



**Independent Schools  
Queensland**

choice & diversity

# Annual Report **2023**





## CONTENTS

By the Numbers	2
Chair Report	4
CEO Report	6
ISQ Board and Committees	8
Year in Review	9
ISQ Staff	32
Member Schools	35
ISQ Alliance Partners	37

IMAGE:  
The Rockhampton Grammar School



# Annual Report 2023

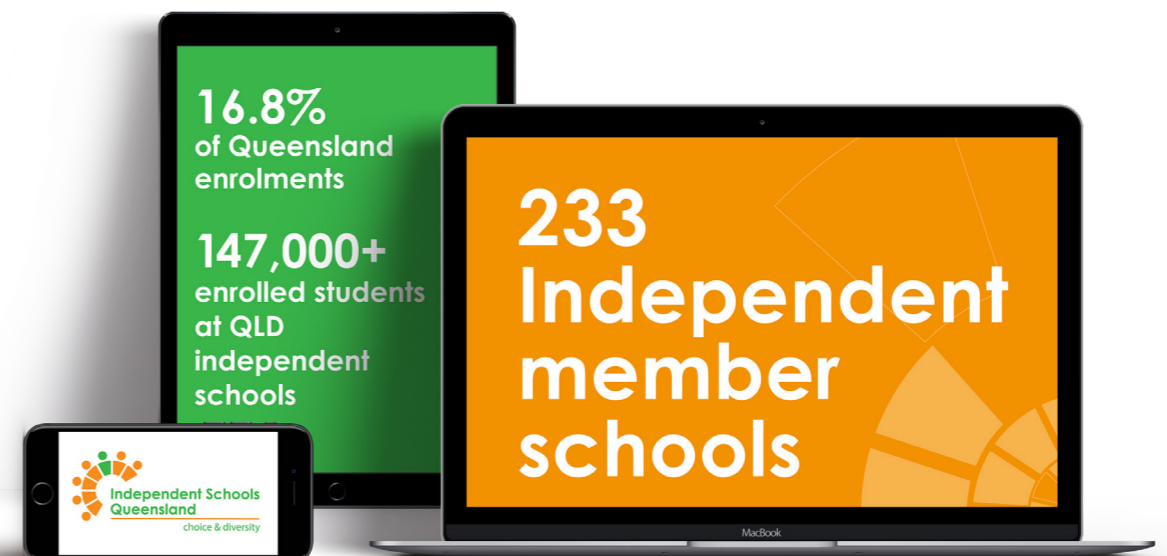
Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) is the peak state body for the independent schools sector. We represent the interests of member schools, fostering choice and diversity in education and protecting the autonomy of independent schools.

## MISSION

To champion independent education and to support independent schools to serve their communities.

## VISION

A thriving independent school sector that ensures choice and diversity in Queensland's education system.





# By the Numbers

## MEMBERSHIP

238	member schools
	233 independent schools
	5 Catholic schools
147,268	independent school students
5	special schools
30	special assistance schools

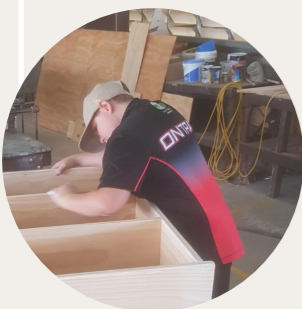
## INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

156	combined primary & secondary schools
30	primary only schools
52	secondary only schools
215	co-educational schools
12	girls only schools
11	boys only schools

Independent Schools in **37** Local Government Areas



30 SPECIAL ASSISTANCE SCHOOLS CATERING FOR 4,942 DISENGAGED STUDENTS



221 SCHOOLS EDUCATING 6,519 INDIGENOUS STUDENTS AND 11 MAJORITY INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS



73 SCHOOLS EDUCATING 1,193 FULL FEE PAYING OVERSEAS STUDENTS



176 INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OFFER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING



135 APPROVED EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES



36 SCHOOLS PROVIDING BOARDING



SCHOOL IMAGES FROM LEFT

1. Ontrack College Emerald
2. The Murri School
3. St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School (page 2);
4. Australian Trade College North Brisbane
5. Brisbane Christian College
6. Somerville House (page 3)

# Chair Report



**2023 was a momentous year of change for ISQ. With a change of Government and subsequent priorities in 2022, significant funding pools coming to an end for the sector and a movement of premises, careful forward planning and sustainability measures were crucial to ensure the longevity of the organisation and the services it provides for its members.**

**In this instance, change was a necessity, albeit at times challenging. However, it is how that change is managed and how you come out the other side that shows how well an organisation is positioned for its future. For ISQ, that future looks bright.**

## Continued sector growth

Parental confidence in Queensland's independent school sector continues to grow, with increased value being placed on the choice and diversity afforded to them by our members. At the conclusion of the 2023 school year, ISQ's membership accounted for 238 schools (233 independent schools and five Catholic schools). There were 147,268 students enrolled in independent schools, with the sector representing 16.8% of all school enrolments across Queensland, up from 16.2% in 2021.

## Service continuity

Alongside this continued growth, ISQ staff have worked incredibly hard throughout 2023 to ensure their membership base received the service and professional development opportunities for which the organisation is known.

As a backdrop for this, it's important to note the significant restructure ISQ went through during the first half of 2023. These changes were carried out in large part due to the reduction in Government funding totalling approximately \$5.5 million per year as a result of the cessation of the Non-Government Reform Support Fund and the Advancing Teaching and Learning Fund.

As with any restructure, positive opportunities can and do arise to look at things differently as an organisation; to find new ways in efficiency and in service delivery. I am incredibly proud of the way ISQ staff handled themselves throughout this period of change, their unwavering commitment to ensure member service remained front and centre, and the leadership shown throughout the organisation.

## A modern ISQ

A significant part of this efficient and high-quality service delivery for our members was realised in the opening of ISQ's new office space in South Brisbane. Not only was the office move a cost saving measure, it also offered an opportunity to bring ISQ's Professional Learning Centre into the same space.

Member engagement is the essence of our organisation and its success, and the physical and visual connection between the office and professional learning space will serve as a constant reminder of our dedication to this. We are already seeing the benefits of this, with more opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and networking, all of which are essential to ISQ's purpose.

## Advocating on behalf of our members

Throughout 2023 ISQ maintained a productive and collegial partnership with the Queensland Education Minister Grace Grace, her advisors and key departmental officials. We are also pleased to see this same relationship continue with the newly appointed Education Minister Di Farmer.

In March 2023, the Queensland Education Minister announced the appointment of Cheryl Vardon to oversee the review of the Queensland Non-State School Accreditation Framework. ISQ conducted thorough member school consultation to feed into the review and was delighted to see this result in significant uptake in the recommendations put forward to the review.

ISQ also welcomed the ongoing capital funding assistance and recurrent funding for non-state schools outlined in the 2023–24 State budget. This meant that eligible Queensland independent schools had access to the third tranche of the original three-year, \$180 million capital grants funding, with the Government extending this funding through its \$126.8 million non-state school capital grants and student hostel allocation.

From a funding policy perspective, ISQ continued its engagement with its national counterparts at Independent Schools Australia and the Commonwealth Government regarding the implementation of the new Direct Measure of Income (DMI) to calculate schools' 'capacity to contribute'. Amongst various considerations, this engagement addressed the long-term impacts on the financial viability of Queensland independent schools, with a particular focus on regional schools.

In 2023, ISQ directed funding towards two primary priorities: Transition Assistance and Choice and Affordability of Schools.

Under these priorities, ISQ continued to direct financial support to independent schools that were negatively affected by the new funding arrangements. Schools that would have qualified for assistance via National Adjustment Assistance Fund were also assisted through the Choice and Affordability Fund (CAF).

## Leading and Governing by example

Thank you to the staff of ISQ for your dedication and contributions to a successful year of growth, change and seizing of opportunities. Thank you also to Mr Christopher Mountford, CEO of ISQ and his leadership team of Mr Stuart McDowall and Mr Mark Newham. Without your dedication, commitment and unwavering hope – we would not be the organisation that we are today.

It is a privilege to lead the ISQ Board alongside Deputy Chair Dr Lynne Doneley. The performance and reputation of the ISQ Board is critically dependent on the quality and effort of all the members of the Board.

In 2023 the ISQ Board has been outstandingly served by its members listed on page eight. These members have each provided a combination of professionalism, dedication, engagement, and enthusiasm wrapped up in many packages – educators of a range of backgrounds, schools and personalities – diversity that has been applied to benefit ISQ as a whole. I thank them all for their efforts. It has been a privilege to work with them and I appreciate their individual and collective contributions to ISQ's success. I would also like to acknowledge the valued work of the various committees appointed by the Board, their Chairs, and dedicated members. ISQ's Board-appointed Finance Committee is chaired by Geoff McLay, Principal at West Moreton Anglican College and the Education Committee is chaired by Ros Curtis, Principal of St Margaret's Anglican Girls School.

I would also like to recognise the contribution that Dawn Lang has made not only to the QIS Block Grant Authority which she has led as Chair since 2012, but also to independent school education at the state and national level. Through her leadership, Dawn has made the BGA much more than a funding organisation for schools, it is a place that enables the independent school family to grow and develop, a place where she has invested her heart and soul into helping every school prosper.

