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Media Release

Independent Schooling Sector Releases 2020 Queensland Election Statement

In the lead up to the 2020 State Election independent schools and their families will be advocating for policy reforms that empower the sector to maximise its contribution to Queensland's COVID-19 economic and social recovery.

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) Executive Director David Robertson said Queensland Government funding support for the state's 218 independent schools and almost 129,000 students paid significant economic and community dividends. This contribution has been documented in a new publication, [The Value of Independent Schools](#).

Mr Robertson said the Queensland Government contributed about 12% of combined parent and public funding for independent schools.

"In return independent schools generate almost \$5 billion in direct and indirect economic activity and support the livelihoods of almost 33,600 full-time employees every year," he said.

Mr Robertson said the sector was a significant investor in new infrastructure, spending more than \$300 million annually on new facilities and maintenance, the majority of which is financed by parents and borrowings.

"To simply maintain existing levels of school choice for Queensland families, 21 new Prep-Year 12 schools and 622 extra classrooms will be needed by 2036 – that's in addition to existing capital spending by independent school communities," he said.

Mr Robertson said independent schools and their families valued the bipartisan support of Queensland's major political parties.

"As the sector transitions to a more unpredictable federal funding model, independent schools will rely more heavily on the stability and certainty of funding support from the Queensland Government," he said.

Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network (QIS Parents Network) Executive Officer Justine Cirocco said all families had a stake in a strong and growing independent schooling sector in light of analysis that showed school choice freed up \$1.02 billion in public funding for other essential services.

"Parents of 1 in 7 school-age children value, and in many cases will sacrifice for, an education they believe will best meet their child's needs," Ms Cirocco said.

"Contrary to popular misconceptions about the sector, 2 in 5 independent school students are in fact from families with incomes below the state median," she said.

"In the independent sector long-standing grammar schools operate alongside small new community schools, majority Indigenous schools and specialist schools educating the most at-risk and disadvantaged young people."

ISQ and the QIS Parents Network today issued a [joint election statement](#) seeking policy commitments from Queensland's political parties in five key areas:

- maintain the current value of total state recurrent funding for independent schools, but increase support for students in need
- allocate an additional \$240 million in capital funding over four years to independent and Catholic schools and streamline school planning processes
- increase and extend funding and research support for parent engagement
- invest \$16 million over four years to strengthen quality teaching in independent schools
- reduce red tape and reconfirm the charter of the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board as an enabling and supportive oversight body.

"As the Queensland Government seeks to stimulate the economy through job creation and private investment, it's imperative that existing successful public-private partnerships, such as the long-term one between the government and independent school families, continues," Mr Robertson said.

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