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MEDIA RELEASE

Independent schools welcome Labor funding commitment

Independent schools in New South Wales today welcomed Labor's commitment to extend the current school funding arrangements to the end of 2013, according to the Association of Independent Schools of NSW.

The Executive Director, Dr Geoff Newcombe, said: "This announcement helps to allay some of the concerns of independent school communities that their needs are being properly considered by the Government. Independent schools need certainty in relation to future funding".

The Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, and Minister for Education, Simon Crean, today announced that the current funding arrangements for non-government schools, which run until the end of 2012, would be extended to the end of 2013, including funding being indexed to ensure its value in 'real terms'. In addition, the Government reversed an earlier decision which prevented independent schools from planning capital projects beyond 2012.

"Failure to index funding would have severely impacted on independent school communities, with increased fees being the result. Continuing with the current arrangements allows schools another year of certainty which greatly assists with forward planning", Dr Newcombe said.

The decision to also extend the capital grant forward commitments is also great news for independent schools, said Dr Newcombe.

"The management of the BER program and the value for money achieved clearly shows that independent schools are highly efficient in managing government funds."

"Independent school parents and communities already contribute, on average, 80% of the building and capital costs for their schools, saving governments billions of dollars in essential infrastructure costs. This forward commitment to 2014 is critical in allowing schools to plan and proceed with important building projects."

The independent schools sector will continue to work closely with the Government to seek agreement on future funding arrangements beyond the period of the new commitment, Dr Newcombe said.

For more information about independent school funding go to www.aisnsw.edu.au/election2010