

Media statement

Rachel Holthouse, Chief Executive, Independent Schools Victoria

Salary increases are a normal, cyclical part of school life, occurring every year across the education sector as schools respond to inflation and remain competitive in the market for talented staff.

Staff are drawn to the independent sector for many reasons beyond remuneration, including alignment with a school's values, faith, or educational philosophy and, particularly in regional communities, the opportunity to be embedded in the community they serve.

Independent schools operate differently to government schools. Rather than a single, sector-wide agreement, each independent school negotiates its own agreement tailored to its community and circumstances. For independent schools, any wage increase must be considered within the financial capacity of the individual school. Unlike the public sector, independent schools cannot draw on consolidated government revenues, cross-subsidise across departments or rely on debt to fund ongoing operating costs.

Schools across Victoria face a range of financial pressures, including rising operating costs, declining government funding and cost-of-living pressures on families, which can affect their capacity to absorb higher school fees. Victoria's payroll tax on education places an additional cost burden on independent schools.

Ultimately, independent schools are committed to ensuring their staff are fairly rewarded through a balance of salary and conditions, their schools remain sustainable, and the communities they serve continue to have access to the quality education they expect.