



**The Association of Independent Schools of New South Wales Limited**

---

Level 12, 99 York Street, Sydney NSW 2000  
Phone (02) 9299 2845 Fax (02) 9290 2274  
Web [aisnsw.edu.au](http://aisnsw.edu.au) Email [ais@aisnsw.edu.au](mailto:ais@aisnsw.edu.au)  
ABN 96 003 509 073

20 September 2010

**Letter to the Editor  
The Sydney Morning Herald**

Ross Gittins ("*Don't make taxpayers subsidise status seeking*", *September 20*) takes an all too simplistic view of non-government schools, and in the process fundamentally misunderstands the motivations and financial capacity of the vast majority of families who choose to enrol their children in them.

Numerous surveys over many years have clearly demonstrated that parents, regardless of income, base their choice of school on a wide range of factors, with status barely rating a mention. The growth in independent schooling in the last 20 to 30 years has been mostly in low fee schools showing that it is a matter of prioritising the education of one's child, rather than being a measure of affluence or seeking social status. These parents are also saving governments billions of dollars each year by not accessing a fully funded place in a government school. As an economist and commentator Gittins should understand and acknowledge these simple and well-documented facts.

Such a narrow perspective of the profile of the non-government schools sector harks back to the class distinctions of early last century, and simply denies the fact that the one-third of parents who choose non-government schools reflect the reality of our community across all socio-economic profiles.

**Dr Geoff Newcombe  
Executive Director**