

2 February 2010

## Response to Queensland Education Initiatives

Independent Schools Queensland has today welcomed the Premier's announcement the State Government intends to transfer Year 7 to secondary schooling.

Independent Schools Queensland Executive Director Dr John Roulston said a large number of independent schools had been calling for such a change over the past year.

"With the implementation of the National Curriculum, it will be particularly important Queensland makes this move as soon as practicable," Dr Roulston said.

Dr Roulston said given more than 70% of independent schools provide both primary and secondary education (P-12 schools), the independent sector was well placed to make the change.

"There will be significant resourcing and operational issues for all schools in the change and Independent Schools Queensland is pleased to note the Premier's assurances that the State Government will work with all sectors of education to ensure any change is properly resourced and well implemented," he said.

Independent Schools Queensland was less supportive of the other major announcement by the Premier today with the proposed formation of a Queensland Education Standards Authority based on the amalgamation of three existing statutory authorities (the Queensland College of Teachers, the Queensland Studies Authority and the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board).

Dr Roulston said Independent Schools Queensland will be happy to work through the details of the proposal with the State Government.

"Independent schools recognise the government does have a role to play in ensuring high quality standards are met in independent schools, however, we are not convinced that an inspectorial system is the best way of achieving this," he said.

"A standards authority which monitors and reviews independent schools could be acceptable, however, independent schools are unlikely to accept a model which erodes the independence and autonomy of schools.

"For independent schools, the school board or governing body has ultimate responsibility for the performance and operation of the school and this has proved to be a very effective model over many decades with independent schools being responsive and accountable to their communities and parents.

"While independent schools will continue to meet the standards and requirements legislated by governments, I do not believe it would be in the best interests of a vibrant and diverse school education system, for there to be a "heavy-handed" inspectorial approach to monitoring school standards and outcomes."

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