In conclusion, I wish to offer congratulations to Independent Schools Queensland for what has been a year of challenge and success. The ISQ Board is appreciative of the role that it has to play in representing all Independent Schools in Queensland and looks forward to further supporting members in 2024.

**Dr Phillip Moulds OAM**  
CHAIR  
ISQ BOARD





# CEO Report



**ISQ is the state-wide peak body for Queensland's independent schools, dedicated to championing the interests of schools in a sector which spans Kindergarten to Year 12 and encompasses international, boarding, vocational education and training, specialist learning and support for students.**

Core to ISQ's mission is delivering the best knowledge, advice, service and support to nearly 240 members across Queensland. We see this expertise as vital in ensuring these schools can be the very best for their students and their communities.

Through 2023, ISQ put into action numerous significant operational improvements. These were made to ensure our service delivery was not only the best it could be for schools now, but also for the future of ISQ as it moves with an evolving education landscape.

I want to begin by thanking all ISQ's members for their patience as these changes took place, and hopefully you are beginning to see the benefits with your daily interactions with ISQ.

## Professional Learning and Support

In terms of professional learning opportunities for our members, ISQ hosted 61 face-to-face events at both the purpose-built Professional Learning Centre (PLC) in Brisbane and at ISQ's new office in South Brisbane. In addition, ISQ continued to bring professional learning opportunities to member schools in regional Queensland hosting 64 face-to-face events at regional member schools and external conference facilities. This is an increase of 20% from 2022. The number of online and hybrid events delivered was 121, up by 11 from 2022.

In 2023, over 20,000 education professionals and school staff logged into ISQ's online learning platform, Connect&Learn. Of the users, 35,115 distinct visits were made to Connect&Learn's online modules. The most popular course was Child Protection Training for Teachers being completed by 14,928 people.

The provision of tailored and timely learning across all areas of school operations and governance remains one of ISQ's key functions and we are continually seeking opportunities to evolve our offerings.

## Policy and politics

Throughout 2023, ISQ has worked closely with its colleagues at Independent Schools Australia (ISA) and its national advocacy efforts with the Federal Labor Government on behalf of members.

Through collaborative stakeholder engagement, submissions and roundtable discussions, key areas of focus for national advocacy in 2023 included:

- National Teacher Workforce Action Plan
- Ongoing work around the new National School Reform Agreement
- Student and teacher wellbeing
- Non-state schools deductible gift recipient status

Alongside our regular stakeholder meetings and collaboration with the State Education Minister, her advisors and the Department of Education, ISQ also put forward a number of state level submissions to a number of policy and legislation reviews including:

- Inquiry into the delivery of vocational education and training in regional, rural and remote Queensland

- Australian Law Reform Commission's consultation paper on Religious Education Institutions and Anti-Discrimination Laws
- Non-State School Accreditation Framework
- ShapingSEQ 2023 Update

## Staff put members first

The cohort of ISQ staff is made up of talented and committed individuals who put the interests of members first in all that they do. Taking in mind the operational changes made at the organisation throughout 2023, I want to thank all ISQ staff members who have taken on extra work while we adjusted to our new way of working. They did this with a member first approach, which can be seen in the increase in services being delivered and outlined within this report.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to ISQ's 12-member board, led by Chair Dr Phillip Moulds OAM and Dr Lynne Doneley, for their ongoing support. The latest enrolment data speaks for itself, and it is clear that our hard work amongst a growing and evolving school landscape is paying dividends with parents placing considerable value on the choice and diversity offered by independent schools across the state.

**Christopher Mountford**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS QUEENSLAND



# ISQ Board and Committees

## 2023 Board of Directors

ISQ is governed by a Board of Directors. Directors are appointed for three-year terms, with one-third of directors retiring each year. ISQ's Board met seven times during 2023 to continue the advancement of the collective interests of member schools and their communities. ISQ's Board is responsible for ISQ's overall governance, management and strategic direction, including the stewardship of human and physical resources, to provide services in line with the needs of member schools.

**Dr Phillip Moulds OAM (Chair)**  
The Rockhampton Grammar School  
Headmaster

**Dr Lynne Doneley (Deputy Chair)**  
Nambour Christian College  
Governing Body Representative

**Craig Bassingthwaighte**  
Somerset College\*  
Headmaster

**David Bliss**  
St Andrew's Lutheran College\*  
Principal

**Dr Alan Campbell**  
Anglican Church Grammar School  
Headmaster

**Ros Curtis**  
St Margaret's Anglican Girls School  
Principal

**Kim Kiepe**  
Somerville House^  
Principal

**Alasdair Jeffrey**  
St Peters Lutheran College\*  
Governing Body Representative

**Dr Andrew Johnson**  
Redlands College#  
Principal

**Geoff McLay**  
West Moreton Anglican College  
Principal

**Anna Owen**  
Sunshine Coast Grammar School#  
Principal

**Karen Spiller OAM**  
John Paul College^  
Principal

**Andrew Wheaton**  
Whitsunday Anglican School  
Principal

**Richard Brown**  
Nambour Christian College  
Governing Body Representative

## Education Committee

The Board of Directors appoints the Education Committee on an annual basis following the Annual General Meeting. Members of the committee are appointed for three years, with four positions to be made vacant each year to provide fresh perspectives and allow for the continuity of the Committee to be maintained.

**Ros Curtis (Chair)**  
St Margaret's Anglican Girls School  
Principal

**Tony Andrews**  
Kairos Community College#  
Principal

**Michael Barton**  
Djarragun College  
Principal

**Daniel Brown**  
Emmanuel College  
Principal

**Dr Andrew Cousins**  
Clayfield College#  
Principal

**Josh Counsel**  
Discovery Christian College#  
Principal

**Sharyn Ive**  
Carinity Education Shalom  
Campus Director

**Tim Kotzur**  
St Peters Lutheran College  
Head of College

**Gary O'Brien**  
Cannon Hill Anglican College  
Principal

**Toni Riordan**  
St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School#  
Principal

**Craig Schmidt**  
Westside Christian College\*  
Principal

**Ross Waltisbuhl**  
Cooloola Christian College#  
Principal

**Dr Tsae Wong**  
Trinity Lutheran College  
Principal

## Other ISQ Committees

The Board also has two other standing committees that provide specialised advice and recommendations: the Finance Committee; and the Remuneration and Nominations Committee.

### Finance Committee

**Geoff McLay (Chair)**  
**Craig Bassingthwaighte**  
**Richard Brown**  
**Kim Kiepe**^  
**Dr Andrew Johnson**#  
**Toni Williams**

### Remuneration and Nominations Committee

**Dr Phillip Moulds OAM**  
**Dr Lynne Doneley**  
**Geoff McLay**

There were no new appointments or resignations to the Remuneration and Nominations Committee in 2023.

## Terms Concluded in 2023

**Bronwyn Dolling**  
Pacific Lutheran College  
Principal  
**Colin Minke**  
Immanuel Lutheran College  
Principal

## Resigned in 2023

**Eliza Lane**  
Australian Industry Trade College

^ Terms concluded at the 2023 AGM  
# Appointed in 2023  
\* Reappointed at the 2023 AGM

# Year in Review

2023 was a year of continued growth for the independent sector, with memberships sitting at 238 schools, providing choice and diversity in schooling for parents across the state.

In 2023, 147,268 students were enrolled in Queensland independent schools. Independent school enrolments represented 16.8% of all school enrolments across Queensland.

Throughout the year, ISQ's work has been guided by its *Strategic Plan* launched in 2022. The seven strategic goals which will help guide ISQ's work between 2022–2024 are:

01. champion change and reform through advocacy
02. lead alongside our members
03. create new opportunities and value for members
04. deliver exceptional member services
05. embrace growth, agility and innovation opportunities
06. engage and communicate with members
07. provide a great place to work



Throughout 2023, ISQ continued to adopt a member first mentality, providing assistance and support to these schools in delivering positive educational outcomes for their students and their communities.

Examples of the commitment of ISQ's staff towards promoting, supporting and developing the Queensland independent school sector are highlighted throughout this *Annual Report*.



# 01.

## CHAMPION CHANGE AND REFORM THROUGH EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY



**IMAGES:** (top) Official Opening of the ISQ Head Office: ISQ CEO Chris Mountford, The Hon Grace Grace MP, ISQ Chair Dr Phillip Moulds OAM; (bottom) Boardroom Luncheon: Opposition Leader David Crisafulli, ISQ CEO Chris Mountford, Shadow Education Minister Christian Rowan

### Australian Government

#### MINISTERIAL ADVOCACY

Throughout 2023, ISQ has worked closely with its colleagues at Independent Schools Australia (ISA) and its national advocacy efforts with the Federal Labor Government on behalf of members.

Through collaborative stakeholder engagement, submissions and roundtable discussions, key areas of focus for national advocacy in 2023 included:

- National Teacher Workforce Action Plan
- Ongoing work around the new National School Reform Agreement
- Student and teacher wellbeing
- Non-state schools deductible gift recipient status.

