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Media Release

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Minister's school funding decision a victory for common-sense

Chief Executive of the Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW), Dr Geoff Newcombe AM, welcomed the intervention of the federal Minister for Education, the Hon Dan Tehan MP, to secure the funding of Youth Off The Streets, one of many independent Special Assistance Schools in NSW dedicated to assisting students at risk of not completing their education.

“This situation clearly demonstrates that no funding model will be without its flaws and it is pleasing that the Australian Government has recognised this and resolved the issue quickly.”

Dr Newcombe said the main purpose of the *Choice and Affordability Fund*, announced by Minister Tehan last month as part of the package of new funding arrangements for non-government schools, is to provide additional support for schools impacted by the changes to school funding.

The focus of this support is to ensure that choice of schooling continues to be available for students from a range of disadvantaged backgrounds, including Indigenous students and students with learning difficulties, and will be particularly important for the significant and growing number of independent schools catering for lower socioeconomic communities.

The fund will allow a range of support services to be provided to schools that face specific challenges as a result of changes to funding, such as schools in drought-affected areas and others providing quality educational opportunities to a diverse range of communities.

“It is critical that these schools are able to continue to assist their students to achieve quality education outcomes.”

The Minister's decision paves the way for a sensible reassessment of this aspect of school funding policy to ensure that parents of students from disadvantaged backgrounds continue to have access to the school of their choice.

AISNSW will work closely with the Australian Government in an effort to minimise the impact on school communities of any future funding reductions and to maximise the educational opportunities available for all students.

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