



Thursday 6 July 2023

Ms Sarah Redden
A/g Committee Secretary
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: eec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Redden

Thank you for your letter 27 June 2023 regarding the Senate Inquiry into the national trend of school refusal and related matters. As school refusal impacts many students across Australia, Independent Schools Australia (ISA) provided a submission in December 2022 and attended a Senate hearing on school refusal earlier this year.

Thank you for advising ISA that the Senate Education and Employment References Committee has written to each state and territory Association of Independent Schools. As the national peak body, our members have asked me to respond on their behalf.

We represent a diverse group of more than 1200 non-government schools that are autonomous and governed independently. As we are not systemic, we generally do have the ability to provide the type of information the committee has requested.

Our Associations of Independent Schools do not collect attendance and performance data from their member schools and each school develops their own policies, strategies and interventions to address poor school attendance and provide support to students and their families for those experiencing school refusal.

When researching information for our submission, the Associations of Independent Schools provided a high-level overview of trends and interventions in school refusal matters in the Independent sector and these was included in our submission.

In the Independent sector there are currently 96 Independent special assistance schools that have developed exceptional programs to re-engage students experiencing school refusal or have not been successful in mainstream schools. This year ISA published a showcase report on the flexible approaches and unique programs these schools offer which may be of interest to the Senate Committee as they consider this important matter that impacts many students across Australia. The report can be found at: [SPECIAL ASSISTANCE SCHOOLS: SHOWCASE – Independent Schools Australia \(isa.edu.au\)](https://isa.edu.au/special-assistance-schools-showcase)

Thank you again for your correspondence, and please don't hesitate to contact Independent Schools Australia if we can assist the Committee further.

Yours sincerely

Graham Catt
Chief Executive Officer

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