#### FUNDING

ISQ continued its engagement with ISA and the Commonwealth Government regarding the implementation of the new DMI to calculate schools' 'capacity to contribute'. Amongst various considerations, this engagement addressed the long-term impacts on the financial viability of Queensland independent schools, with a particular focus on regional schools.

#### CHOICE AND AFFORDABILITY FUND

The Choice and Affordability Fund (CAF) provided direct financial support to independent schools adversely affected by the new funding models, aiming to assist these schools in transitioning to the revised funding arrangements.

In 2023, ISQ directed funding towards two primary priorities: Transition Assistance and Choice and Affordability of Schools.

Under these priorities, ISQ continued to direct financial support to independent schools that were negatively affected by the new funding arrangements. Schools that would have qualified for assistance via National Adjustment Assistance Fund were also assisted through the CAF Program.

Within the Choice and Affordability of Schools priority, grants were allocated to schools eligible for initiatives promoting parental choice within the context of affordability. ISQ supported school projects anticipated to help schools sustain their choice and affordability, as well as projects aiding the implementation of structural adjustments necessitated by changes in funding models. As part of the agreement, ISQ committed to the following objectives for the Choice and Affordability of Schools priority:

- Preserve and enhance choice in schooling for Queensland families, thereby elevating educational standards and fostering competition across the educational sector.
- Preserve and enhance opportunity and diversity within the schooling system through a dynamic independent schools' sector in Queensland.
- Facilitate structural adjustments and the planning for structural adjustments for schools adversely affected by the new funding arrangements.

The funding aided schools in preserving and enhancing choice in schooling for Queensland families. It also contributed to the preservation and enhancement of opportunity and diversity in the schooling system, supported by a dynamic independent school sector in Queensland.

The allocation of funding support for Queensland independent schools was guided by the ISQ Choice and Affordability Fund Reference Group. This group consists of individuals, appointed by the ISQ Board of Directors, who are independent of any single independent school and collectively bring a diverse set of skills, expertise, and experience in financial assessment, program management, and the governance and management of independent schools.

Approved Authorities have confirmed that the allocated funding was utilised for its intended purposes. Annually ISQ reports the distribution of CAF funding to the government and will ensure these reports are accessible to the public for the life of the program.

### Queensland Government

#### MINISTERIAL ADVOCACY

Throughout 2023 ISQ maintained a productive and collegial partnership with the Queensland Education Minister Grace Grace, her advisors and key departmental officials. ISQ was also pleased to see this same relationship continue with the newly appointed Education Minister Di Farmer.

In March 2023, the Queensland Education Minister announced she has appointed Cheryl Vardon to oversee the review of the Queensland Non-State School Accreditation Framework.

ISQ conducted thorough member school consultation to feed into the review, and was delighted to see this result in significant uptake in the recommendations put forward to the review.

ISQ also welcomed the ongoing capital funding assistance and recurrent funding for non-state schools outlined in the 2023–24 State budget.

This meant that eligible Queensland independent schools had access to the third tranche of the original three-year, \$180 million capital grants funding, with the Government extending this funding through its \$126.8 million non-state school capital grants and student hostel allocation.

ISQ also put forward submissions to a number of policy and legislation reviews including:

- Inquiry into the delivery of vocational education and training in regional, rural and remote Queensland
- Australian Law Reform Commission's consultation paper on Religious Education Institutions and Anti-Discrimination Laws
- Non-State School Accreditation Framework
- ShapingSEQ 2023 Update.

With October signalling the official start to the Queensland election year, ISQ also took the opportunity to proactively engage with Opposition Leader David Crisafulli and Shadow Education Minister Christian Rowan and their policy advisors.



Key to this engagement was a successful boardroom luncheon held at ISQ's Office with the Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister meeting with member school principals from key electorates as suggested by the opposition leader.

**FUNDING**

ISQ remained a highly active member representative in the Queensland Non-State School sector through funding and policy advocacy involving the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and the Queensland Office of Non-State Education and the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board.

Budgets from the 2022–2023 financial year are determined according to arrangements under the bilateral funding agreement between the Queensland and Commonwealth governments.

Under this agreement (signed in 2018), the state will contribute a minimum of 20% of the nationally determined Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) for non-state schools in Queensland. This state funding was 20.58% in 2023 and will transition to 20% of SRS in 2024.

In August 2023, ISQ received confirmation from then Minister Grace that the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) will replace the Education Adjustment Program (EAP) as the basis for state government Students with Disability (SWD) funding from 2024 in all non-state schools.

The decision by the Minister also triggered a review of the measures used to calculate funding for non-state schools. Three new replacement measures introduced for calculating State Recurrent Grant distribution model were:

- Disability Measure – replacing the Education Adjustment Program (EAP) with Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for students with disability (NCCD)

- Socio-Economic Status (SES) – replacing SES with the Australian Government's Capacity to Contribute (CTC)
- School Isolation – replacing existing outdated measure with the nationally recognised and utilised Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+).

ISQ negotiated with the Queensland Government to finalise arrangements for short-term transition funding, which was made available to support those few schools that would experience a large (or relatively large) reduction in State Recurrent funding. For the remaining schools, transition will see 2024 funding based on 50% existing measures and 50% new measures detailed above.

**GOVERNMENT POLICY**

Throughout the year, ISQ was actively involved at the national and state level to ensure the design of future funding models would offer substantial support to independent schools, many of which are still dealing with significant challenges.

ISQ continued to support member schools with advice and support around policy changes to the 'Gonski' model of Commonwealth Funding and the State Recurrent Grant distribution model.

A particular area of inquiry was sector-wide phasing out of deemed values for Socio-Educational Disadvantage Loading and Low English Proficiency Loading for Special Assistance Schools (SAS), Majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Schools (MATSI) and Special Schools.

Pending changes in 2024 to the State Recurrent Grant distribution model and Student with Disability Funding was also topical.

The introduction of these new policy measures led to a surge in inquiries from member schools seeking to understand the impact on their operations. Throughout the year, ISQ offered consultations, produced forecasts, and conducted scenario analyses, offering crucial support for budgeting and planning, as well as advice to both current and potential members.

**SCHOOL PLANNING**

Throughout 2023 the sector continued to see significant growth.

Meeting this growing demand for an independent education and providing choice and diversity for parents in the education of their children remains a priority focus for ISQ.

ISQ represented the interests of the sector on the Queensland Schools Planning Reference Committee (QSPRC), a Queensland Government committee that conducts regular consultations with key local government authorities (LGAs) in areas where the greatest growth is projected for school-aged children, including new growth areas, and reports to the Queensland Government about the likely demand for future school capacity. These consultations are across all three school sectors with relevant government agencies participating.

Establishing a new school is complex and ISQ works with aspiring new independent schools across Queensland to aid in the development of their operational, infrastructure, governance and teaching and learning requirements.

Significant work in collaboration with Queensland Independent Schools Block Grant Authority also began in 2023 around a New Schools Strategy. This work involved meeting with key stakeholders in the new school space including developers, funding institutions, local and state governments, and of course member schools to openly discuss the challenges and opportunities for all parties in meeting the demand for new schools in the context of significant population growth in southeast Queensland over the coming decades.

**02. LEAD ALONGSIDE OUR MEMBERS**



**THOUGHT LEADERSHIP**

*Briefings* is an ISQ publication providing thought leadership for the independent schooling sector.

Each edition includes an opinion article, a research feature or an advocacy piece. In 2023, ISQ subject matter experts delved into areas of importance to member schools and the education sector including:

**UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF POWERFUL MIDDLE LEADERS IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS.**

by Anjulee Singh

The focus on middle leaders has never been more critical in addressing the ongoing challenge of teacher workforce retention.

The development of middle leaders is a potential strategy to support and retain teachers by creating clear pathways for classroom teachers to conceptualise a desirable career trajectory in a school. Leadership development in education also remains a significant focus for policy makers at both the state and federal levels.

ISQ Education Services Deputy Director Anjulee Singh investigates middle leadership in schools, middle leader development, and the impact middle leaders have on student learning.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF LESSON OBSERVATIONS AND HIGH QUALITY FEEDBACK FOR TEACHER GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

by Eva Perry

The core purpose of educators is to improve outcomes for students.

The challenge for schools is to consider the key aspects in which they can improve student outcomes and the evidence based methodology they utilise to achieve this.

ISQ's former Manager (School Improvement) Eva Perry investigates effective improvement and growth processes for teachers, and the benefits of high quality professional learning and feedback.

**STUDENT LOYALTY IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**

by Bethwyn Kitson

Increased competition in the education sector means independent schools need to continue to develop and deliver effective marketing and communication strategies.

Providing insight into how school marketing strategies can be used to build student satisfaction and student loyalty, has the potential to lead to increased retention rates in schools. According to research, in educational contexts, loyalty has been found to equal retention, which leads to benefits for schools including long term income, positive word of mouth and more actively involved students.

In this latest ISQ research feature, ISQ Communications Manager Bethwyn Kitson explores factors influencing the return of school students as alumni-staff members and alumni-parents and makes some practical recommendations based on the research findings.

**THE CHANGING FACE OF READING INSTRUCTION.**

by Louise Brauer

Literacy is undeniably fundamental to a student's academic success and active participation in society (ACARA, n.d.).

