

The Association of
Independent Schools of
New South Wales Limited

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Best Wishes to All Schools

On behalf of the AIS Board and all AIS staff I would like to thank all member schools for their support and assistance during 2010. A large number of principals, business managers, senior staff and teachers gave their time and expertise to the many committees, panels and working groups facilitated by the AIS. Many of these are necessary as a result of the ongoing and increasing demands of the Federal Government, such as the introduction of *My School* plus a raft of additional program and reporting requirements that impact significantly on the work of schools and the AIS.

The year was a particularly interesting one with the federal election and the continued roll out of the Government's education agenda. It is clear that the types of policy challenges being posed by the Federal Government's increasing involvement in education will continue to occur at considerable pace. The additional burden these requirements and challenges place on schools needs to be recognised by governments, including the impact they have on the teaching and learning focus of schools, and we will try to ensure that the government is fully aware of this.

We look forward to working closely with independent schools again in 2011 and wish all schools, teachers and students a happy and safe Christmas holiday period.

My School Website delay

The AIS welcomes the announcement today by the Minister for School Education, Peter Garrett, that the launch of the *My School* website will be delayed until early 2011 while serious issues surrounding the financial data are addressed.

The issues relating to the financial data and ICSEA scores for independent schools has seen considerable pressure placed on ACARA to rectify the problems. Ongoing representations from the Independent Schools Council of Australia and State/Territory Associations of Independent Schools appear to have succeeded in convincing the Minister that the issues are serious enough to warrant a complete review of the data and the methodology used. These concerns relate to both the financial data for independent schools and the processes involved in calculating ICSEA rankings.

AISNSW will continue to insist that the methodology being used to determine ICSEA values and financial data must be consistent for all schools and sectors, and for the principles of accuracy and comparability between sectors to be upheld. To this end, we will also be commissioning a review of the methodology used and submit this to the Government and to ACARA for consideration.

I would like to thank all independent schools for assisting the AIS in this process over the last few weeks. We will continue to provide schools with further information as it becomes available.

Board of Studies Report

The independent sector representative on the NSW Board of Studies, Dr Timothy Wright, provided the following report following the November 2010 Board meeting.

Australian Curriculum

The BoS has been working closely with ACARA with the aim of getting to a single and stable draft national curriculum, particularly with respect to the content descriptions. The following points were made in relation to the national curriculum:

- The NSW view is that the curriculum must be implemented within the allocated timeframes currently set in NSW, and at an appropriate depth.
- The issues of sequencing may arise because NSW interprets global statements more tightly than other jurisdictions.
- Achievement standards remain unclear.

The Board was due to constitute the Board Curriculum Committees for English, History and Mathematics in early November and will develop its advice to the Minister after these meetings. The Board's inspectors are confident that substantial improvement has been achieved in these areas. Science is more challenging and the BCC was scheduled to meet in late November. If endorsed by the Minister, the BoS will develop syllabuses over 2011.

School Certificate

The School Certificate Review has included broad consultation and a discussion/options paper is being finalised. Central issues include:

- The nature, scope and timing of the School Certificate
- Whether enhanced reporting (eg. community service) should be part of the SC
- Whether it be a cumulative exit credential.

Other matters

The role taken by the BoS in accrediting schools to offer courses for overseas students will be part of the Registration and Accreditation process for independent schools, concurrent with the normal cycle. Guidelines to assist schools are on the BoS website. It was also noted that current VETAB CRICOS accreditation for those schools currently registered to accept overseas students will roll over.

NSW Child Death Review Team Annual Report

The NSW Child Death Review Team's 2009 Annual Report was tabled in the NSW Parliament on 28th October 2010. The primary function of the Team is to prevent or reduce the number of child deaths in NSW. This is achieved through the maintenance of the Child Death Register, analysis of data regarding the causes of death, identification of patterns and trends relating to these deaths and the identification of areas requiring further research.

The 2009 Annual Report examines the deaths of 565 children and young people aged 0 to 17 years in NSW between January and December 2009.

The report can be viewed on the Commission for Children and Young People website at:
www.kids.nsw.gov.au/kids/resources/publications/childdeathreview

NSW Quality Teaching Awards

The AIS would like to congratulate Ms Verity Millard, a teacher at the Giant Steps Sydney School for children with autism, who is the recipient of a NSW Quality Teaching Award for her outstanding contribution as a teacher. The awards recognise teachers who are highly accomplished in their particular field and are a joint initiative of the NSW Government and the Australian College of Educators.

Go Play - NSW Government initiative for school holidays

The NSW Government has established a website called 'Go Play' which provides details of hundreds of school holiday activities for children of all ages, and has requested that all schools and parents be informed. The activities include a variety of art, culture, sport and recreational activities available around NSW. The website has multiple ways to search and browse events along with other family friendly information including availability of baby change tables, cafes, disabled and pram access. It also includes an integrated transport planner which shows how to get to activities using public transport.

The Go Play website goes live on 18th December 2010 and can be found at www.goplay.nsw.gov.au

PLEASE REMEMBER TO ADVISE THE AIS OF ANY CHANGES TO YOUR SCHOOL'S CONTACT DETAILS, INCLUDING CHANGE OF PRINCIPAL, BUSINESS MANAGER AND CHAIR OF THE SCHOOL COUNCIL. CHANGES CAN BE EMAILED TO admin@aisnsw.edu.au

Dr Geoff Newcombe
Executive Director
2nd December 2010

