



MEDIA RELEASE

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Funding boost for students with disability a good start

Independent schools in New South Wales welcomed today's announcement by the Prime Minister and Minister for School Education that an additional \$200m would be provided to assist the educational needs of students with disabilities.

"This significant funding boost to one of the most neglected groups of students is very welcome and we thank Prime Minister Gillard and Minister Garrett for this new and additional funding", said Dr Geoff Newcombe, Executive Director of the Association of Independent Schools of NSW.

"For many years we have lobbied successive Federal and State governments about the need to improve the funding and support arrangements for students with a disability, and this is an excellent start.

"The number of students with a disability in independent schools has grown substantially in recent years, despite the lack of funding available. This will help to provide these students to participate in similar educational opportunities to those enjoyed by their fellow students.

"The extra costs associated with educating students with special needs is significant with additional equipment for students, professional learning for teachers and classroom support, together with expert advice, being critical in addressing these needs.

Dr Newcombe said that governments must continue to focus on this as a priority area and ensure that all students with a disability, regardless of the type of school they attend, have equal access to funding and support.

"Independent school communities have borne the additional costs associated with educating this cohort of students. While the additional funding will help to alleviate these costs, more is needed. I am hopeful that the Review of Funding for Schools will result in a great deal more funding being available to assist students with a disability", Dr Newcombe said.