In this research feature, ISQ Education Services Manager Louise Brauer delves into The Science of Reading and its implications for Version 9 of the Australian Curriculum: English. The Science of Reading encompasses a substantial body of evidence concerning the cognitive processes involved in reading and the developmental aspects of reading skills.

This investigation focuses on practical classroom techniques aligned with these scientific principles, offering valuable insights to assist schools as they transition to the new curriculum.



# 03.

## CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND VALUE FOR MEMBERS



### ISQ TEAM

Throughout 2023, ISQ responded to the changing needs of our ever-growing membership base which required more specialised staff. Due to retirements and several staff leaving to pursue other opportunities, including returning to work in schools, ISQ welcomed 10 new people to the team throughout the year. The collective expertise of 46 staff at the ISQ Office in South Brisbane has enabled ISQ to provide a diverse range of tailored services and support including advocacy, student services, school business services, teaching and learning, leadership, policy, research, IT, school improvement, communications and media issues and crisis management.

IMAGE: ISQ staff in attendance at the ISQ Staff Professional Development day



### GROUP PROCUREMENT ARRANGEMENTS

ISQ recognises the opportunity to support members by helping them to manage their costs, through the establishment of group procurement arrangements.

The intent of these arrangements is to negotiate with potential school suppliers, to achieve more favourable terms than may otherwise be available to an individual school. The negotiated agreement is made available to all members.

As well as lower purchasing costs, this initiative aims to reduce the administrative costs of individual schools, who will not need to each undertake their own procurement process.

Some standing offer arrangements may encompass several different options rather than following a 'one size fits all' approach. Depending on the procurement category, this may be needed to cater for the differing needs of member schools and the communities they serve.

During 2023, ISQ established new procurement arrangements to assist schools with the purchase of electricity, printers, cybersecurity consulting, and strategic ICT review services.

### SCHOOL DATA DASHBOARD

Queensland independent schools operate in a fast-changing landscape, and must continue to stay abreast of changing demographic, social and economic circumstances. As the environment changes, schools must continually reassess their strategy and underlying business model, and make informed decisions about when to change direction.

In response to these challenges, ISQ has commenced work to bring together relevant data for schools into a self-service data dashboard, to inform school decision-making. ISQ collects relevant school data from a range of sources, and is undertaking detailed analysis of this data to develop a range of measures, ratios, and time-series data. This data can then be made available to members through a self-service portal that includes easily digestible visualisations.

During 2023, ISQ developed a first phase of a secure self-service dashboard, to deliver accessible information regarding school funding, school characteristics and basic trend analysis. This dashboard has been rolled out to a small pilot group, representing a cross-section of schools, who are assisting with final testing and validation, before a wider roll-out during 2024.

IMAGE: Brisbane Grammar School



# 04.

## DELIVER EXCEPTIONAL MEMBER SERVICES



IMAGE: ISQ's online learning platform, Connect&Learn

## A SPECIALIST PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROVIDER

**In 2023, there was a large range of both online and face-to-face events hosted by ISQ.**

ISQ hosted 61 face-to-face events at both the purpose-built Professional Learning Centre (PLC) in Brisbane and the new Professional Learning Space (PLS) at ISQ's new office in South Brisbane. In addition, ISQ continued to bring professional learning opportunities to member schools in regional Queensland hosting 64 face-to-face events at regional member schools and external conference facilities. This is an increase of 20% from 2022. The number of online and hybrid events delivered was 121, up by 11 from 2022.

In June 2023, ISQ updated Connect&Learn from an external Learning Management System (LMS) to hosting internally using Moodle as the LMS. The shift from an external provider has delivered significant cost savings to ISQ and allowed synchronising of records from Microsoft Dynamics, creating a single point of truth.

As part of the upgrade of Connect&Learn digital learning eco system, xAPI was introduced. xAPI is a standard for collecting learner experiences. In the six months the new system was online, over 1.3 million xAPI statements were collected. This will allow greater analytics to understand how the online modules are being used by our members.

In 2023, over 20,000 education professionals and school staff logged into ISQ's online learning platform, Connect&Learn. Of the users, 35,115 distinct visits were made to Connect&Learn's online modules. The most popular course was Child Protection Training for Teachers being completed by 14,928 people.

A bespoke flexible registration functionality built into Connect&Learn has meant member schools easily register against their school and have access to compliance training instantly. In addition, greater control was given to School Administrators to view reports across their assigned schools and campuses.

## CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

Alliance Partners provide substantial financial contribution to strategically build their brand recognition, make connections, increase engagement and share knowledge to support the independent education sector alongside ISQ. An Alliance Partnership with ISQ is built on trust, commitment and responsibility and is a genuine relationship with aligned values and agreed objectives.

ISQ provides Alliance Partners with tailored benefits to reflect their financial contribution and priorities. These benefits focus on opportunities for acknowledgement, engagement and profile for the partner and can include:

- bespoke networking opportunities
- logo placement and contribution of content for key ISQ communications and website

- opportunity to present meaningful content at selected relevant ISQ events
- complimentary tickets to attend selected ISQ events (e.g. State Forum).

Members benefit from these partnerships through the sharing of relevant and timely information, access to trusted providers of goods and services, a strengthened connections and involvement with corporate Australia and access to best practice and thought leadership impacting the sector.

ISQ is open to exploring partnerships with the wider business and education community to create new opportunities and value for members.

## SUPPORT FOR CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING: PREP-YEAR 12

Over 2023, the teams of Teacher Quality, Teaching & Learning and Curriculum & Assessment combined to one, more streamlined, Education Services Team. Throughout this significant change in staffing our commitment to delivering exceptional service remained steadfast. While navigating through this period of transition, we successfully maintained the continuity of all external committees, most events and all email and phone support requests. Some of our programs continued while others ceased earlier than planned with these schools supported through similar ISQ events to complete the work that they had begun.

### EXTERNAL COMMITTEES

Throughout 2023, ISQ upheld its pivotal role as an advocate by actively participating in numerous state and national curriculum committees. These included the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Foundation to Year 12 Curriculum Directors Group, the Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority (QCAA) K-10 Curriculum and Assessment Committee, various subject-specific ACARA and QCAA cross-sector committees, the STEM cross-sector reference group, and the QCAA Artificial Intelligence Working Group.

ISQ's presence on these committees has ensured that the voices and needs of independent schools in Queensland are effectively represented and considered in decision-making processes. Moreover, it has facilitated the dissemination of timely and pertinent information regarding available resources and services to schools within the sector. In a bid to enhance communication, ISQ introduced the Curriculum Leaders Updates section on the Member Hub in 2023, enabling immediate transmission of insights and updates garnered from these influential meetings directly to school leaders.



## ISQ PROGRAMS

In 2023 there were numerous programs for schools to engage in.

These programs provided schools with professional learning and support to improve. Their work was exemplified at the Teaching and Learning Showcase held at the end of the year.

**9 schools**  
Teacher Growth and Development

**9 schools**  
Emerging Leaders

**6 schools**  
Improving the Teaching of Mathematics

**6 schools**  
Formative Assessment

**5 schools**  
Empowering Classroom Teachers

**3 schools**  
Early Years Literacy

### EVENTS

Throughout the year, ISQ hosted two highly acclaimed Leading Curriculum Workshops, attracting 110 participants in the initial session and 80 in the subsequent session. These workshops were specifically designed to provide essential orientation and support for new curriculum leaders within the sector.

Furthermore, our School and Curriculum Leaders events, held across Brisbane, online, and in eight regional areas, engaged a total of 223 participants. These gatherings served as vital platforms for disseminating updates from ACARA and QCAA while fostering invaluable networking opportunities.

The Literacy Masterclass and Numeracy Masterclass, conducted in mixed-mode formats and repeated in both semesters, drew significant interest from teachers and curriculum leaders. With over 190 attendees for the literacy events and 180 for the numeracy sessions, these masterclasses imparted high-quality teaching techniques, and the need was evident as the 2024 English and Mathematics programs filled to capacity before the close of 2023.

Similarly, our Middle Leaders webinar series, presented twice during the year, catered to the developmental needs of middle leaders seeking to enhance their leadership skills. These sessions garnered substantial attendance, reflecting the sector's strong demand for such programs. The validation of this need became evident as the 2024 Middle Leaders program reached full capacity before the conclusion of 2023.

The Global Teaching and Learning Summit, conducted online, brought together 41 participants, stimulating robust discussions on innovative practices within the independent sector and fostering dialogue on school improvement strategies. Our Support for Small Schools Forum, with 20 participants, exemplified our commitment to providing tailored support and resources to meet the diverse needs of our member schools.

### INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL SUPPORT

Over the course of the year, our team provided email and/or phone support to over 90% of member schools. We also provided individual paid service of Professional Development sessions for nine schools, one on one, face to face support for eight schools and mock audits or reviews for eight schools.

### VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Queensland consistently represents the highest number of Vocational Education and Training (VET) student enrolments and achievements when compared to other states and territories across the 15–19 year old cohort. The year saw continued growth in the number of students completing nationally recognised training across independent schools, with 178 schools offering a range of qualifications from Certificate I to Diploma level.

Forty-three of the 178 independent schools were registered either with the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) or the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) as training organisations.

