

29 June 2010

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS QUEENSLAND RESPONDS TO GREEN PAPER ON EDUCATION

Independent Schools Queensland has given its support to the movement of Year 7 to secondary education, but opposes the establishment of a single independent education standards authority in Queensland.

In an official response to the Queensland Government's Green Paper on Education – *A Flying Start for All Queensland Children*, Independent Schools Queensland has rejected the need for a single standards authority.

Independent Schools Queensland Executive Director David Robertson said there was no evidence that a single standards authority would contribute to improving educational outcomes in Queensland.

“High performance standards for all schools can be achieved through the improvement of existing statutory authority structures without the need to amalgamate the Queensland College of Teachers, the Queensland Studies Authority and the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board into one super bureaucracy,” he said.

“Independent schools are concerned about the impact of a single standards authority on the autonomy and independence of non-state schools, particularly given the stated mandate of the authority to undertake school inspections.

Mr Robertson said the independent sector would defend existing accreditation arrangements for non-state schools and would totally reject any “one-size-fits-all-approach”.

“Current legislation fosters educational choice in Queensland and non-state schools are encouraged to celebrate their diversity and difference, within a framework of quality assurance and high standards,” he said. “All of the research shows that school autonomy is the most powerful driver of school improvement and performance – not intervention by Governments.

“The independent sector has served the educational needs of the Queensland community very well, as evidenced by its continued growth in enrolments.”

Mr Robertson said the independent sector did support the Green Paper's plans to move Year 7 to secondary education in 2014, subject to sufficient support being given to schools to implement the change.

“The notion that existing P -12 schools will be easily able to handle the change and will not require assistance is simply not true,” he said.

“All schools will require assistance, not only in the provision of the required facilities, but also in areas of pastoral care, expectations of teachers and students, realignment of teaching programs and other matters to ensure that the move of Year 7 results in improved educational outcomes of all students.

“Queensland must also look after the needs of its primary schools which could be severely impacted by the change. Additional recurrent assistance might be required for existing primary schools during the transition period to ensure their on-going viability.”

Mr Robertson said appropriate recognition of additional facilities required at secondary and P – 12 schools had been acknowledged in the Green Paper but significant provision for boarding facilities will also be needed and must not be forgotten.

A copy of Independent Schools Queensland's response to the Green Paper is available at www.aisq.qld.edu.au

Media contact: Jen Barwick, Sequel Communications, ph: 3251 8122 or 0434 313 064