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MEDIA RELEASE

BER Taskforce shows value of independent school autonomy

The release of the BER Implementation Taskforce report today shows that the autonomy of independent schools is a huge benefit when it comes to achieving value for taxpayer dollars, said Dr Geoff Newcombe, Executive Director of the Association of Independent Schools of NSW.

“The Taskforce has stated that it was impressed with the clarity of planning in the non-government schools sector and that such a focus on educational outcomes would be beneficial if adopted right across the education sector”, said Dr Newcombe.

“Clearly, Prime Minister Gillard and Minister Crean agree and have already recognised the benefits of this approach through their recent announcement that a Labor Government would facilitate greater autonomy for principals in all school sectors. The Coalition has also stated that it would pursue this aim.”

“This has long been one of the most valuable aspects of independent schooling – the autonomy that allows principals to make decisions in the best interests of the school rather than having to comply with overly bureaucratic processes that provide little benefit to the educational outcomes of students. The principal knows better than anyone what will work best in their school.”

Dr Newcombe went on to say: “The lessons learnt from the BER process can be applied across a wide range of government programs for education. There are many benefits to adopting a less systemic approach, particularly when it comes to delivering programs that have very specific purposes.”

Independent schools greatly value the autonomy and independence they have which enables them to get on with the job of providing a high quality education to their students. This ensures that decisions can be made in the best interests of the students and that funding can be directed to where it is intended and will be of greatest benefit.