Independent schools saw 23,057 students enrolled in VET in schools programs with certificates at levels II and III continuing to be the pathway of choice for students across Years 10–12. More than 4,000 students have partaken in either a structured work placement or work experience sampling. In 2023, there was a 40% increase in participation across 11 Gateway to Industry Schools (GISP) programs, with Community Services and Health showing the largest increases from 12 to 35 schools. Other GISP providers showing a marked increase included information communications technology aerospace and advanced manufacturing.

ISQ recorded 1,257 students commencing school-based apprenticeships or traineeships, with carpentry, electrotechnology, plumbing, hairdressing and light vehicle being the top five industry areas of choice. Business and Early Childhood Education and Care were the top areas of interest for traineeships.

As well as VET workshops and webinars delivered as professional learning events for members, ISQ offered accredited training opportunities to equip VET practitioners in schools. These included:

- the mandatory training and assessment credential for schoolteachers, namely the TAE40122 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, and
- the Certificate IV in Career Development.

Increased ministerial focus on the delivery of quality VET and its relevance and impact on the current level of skills shortages, continues to be a national issue. 2023 saw the introduction of the new entity Jobs & Skills Australia (JSA) to oversee the progressive skills acquisition across national providers. In 2023 Independent Schools Australia (ISA) with the support of Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) contributed a submission to the JSA to convey the important role that independent schools play in educating young people for the future and in helping to build a skilled workforce to meet Australia's needs.

Independent Schools Australia (ISA), with the support of ISQ, also provided a submission to the House Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training to support an inquiry into the perceptions and status of vocational education and training and the impact these have on the perception of VET held by school students and school practitioners.

Additionally, ISQ made its own submission to Parliament, with the support of a number of its regional schools, to support the inquiry into the delivery of VET in regional, rural and remote Queensland. ISQ is now a member of the Regional Schools Industry Partnership (RSIP) state reference group and provides input to highlight and support its regional schools across the state.

### NAPLAN ONLINE

ISQ Schools remained ready and confident regarding their participation in NAPLAN Online in 2023, with 80% of participating schools rating ISQ's NAPLAN support as good or excellent.

### EDUCATIONAL DATA

Through ISQ's Teaching & Learning offerings, member schools were supported to improve data literacy, data processes, and data use to increase student outcomes. Eighty percent of participating schools rated ISQ's professional learning support regarding educational data as good or excellent.

## STUDENT SERVICES AND SUPPORTING WELLBEING IN SCHOOLS

ISQ delivered a range of services to assist schools in supporting students with additional learning needs and enhancing wellbeing through a whole school approach.

More than 560 school staff from 143 member schools registered to participate in face-to-face or online professional learning to support students with additional learning needs, including those with a disability. This includes staff from 48 member schools participating in cross-sector moderation events. These events included moderation for the Australian Government's Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with Disability (NCCD), leadership in learning support, writing personalised plans, and supporting student behaviour. Almost 5,000 school staff completed at least one disability-related Connect&Learn module including more than 4,500 Disability Standards for Education course completions.

ISQ provided \$16.02million in EAP funding to schools in 2023 where students met the criteria in one or more of seven specific disability categories. Funding was provided to 2,949.2 student FTE in 190 schools in Semester 1 and 2,815.9 student FTE in 189 schools was funded in Semester 2. The EAP funding model ceased at the conclusion of 2023, with 2024 being the transition year to an NCCD-informed funding model.

Professional learning was offered to schools to support staff and student wellbeing including a workshop supporting school leaders with staff wellbeing and a regional student wellbeing forum. ISQ partnered with clinical staff from Ed-LinQ (Queensland Department of Health), Be You and the eSafety Commission to conduct the student wellbeing forum in six locations across Queensland, attended by approximately 182 independent school staff. This forum linked schools with their regional Ed-LinQ and Be You consultants and covered topics on school engagement and school refusal, student wellbeing and resources to support a whole school approach as well as services offered by the eSafety commission to support online safety. ISQ provided Commonwealth National Student Wellbeing Program funding to 85 schools and State Government Student Wellbeing Officer Program funding to 20 member schools to provide pastoral care for students.





## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION

More than 6,000 First Nations students were enrolled in 215 member schools in 2023. In 12 of these schools, the majority of students were of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage.

In 2023, ISQ supported the 31 member school sites providing Indigenous boarding to over 790 First Nations students from regional, remote and very remote communities attending from Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia, New South Wales and the Torres Strait Islands.

Throughout the year, ISQ provided continued support to schools to implement the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy (NATSIES) which aims to:

- support the cultural identity and improved learning outcomes of Indigenous students
- advance teacher professional learning and development across a range of Indigenous education targets
- improve teacher confidence and ability to respond to First Nations students' learning needs
- improve workforce development, especially increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff accessing professional learning.

More than 450 school staff participated in ISQ Indigenous education face-to-face and online professional learning events to support quality teaching and learning. These events included:

- Embedding Indigenous Perspectives in Curriculum Planning Workshop
- Indigenous Bandscales Two-Day Intensive Training and Moderation Day
- Indigenous English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) Webinar
- Indigenous Middle Leaders Mentoring Day
- Indigenous Education Online Boarding Forum

- support events for Principals of schools with large enrolments of First Nations' students
- online learning modules
- targeted whole-of-school on-campus professional learning events.

The ISQ Indigenous Middle Leaders Mentoring annual event aims to provide a tailored professional growth and development opportunity specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander middle leader needs. In 2023, a group of seven First Nations staff from across member schools, were guided by experienced and respected leadership consultants through a day of mentoring.

Since the inception of the Indigenous Middle Leaders Mentoring program, many of the participating middle leaders have stepped into more senior leadership roles such as Deputy Principals, Heads of Primary and Early Years, Curriculum Coordinators, Heads of Indigenous Education and Department Heads. Participating schools in 2023 included The Murri School, Annandale Christian College, The Lakes College, Carinity Education (Shalom), Djarragun College and Tambourine Mountain College.

In 2023, ISQ staff participated in cultural awareness activities during Reconciliation and NAIDOC Weeks to continue improving the cultural competency of the organisation. Additionally, a voluntary team of 13 office staff commenced the development of ISQ's corporate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Working with community elder educators, Reconciliation Australia, and a diverse team of office staff, the process has brought into focus the importance of developing more authentic relationships with First Nations Peoples and stakeholders, and the importance of growing an improved culturally safe work environment.

**IMAGE:** ISQ Indigenous Middle Leaders Mentoring Group pictured with singer/songwriter Waveney Yasso (third from left) and Director of Indigenous Education, Anglican Schools Commission of Southern Queensland Paul Paulson (third from right)

## PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY IN TEACHING

ISQ continues to support the development of teachers across the four career stages, from graduate to lead teachers with expanded professional development offerings that are informed by, and give opportunity for participants to demonstrate, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST). Online and face-to-face learning was available across topics including understanding the APST (from provisional to full registration portfolio building), coaching, formative assessment, early years literacy, educators as researchers and support for emerging and middle leaders as well as support for regional and remote schools through the workforce solutions network.

## COACHING PROGRAM

ISQ ran the Empowering Classroom Teachers program which focused on developing the key skills of coaching and mentoring as well as successfully implementing classroom observations relevant to the various contexts of member schools. ISQ welcomed 20 participants across five schools to the program, who learned how to apply knowledge through practical coaching models and techniques in a range of group and one-to-one conversational contexts across the ISQ coaching cohort, as well as within their school. To cater to the diverse contexts of our schools as well as the growing demand for coaching and mentoring, this program is now a consultancy service and delivered in partnership with Growth Coaching International.

## SCHOOL TRANSPORT

The Non-State Schools Transport Assistance Scheme (NSSTAS) provides financial transport assistance to eligible students attending non-state schools. The scheme is a joint initiative of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and ISQ. QCEC administers the scheme which includes two programs (Bus Fare Assistance Program and Students with Disability) on behalf of all non-state schools in Queensland. In 2023, 8,186 student applications in 258 school communities were funded by the scheme with almost all eligible applications paid within one week of the semester close. In 2023, more than \$7.9 million in funding was provided by the Queensland Government through the Department of Education to support eligible families. Advocacy continues to promote a just outcome in funding for NSSTAS's students with disability who are transitioning to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and continuity of support under NSSTAS for students with disability who are ineligible for NDIS support.



**The lesson observation workshop was outstanding – it provided us with an evidence-based framework to implement a teacher-led improvement process. It is so exciting to see it in action.”**

**EMPOWERING CLASSROOM TEACHERS PARTICIPANT**

**Our beginning teachers were supported through ISQ training to complete their provisional to full registration – the quality of the portfolio and support the school received has been invaluable.”**

**BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT PARTICIPANT**



## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

In 2023, 116 member schools offered 135 early childhood services, incorporating approved sessional and long day care kindergarten models. ISQ supported member schools to meet state and federal early childhood education and care (ECEC) regulatory requirements, advocated via state working groups and committees, and provided targeted support to the 40 members of the ISQ Central Governing Body for Kindergartens.

