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Promise of Education Tax Rebate expansion welcomed by Independent schools

A Coalition election promise made today to include school fees in the Education Tax Rebate has been welcomed by Queensland's independent schools community.

During a visit to the Faith Lutheran College at Redland Bay, Coalition leader Tony Abbott said if his party won the August 21 Federal Election, it would fund a "big increase and expansion" of the existing Education Tax Rebate to include the costs of extra tuition, school fees and extra-curricular activities.

Executive Director of Independent Schools Queensland David Robertson said the decision to include school fees would assist a growing number of parents who send their children to independent schools.

"This sort of tax rebate is one way governments can show support to those parents who made the choice to invest in an independent education for their children," Mr Robertson said.

"Independent schools in Queensland save state and federal governments more than \$570 million in education expenditure each year.

"Given it's the fee-paying parents at independent schools who contribute to these government savings, the provision of this Education Tax Rebate would be highly appropriate."

Under the Coalition policy the Education Tax Rebate would rise from \$390 for primary school students to \$500 and from \$779 for secondary students to \$1000. The existing rebate covers expenses such as the cost of buying, establishing, repairing and maintaining home IT equipment, trade tools, educational software, textbooks and learning materials.

Mr Robertson said both the ALP and Coalition were proposing expansion of the Education Tax Rebate as part of their election commitments.

"The Prime Minister last week announced that school uniforms would be included under an expanded list of eligible expenses in its Education Tax Rebate," he said.

"Both policies acknowledge the importance of an Education Tax Rebate but in our view there is room for further improvement, particularly by extending the rebate to all families and not just those receiving Family Tax Benefit A."

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