

MEDIA

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Independent schools are a vital part of educating Northern Territory students, particularly those in remote locations, ISA Chief Executive Graham Cat said.

Mr Cat, visiting Darwin for the Association of Independent Schools Northern Territory Leadership Forum, said growing student enrolments in the Territory reflected parents wanting to take advantage of the choice that independent schools provided.

"For many parents, the choice of where they send their child to school is the most important thing they can do to support their future in an uncertain world," Mr Cat said. "Parents have shown they want diversity in schooling to help them determine the best education outcomes for their child."

Mr Cat, who has visited local Independent Darwin schools, said that he continued to urge Federal and State Governments to ensure that all schools are fully and fairly funded. The Commonwealth and NT Government on March 13 signed a 'Statement of Intent' for increased funding to ensure public schools reach 100 per cent of their Schooling Resource Standard.

"This was great news for the Territory's public schools and communities, and we look forward to a similar commitment to fully and fairly fund all independent schools in the upcoming bilateral agreements," Mr Cat said.

"Twenty-five independent schools educate 5,863 students in the Northern Territory including those from remote communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and students with disability. Many have little or no capacity to raise private income through fees.

"If we are serious about equity, these students must not be left behind, and nor should families who choose an independent education as the best option for their child."

Cheryl Salter, Executive Director of the Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory, said "It's fantastic to have such a wide range of people in Darwin to participate in the AISNT Leadership Conference, which supports the diversity of independent schools of our parents, in a geographically scattered, socially heterogeneous, culturally diverse, and multi-faith populace. This conversation is important to the future of education not just in the Territory, but across our nation."

ISA is the national peak body representing 1,216 independent schools with close to 720,000 enrolled students, accounting for approximately 17 per cent of Australian school enrolments.

and a workforce of 122,000 people. Independent schools are diverse, serving a range of different communities across Australia.

For more information – www.isa.edu.au

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