In 2023, approximately \$11.5 million in Queensland Government kindergarten funding was administered by ISQ incorporating Queensland Kindergarten Funding (QKF), Kindergarten Inclusion Support Scheme (KISS), Kindy Uplift and two targeted programs. The Kindergarten Funding scheme introduced in 2023 included Kindy Affordability Subsidies to reduce families' out of pocket costs for kindergarten. ISQ supported the implementation of this new funding model by developing a portal for the reporting of individual child enrolments securely to the Department of Education.

The Kindy Uplift Program was expanded to include further kindergarten services in the second year of the pilot program. The funding program is designed to enhance the capability of kindergarten educators to support children's learning and development outcomes, with a focus on the five priority areas of social and emotional capability, physicality, thinking and responding, oral language and communication, and access and inclusion. ISQ provided Kindy Uplift Advisory Support to the 43, member school kindergartens, on both sessional and long day care services, participating in the program.

During 2023, the State Government announced further changes to Queensland kindergarten funding to take effect on 1 January 2024. ISQ worked closely with the Department of Education to understand the impact of the transition to another new scheme, held information sessions for members, and worked closely with services to opt in to the funding model. The ISQ kindy funding portal was upgraded to meet the requirements of the new scheme.

ISQ met regularly with ISA and ECEC representatives from state independent school associations to ensure ECEC services in the independent sector were advocated for on a national level. State representation included the Regulatory Advisory Committee, ECEC Stakeholder Group, Minister's Early Years Forum and Assistant Ministerial OSHC Working Group.



## SUPPORTING GROWTH, PROMOTING EXCELLENCE

ISQ continues to support the development of teachers across the four career stages, from graduate to lead teachers with expanded professional development offerings that are informed by, and give opportunity for participants to demonstrate, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST). Online and face-to-face learning was available across topics including understanding the APST (from provisional to full registration portfolio building), coaching, research in schools, support for emerging and middle leaders as well as support for regional and remote schools through the workforce solutions network.

## HIGHLY ACCOMPLISHED AND LEAD TEACHERS PROGRAM

Throughout 2023, ISQ continued to build upon its success as the first Queensland-based certifying authority of HALT. Concluding the sixth full year, ISQ progressed 38 teachers through some or all stages, with 33 HALTs including 21 Highly Accomplished and 12 Lead Teachers completing certification. ISQ renewed after the 5-year period of certification a total 9 HALTs including 6 Highly Accomplished and 3 Lead teachers. The National Framework for Certification was released by the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership in August. This revised framework allows certifying authorities to streamline the process of certification to allow more teachers to undertake the process and be recognised for their excellence in the classroom.

IMAGE: John Paul College



## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS PARTNERING WITH TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

In 2023, ISQ continued to provide high-quality leadership development and support through a suite of leadership development programs, with:

- 11 schools with more than 70 participants engaged in the Emerging Leaders Program, including a senior leader and educators from a range of career stages. The Program allowed participants to align their leadership with the school's strategic plan to develop their capacity to undertake future leadership opportunities. This Program included exploring how participants enact their unique strengths and leadership capabilities to lead school projects to improve student outcomes as well as ensuring continuity and the strengthening of the school's leadership culture.
- 100% of participants in the New Principals Program (16 participants) reported the program had improved their leadership skills
- 100% of participants in the Aspiring Principals Program (19 participants) reported the program was excellent and had increased their leadership capacity.

In 2023, ISQ was proud to continue working with a range of tertiary institutions including Griffith University, University of Sunshine Coast, Central Queensland University, and Queensland University of Technology. ISQ presented to final year education graduates about the benefits of working in the independent school sector. ISQ was represented on the Department of Education (DoE) Queensland Council of Deans of Education which has representation from most Queensland tertiary institutions. This group met quarterly to discuss the ways in which schools, sectors and universities can ensure ongoing preparation and supply of teachers across the sector.

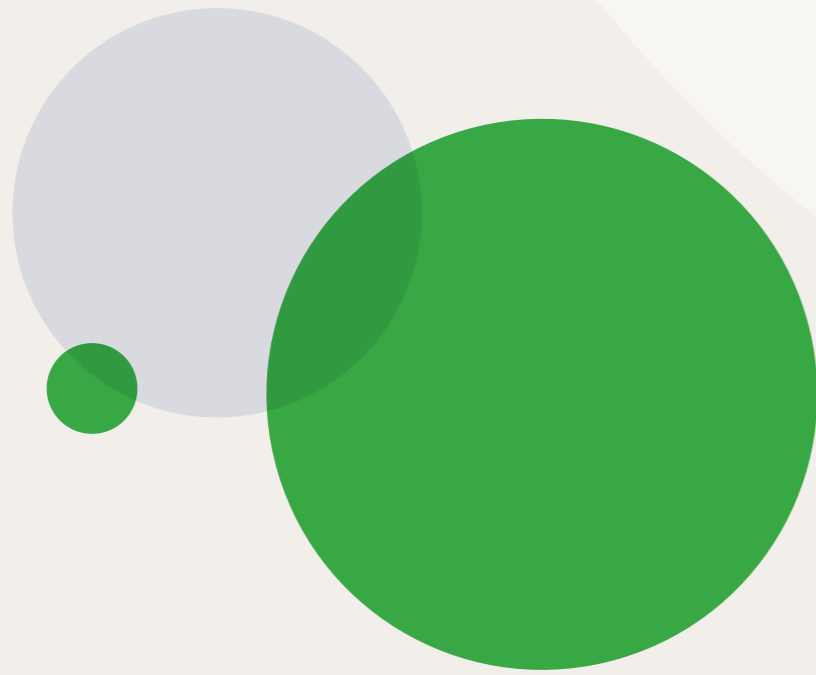
- Professor Peter Grootenboer for the Middle Leaders Program
- Emeritus Professor Peter Sullivan from Monash University for the Numeracy Program.

ISQ proudly partnered with Queensland universities for the benefit of the sector, including in:

- induction of first-year education students
- support for graduate teachers in the transition to schools
- enhanced approaches to preservice teachers' placements in independent schools
- collaborative efforts to find solutions to sector-wide workforce challenges
- supporting middle leaders.

IMAGE: 2023 HALT Graduation recipients with ISQ CEO Chris Mountford





# 05.

## EMBRACE GROWTH, AGILITY AND INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES



IMAGE: 2023 EPIC Masterclass 1

### GUIDING SCHOOLS IN EFFECTIVE PARENT ENGAGEMENT

The 'how to' of engaging parents in their child's education was significantly advanced by ISQ's innovative research project with independent schools which continued throughout 2023.

Engaging Parents in Curriculum (EPIC) – a longitudinal collaboration between ISQ, Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network and Griffith University – saw researchers work alongside independent school teachers and leaders as they honed their parent engagement practices.

2023 was the third and final year of EPIC and scaled up to include ten schools (up from three in 2022), with 50+ participants, including parent representatives from every school team.

EPIC 2023's goal was to help teams of people at each school (school leaders, year level leaders, teachers and parents) work together to build sustainable practices of parent engagement while they worked on a self-identified parent engagement 'project' or 'goal'.

Detailed case studies on the eight schools, which featured the voices of school leaders and teachers, were featured in the final report released in December 2023 titled Engaging parents and communities in children's learning and wellbeing: Exploring sustainable models through school leadership teams.

The findings have also been distilled into a suite of professional development videos and snapshot documents which are available to all ISQ member schools to support them to effectively engage parents.

In late 2023, ISQ also launched its new parent engagement offering Mastering Parent Engagement, a year long scaffolded program for ISQ member schools that draws on national and international research and demystifies parent engagement for busy school leaders.

### INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

While 2023 marked a new COVID-normal landscape, the international education school sector in Australia was still in recovery mode. There was an even greater focus on diversifying student recruitment efforts, with schools increasingly exploring emerging markets and implementing innovative strategies to attract international students. Through strategic partnerships and innovative industry collaborations, ISQ continued to provide opportunities for member schools as they expanded the delivery of their international education programs. Additionally, regulatory compliance remained a priority for the sector and ISQ was instrumental in facilitating engaging professional development sessions that focussed on legislative rigour, quality and integrity, knowledge-sharing, and best practices in the delivery of international education in member schools. Overall, 2023 saw Queensland independent schools demonstrate resilience and adaptability in their efforts to provide high-quality international education opportunities.

Advocacy for offshore curriculum licensing for the independent school sector remained one of the key priorities for ISQ in 2023 and it continued to hold meaningful discussions at state and commonwealth levels to ensure intent and engagement remained current and relevant. To strengthen advocacy, International Education was also featured at the ISQ State Forum.

ISQ collaborated with Study Queensland and Trade and Investment Queensland (TIQ) to launch two virtual showcases that provided a platform for 11 member schools to promote their schools and connect with 14 TIQ Business Development Managers from key source countries of Japan, South Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Middle East, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Latin America (Brazil, Chile, and Colombia).

As a key industry partner, ISQ also collaborated with Study Queensland in two International Education and Training TIQ Minister's Forums held in Toowoomba and Brisbane through panel discussions and supporting member schools in roundtable discussions with the Minister and other industry representatives.

The Queensland School Sector Working Group, comprising ISQ, QCEC, and EQI, continued its troubleshooting with the Designated State Authority and the Education Visa Consultative Committee on issues impacting international students. The Working Group also delivered the annual School Advisors' Workshop focussing on changes and implications for Queensland schools in the new COVID-normal climate as they prepared international students for tertiary education. A key theme for the workshop was student voice and a panel of university students were invited to share their perspectives and experiences on transitioning from high school to tertiary education.

