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Christian Schools Need Land and Buildings

The release of the Independent Schools Australia Research Report, *School Enrolment Trends and Projections 2022* provides further evidence of the desperate need for land and buildings to house students in Christian schools.

The Report found that over the past five years, the Independent sector has seen an average enrolment growth rate **of 2.3% per year** which exceeds overall student population growth over the same period of 1.2%. By contrast, over the same period, the government sector grew by 1.1% per year and the Catholic sector an average of 0.6% per year.

‘Data from our member schools indicates an average enrolment growth rate of **2.8% per year over the last five years**’, said Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy at Christian Schools Australia, ‘once again confirming that **Christian schools remain the fastest growing schools in the country**’.

‘Parents are continuing to choose Christian schools that have a clear set of values and underlying beliefs’, he said.

‘We know from both our polling and the continued growth of enrolments in Christian schools that Australians from across the political spectrum value the education Christian schools offer, and support the protection of Christian schools against activists seeking to impose their values on these schools’.

The Report also indicates that overall school enrolments in Australia are projected to increase by 1.2% per year to 2031, with the Independent sector growing by 2.1% per year, the government sector 1.1% per year and the Catholic sector 0.8% per year. On this basis, Independent schools could enrol an additional 153,000 students with around 270 additional Independent schools required.

On the current trends many, if not most, of these schools would be Christian schools – resulting in calls for an urgent increase in capital funding from the Commonwealth Government and freeing up of land by State governments.

‘Christian schools have largely reached capacity’, Mr Spencer said, ‘and without the backing of large school systems it is almost impossible to start new Christian schools.’

‘We are calling on the Commonwealth Government to review capital funding support, which was not addressed in the Gonski Reviews, and plan to help school communities fund the buildings that will be needed to accommodate this growth’.

‘Another critical bottleneck for school growth is the availability of land and State Government planning and approval requirements,’ he said, ‘we need a conversation as a community about how we plan for new non-government schools to help take pressure off the Government sector and meet parental demands’.

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About Christian Schools Australia

Christian Schools Australia is the largest association of Christian schools in the country and has member schools educating around 72,000 students and employing more than 10,000 staff at more than 180 locations across Australia. CSA is part of the global ACSI network of 24,000 schools educating in excess of 5.5 million students in over 108 countries world-wide.

