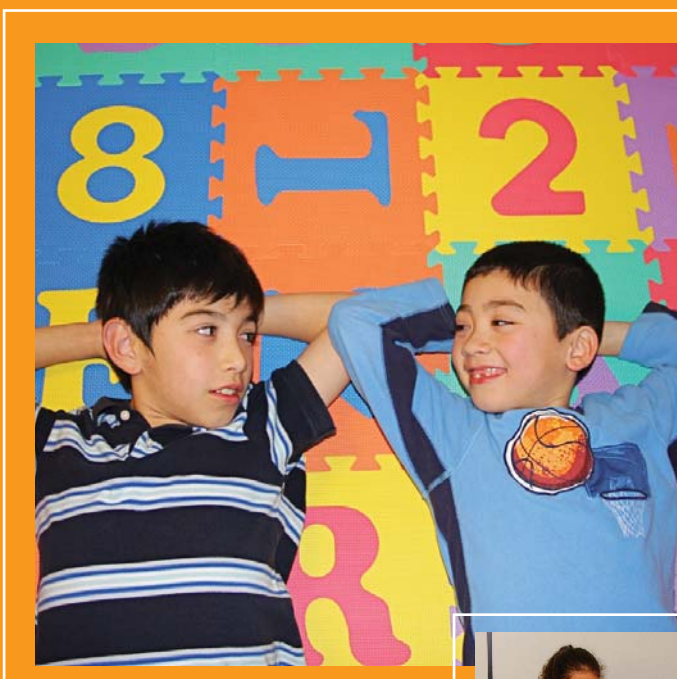
Just as families come in a variety of configurations, faiths and cultural backgrounds, their reasons for choosing non-government schools are varied. For instance, more than 91,000 families with two or more children at school had children in more than one sector, and more than 650 families chose all three sectors. More than 200,000 students in Australian schools have at least one of their siblings educated in another school sector.

We are a nation in which more than 25% are overseas-born, more than 200 languages are spoken and, coinciding with immigration patterns, there has been an increase in people affiliated with religions other than Christianity. Non-government schools reflect our diversity.

IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA:

Non-government schools in Western Australia provide for a wide range of communities including some of Western Australia's most remote and disadvantaged Indigenous communities, communities in regional towns and cities and diverse communities in Perth.

- 118,700 full time students were educated in 297 non-government schools in 2008¹;
- In 2006 the number of Indigenous students attending non-government schools was 3,599 according to most recent statistics available²; and
- Approximately 1733 students with disabilities were enrolled in Catholic schools in 2008³.



Whether public, independent or faith-based, our schools have a valued and rightful place in our community and they remind us that diversity is something to celebrate. ”



The IEU represents more than 4,000 teachers, principals and support staff in Western Australian non-government schools and colleges and more than 65,000 nationally. Our members come from institutions of every major religion and faith, along with many non-religious schools.

We, as a union, are strong supporters of the values, ethics and principles that all schools, including public schools, share with the broader community. We acknowledge the vital work of educators in encouraging unity and breaking down stereotypes, and we support our schools in this endeavour.

Whether public, secular independent or faith-based; secondary, primary or early childhood sector, all schools have a valued and rightful place in our community and they remind us that diversity is something to celebrate. This is worth supporting.

FACE OF OUR NATION

Australians come from a broad range of cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and the non-government education sector both reflects and celebrates this diversity.

For many families, the ability to send their children to schools reflecting their culture and values, teaching their faith, keeping alive their language or catering for specific needs is an integral part of what it means to be Australian.

Non-government schools are also at the forefront of sharing culture within the community and building understanding. They provide frequent opportunities for people of many backgrounds to come together and learn from each other through cultural exchange programs, peace initiatives, interfaith events and diversity days.

FABRIC OF OUR FUTURE

Our schools come in all shapes and sizes and, while they provide a broad choice, many also cater for specific needs.

The non-government education sector provides learning opportunities for a wide range of students who are either not easily accommodated in mainstream schools or who, for one reason or another, have had to find alternative opportunities.

The majority specifically cater for special needs children and many have large numbers of students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Some non-governmental schools with high numbers of Indigenous students have leading-edge programs to help maintain local language and culture.

In the case of faith-based schools, these support families and communities in conveying their values to their children. In some cases they can even mean students are finally able to learn about a heritage that elsewhere has been kept from them.

TOWARDS COHERENT FUNDING

The Independent Education Union of Australia has long argued for a federal funding regime for schooling that provides for transparency, accountability, certainty and adequacy.

The IEUA believes that a more coherent public policy on education funding is essential. It must acknowledge the realities of Australian schools and provide the way forward for a more equitable and less divisive framework of schooling.

The IEUA supports:

- Development of clear principles to bring the differential funding from state to federal sources into a consistent framework. This would enable public discussion of funding realities to take account of all sources of funding for government and non-government schools.
- The requirement that equity measures target extra funding across all schools where relevant student and/or school needs are identified.

Opposing privatisation:

Non-government education is not-for-profit, community-based education as diverse as the nation's families.

The IEUA has always opposed the corporatisation model in early childhood and in school education. The right to a successful education for all should not be undermined by subjecting schooling to the market forces of competition and privatisation.

Sources: ¹ABS Document 42210D001_2008 Schools, Australia, 2008 released May 6, 2009.
²Commonwealth of Australia (2008) National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training, 2006, accessed 24-06-09 at http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/C7CB8111-A9D3-4F54-9028-8484A3817089/24215/2006_NRPReportFINAL_WEB.pdf
³Information from Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, Annual Report, 2008.



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Non-government education

Reflecting diversity

face of our nation



fabric of our future



Produced by the Independent Education Union of Australia - Western Australian Branch and authorised by General Secretary, Theresa Howe.

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Our schools...

... Our future