To support the delivery of the Australian Strategy for International Education 2021-2030, ISQ participated in two key stakeholder consultations:

1. Review of the ESOS Act 2000 and the National Code 2018 at the State level (carried over from 2022), and
2. Review of the Migration Strategy at both State and Commonwealth levels around the genuine student requirements and visa application processes for the school sector.

There were 85 CRICOS registered member school campuses (75 registrations in total) that remained committed to delivering international education. ISQ delivered six International Education Professional Development days, including a CRICOS workshop for School Principals.

ISQ continued its commitment to fostering international education within the independent school sector. By proactively supporting member schools to connect with emerging and non-frequented markets for student recruitment, maintain regulatory compliance, facilitate purposeful engagement with key stakeholders in the global education industry, and advocate for the interests of the Queensland school sector as a whole at all levels of government.



## SCHOOL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

The ISQ School Governance Course continued to be delivered throughout 2023, with participants evaluating it with a Net Promoter Score of 84 (exceptional) for the 48 modules delivered during the year. A masterclass and podcast focused on the specific skillset boards should develop when they decide to invest in giving programs and structures.

Further events delivered through the Governance Program included a Strategy Masterclass with Prof Michael Rosemann about 'The New Learning Economy', several boardroom lunches, and two events coordinated in partnership with the national 'Chair Connect' initiative, bringing together chairs of independent school boards across the country.

A total of 15 schools requested ISQ facilitate board or operational reviews, new strategic plans, and principal performance reviews in 2023. In addition, ISQ was a trusted advisor to board chairs and directors on confidential board matters.

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND COMPLIANCE

ISQ continues to support school leaders in navigating the complex landscape of employee relations. As well as assisting numerous member schools with the negotiation and settlement of their enterprise agreements, ISQ assisted school leaders with over 1,350 employee relations matters including the impacts of the significant changes to Federal workplace relations laws.

The ISQ Employee Relations team delivered numerous information sessions to schools in relation to these new laws and emerging industrial trends impacting the sector. New Employee Relations resources and guidance materials were developed in relation to the changes to enterprise bargaining, use of fixed term contracts, request for flexible work arrangements and unpaid parental leave provisions of the National Employment Standards.

ISQ continued collaboration with interstate counterparts and Queensland Catholic employers in relation to changes to federal laws and emerging industrial trends, advocating the interests of Queensland independent schools.

## BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

The Business Managers Program is designed to deliver exceptional services to members through regular communication and opportunities to learn. The 2023 program comprised eight School Operations Focus Area Updates, five individual business manager inductions and a mix of face-to-face and online training sessions. There were four professional development events held throughout the year. The first delivered a comprehensive overview of the sector to 13 new business managers. Three further sessions provided training in contemporary issues essential for business managers to stay up to date with the latest developments, techniques and best practice, with each session attracting between 36 and 57 participants.

In response to the positive feedback, the bespoke webinar series, starting in 2022 with the topic of financial fraud in schools, was expanded in 2023 to four modules. This provided business managers and other members of the senior leadership team with the opportunity to acquire new knowledge and skills, empowering them to enhance their professional expertise. In 2023, the webinar *Risk, WHS, and Duty of Care* was attended by over 70 participants. *WHS: Psychosocial Risk* was attended by 40 participants, and *Complaints, Whistleblower, and School Investigations* was attended by 17 participants. In the second year of offering, *Financial Fraud in Schools* was attended by over 20 participants. The series has been renamed for delivery in 2024, as the School Management Modules and four additional modules are planned, with a total of eight webinars to be offered throughout 2024.

In the past, the management of risk and compliance has typically been entrusted to the business manager. With ever-increasing demands on independent schools to attend to risk and compliance, there is a growing trend in schools to establish a specialised risk and/or compliance position to support the business manager. To support this change, in 2023 ISQ established a Compliance and Risk Manager Network (CARMN), with over 50 members, attending two meetings. The 2024 CARMN engagement plan aims to increase membership through a series of quarterly meetings, including an inaugural networking event in Term 2.

### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND EVENTS

**35,115**  
ISQ Connect&Learn  
online logins

**61**  
face-to-face events  
at ISQ Professional  
Learning Centre

**64**  
events held  
regionally and  
externally

**121**  
live webinars  
hosted with  
2,570 participants

**220+**  
attendees at the  
biennial State Forum,  
AGM and Gala Dinner

IMAGES: assorted images from the ISQ State Forum event



### ISQ STATE FORUM proudly independent, collectively strong

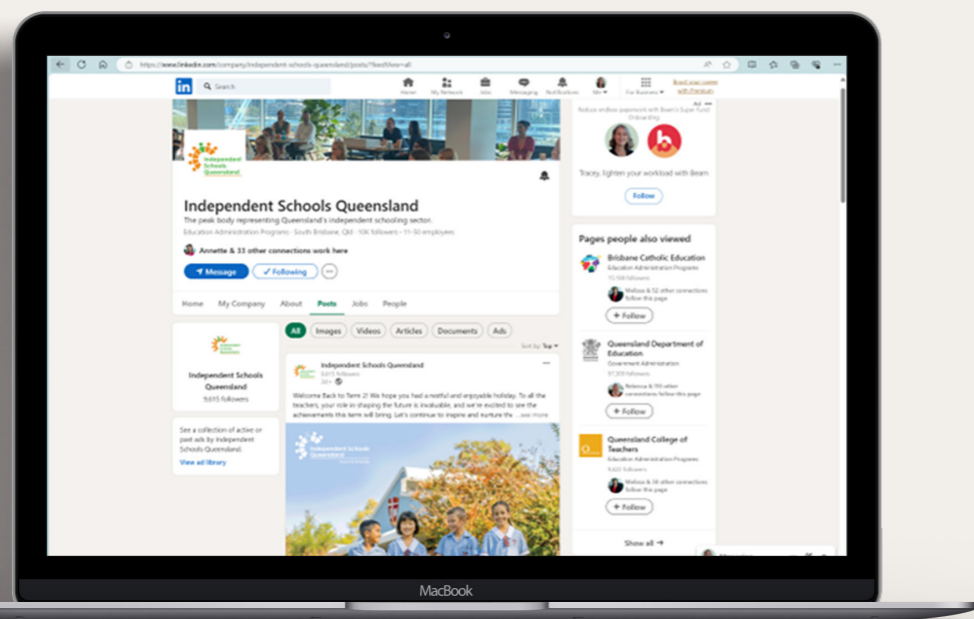
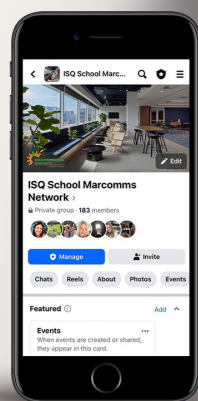
The biennial ISQ State Forum was held at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre in June 2023. The theme, Proudly Independent; Collectively Strong, demonstrated that the very nature of being independent is what brings our sector's schools together, as we celebrate our shared values, our autonomy, and we face challenges and opportunities collectively.

Hosted by 612 ABC Radio Brisbane's breakfast presenter Loretta Ryan, the incredible speaker line-up included Kurt Fearnley AO, Andrew Fuller, Belinda Allen, Mark McCrindle and Matt Carroll AM. The two panel discussions addressed Changes and Challenges, and the importance of International Education.



# 06.

## ENGAGE AND COMMUNICATE WITH MEMBERS



IMAGES: (L-R) ISQ School Marcomms Network Facebook Group, ISQ LinkedIn page



### ENHANCING SCHOOL MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION EXPERTISE

The approach to marketing and communications in Queensland's independent schools varies, with some schools employing dedicated professionals for these roles, while others rely on existing staff to handle them alongside their primary responsibilities.

Throughout 2023, ISQ supported independent schools to serve their communities by working to enhance school marketing and communications capacity. These offerings included:

- tailored one-on-one media and communications support
- support with marketing and media issues management
- developing positive media profiles for schools

- highlighting school staff and student achievements in traditional and social media
- managing an online marketing and communications network
- providing practical media training to school leaders.

ISQ continued to deliver exceptional member services through hosting events such as the Schools Marketing and Communications Forum, media training events and providing training on emergency management communications and media issues management at the New Business Managers Forum and the New Principals Program. The 2023 Marcomms Forum held at St Aidan's College was fully subscribed, with 54 attendees from member schools. ISQ maintained regular communication with members through Marketing and Communications Focus Area Updates and the ISQ Marcomms Facebook group.

### EYES ON SOCIAL

**9,230**  
LinkedIn followers

**173**  
LinkedIn posts

**3,110**  
X (Twitter) followers

**148**  
Tweets/retweets

**1,150**  
Facebook followers

**168**  
Facebook posts

IMAGES: Schools Marketing and Communications Forum, St Aidan's College



# 07.

## PROVIDE A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

### CHOSEN CHARITY

ISQ is an organisation built on community, and our people are purpose-driven. The ISQ team recognise that to truly support the education of children, they must also support the broader community.

