



Media Release

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Accuracy and transparent required in schooling cost estimates

Estimates of the costs associated with school education released by the Australian Scholarships Group (ASG) today appeared to be significantly inflated, said Dr Geoff Newcombe, Chief Executive of the Association of Independent Schools of NSW.

“According to data collected from all independent schools for 2015, the median level of tuition fees per student for schools located in the Sydney metropolitan area was \$5,870. Even taking into account the additional costs associated with uniforms, transport, excursions and other extra-curricular costs that have been included in the data, it is scarcely believable that the total cost could be anywhere near the \$575,000 quoted”, said Dr Newcombe.

“In metropolitan Sydney, 67 per cent of independent schools charge tuition fees of less than \$10,000 and 42 per cent lower than \$5,000, while just thirteen per cent charge tuition fees of more than \$20,000. The fact that a significant majority of independent schools are in the lower fee range and cater to all demographic groups in the NSW community is not at all apparent from the ASG survey.”

ASG states that its Planning for Education Index is based on estimates of future education costs provided by parents through surveys, with these estimates then used to forecast the future costs of educating a child born the following year. However, in addition to being unable to determine the accuracy of such estimates, Dr Newcombe said it was also unclear exactly what ASG considers to be a ‘private’ school as its material states that *“a systemic education includes religious schools, e.g. Catholic, Anglican, Uniting Church, Buddhist, Islamic or Hindu.”*

“Schools with these religious affiliations, with the exception of Catholic systemic schools, are regarded as independent schools and are regularly described as ‘private’ schools. It is therefore difficult to ascertain which schools have been included within the category ‘private’ that would result in these types of costs.”

“While it is commendable that there are organisations which assist parents to plan appropriately for the costs of their child’s education, it is important that the data used to convey future education costs be accurate and transparent”, Dr Newcombe said.

“Independent schools are particularly conscious of ensuring that they remain affordable to their communities, while maintaining the highest possible standard of education provision that is expected by parents. I would encourage all parents to do their own research on the likely cost of their child’s education by speaking directly to the schools they may be considering for their child”, said Dr Newcombe.

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