Since 2002, ISQ has chosen a community charity to support each year. Each of these charities has an education or child focus that is aimed at enhancing the community's ability to provide children with a safe place to learn and grow.

In 2023, through staff-led morning teas, raffles, and other various fundraising activities, ISQ staff raised \$2,595 to the Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF).

The ILF was founded by Suzy Wilson, a former teacher and education consultant who owns Riverbend Books. The ILF is a not-for-profit charity which respects the unique place of Australia's First People and draws on the expertise of the Australian book industry. The foundation's purpose is to invest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander remote Communities to provide the tools and resources they request to shape the direction of their children's literacy future.

### COMMITTED TO SUSTAINABILITY

ISQ continues to support a commitment to reduce its impact on the environment and to adopt practices that use resources sustainably. Numerous initiatives have been implemented to improve ISQ's environmental impacts both at ISQ's Head Office and the Professional Learning Centre. ISQ continues to investigate and implement options to reduce its carbon footprint at both premises by working with our suppliers to ensure products are sustainably resourced and have minimal environmental impact, and by making choices to avoid unnecessary consumption or demand for all consumables.

IMAGES: (clockwise from top) Gulf Christian College, Caboolture Montessori School, Hymba Yumba







as at  
31 December  
2023

ISQ STAFF  
IN 2023

46  
total staff

## Independent Schools Queensland

### Executive

**Christopher Mountford**  
Chief Executive Officer/Company Secretary  
**Stuart McDowall**  
Chief Operating Officer  
**Mark Newham**  
Education & School Services Director

### Organisation Services

**Annette Butterworth**  
Executive Assistant  
**Gina Dunstone**  
Receptionist  
**Callum Bentley**  
Advocacy & Public Relations Manager

### Education and School Services

#### SCHOOL SERVICES

**Johannes Solymosi**  
School Services Deputy Director  
**Rebecca McKinnon**  
School Services Manager  
**Angelin Achari**  
School Services Advisor  
**Kate Crowe**  
School Services Advisor  
**Courtney Downward**  
School Services Advisor  
**Jane Simmonds**  
School Services Advisor

#### EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

**Peter Ruffini**  
Employee Relations Assistant Director  
**Melissa Villalobos**  
Employee Relations Senior Advisor  
**Bonnie Bradford**  
Senior Employee Relations Advisor  
(maternity leave)  
**Whitney Darke**  
Acting Senior Employee Relations Advisor

### EDUCATION SERVICES

**Anjulee Singh**  
Education Services Deputy Director  
**Louise Brauer**  
Education Services Manager  
**Edwin Choi**  
Education Services Advisor  
**RoseMarie Koppe**  
First Nations Education Services Advisor  
**Melanie Alexander**  
Vocational Education Services Advisor  
**Natasha Mayne**  
Manager (TeachWell Workforce  
Innovation Project)  
**Loree Wilkinson**  
Project Support Officer  
(TeachWell Workforce Innovation Project)  
**Angela Lovejoy**  
Executive Leadership Project Coordinator  
**Taylor Pampling**  
Education and School Services  
Administration Officer

### STUDENT SERVICES

**Karen Roman**  
Student Services Manager  
**Hayley McDonald**  
Student Services Advisor  
**Anne Wachtel**  
Student Services Advisor  
**Sarah Coomb**  
Psychologist  
**Tess Verner**  
Student Services Project Coordinator

### Operations

#### ELEARNING AND ICT

**Julian Davis**  
eLearning and ICT Support Manager  
**Glenn Hammond**  
eLearning Specialist  
**Kyle Raby**  
System Administrator  
**Shaun Chen**  
ICT Helpdesk Officer

#### FUNDING

**Len McCarthy**  
Data Analytics and Schools Funding Manager  
**Rishitha Asam**  
Data Analyst

#### COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS

**Smaro Exelby**  
Commercial Director  
**Beth Kitson**  
Communications Manager  
**Tracey Maree**  
Graphic Designer  
**Jeff Licence**  
Multimedia Officer  
**Jenna Harp**  
Venue and Programs Coordinator

#### FINANCE

**Stan Lysuik**  
Senior Accountant  
**Kendry Corcut**  
Finance Officer

#### HR

**Rachel Wolfson**  
HR Business Partner

### Queensland Independent Schools Block Grant Authority

**Gary Adsett**  
General Manager/Company Secretary  
**Kylie Burnett**  
Executive Officer  
**Rod Morris**  
Executive Officer  
**Maria Brookes**  
Financial Officer  
**Shannon Service**  
Senior Administration Officer  
**Hayley Hunter**  
Administration Assistant

### Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network

**Amanda Watt**  
Executive Director  
**Jacky Dawson**  
Parent Engagement Project Manager

### Retirements

**ISQ**  
**Kym Ayling**  
School Services Advisor  
3 years





# Member Schools



as at  
31 December  
2023



- A B Paterson College
- Aboriginal & Islander Independent Community School
- All Saints Anglican School
- All Souls St Gabriels School
- Alta-1 College
- Angelorum College
- Anglican Church Grammar School
- Annandale Christian College
- Arcadia College
- Arethusa College (Deception Bay)
- Australian Christian College - Moreton
- Australian Industry Trade College - Brisbane
- Australian Industry Trade College - Ipswich
- Australian Industry Trade College - Maroochydore
- Australian Industry Trade College - Redlands
- Australian Industry Trade College - Robina
- Australian Industry Trade College - Toowoomba
- Australian Industry Trade College All Campuses
- Australian International Islamic College
- Australian Technology and Agricultural College
- Australian Trade College North Brisbane
- Autism Queensland Education & Therapy Centre
- Bayside Christian College Hervey Bay
- Bethania Lutheran Primary School
- Bethany Lutheran Primary School
- Birali Steiner School
- Blackall Range Independent School
- Blackheath and Thornburgh College
- Border Rivers Christian College
- Brisbane Adventist College
- Brisbane Boys' College
- Brisbane Christian College
- Brisbane Girls Grammar School
- Brisbane Grammar School
- Brisbane Independent School
- Brisbane Montessori School
- Bundaberg Christian College
- Burdekin Christian College
- Burnett Youth Learning Centre
- Caboolture Montessori School
- Cairns Adventist College
- Cairns Hinterland Steiner School
- Caloundra Christian College
- Caloundra City Private School
- Calvary Christian College
- Calvary Christian College (Townsville)
- Cannon Hill Anglican College
- Canterbury College
- Carbrook Animal Assisted Learning Centre
- Carinity Education - Glendyne
- Carinity Education - Rockhampton
- Carinity Education - Shalom
- Carinity Education - Southside
- Carlisle Adventist College
- Carmichael College
- Challenge Trade and Business College\*
- Chinchilla Christian College
- Citipointe Christian College
- Clayfield College
- Clearview Christian College\*
- Compass Independent School\*
- Concordia Lutheran College
- Cooloola Christian College
- Coolum Beach Christian College
- Coomera Anglican College
- Dalby Christian College
- Darling Downs Adventist College
- Darlingia Forest School
- Discovery Christian College
- Djarragun College
- Eaton College\*
- Emerald Christian College
- Emmanuel College
- Endeavour Christian College
- Enkindle Village School
- Fairholme College
- Faith Baptist Christian School
- Faith Christian School of Distance Education (Daisy Hill)
- Faith Lutheran College - Plainland
- Faith Lutheran College - Redlands
- Fraser Coast Anglican College
- Freshwater Christian College
- Genesis Christian College
- Glasshouse Christian College
- Glenvale Christian School
- Gold Coast Christian College
- Good News Lutheran School
- Good Shepherd Christian School
- Good Shepherd Lutheran College
- Goora Gan Steiner School (Surf Club Avenue)
- Grace Lutheran College
- Grace Lutheran Primary School

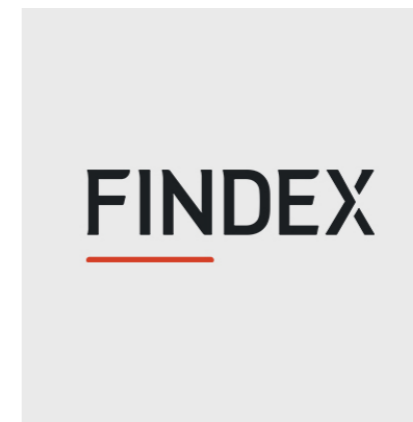
IMAGES: (clockwise from top)  
SCOTS PGC, Concordia Lutheran  
College, St Margaret's Anglican  
Girls School



# Alliance Partners

Independent Schools Queensland aligns itself with other organisations which are also determined to make a difference.

ISQ's Alliance Partnerships are built on trust, commitment and responsibility. They are partners with principle.



Groves Christian College  
 Gulf Christian College  
 Heights College  
 Highlands Christian College (Toowoomba Campus)  
 Hillbrook Anglican School  
 Hillcrest Christian College  
 Hills International College  
 Hinchinbrook Christian School  
 Hope Adventist School  
 Horizons College of Learning and Enrichment  
 Hubbard's School  
 Humanitas High School  
 Hymba Yumba Independent School  
 IES College  
 Immanuel Lutheran College  
 Indie School, Logan  
 Iona College\*  
 Ipswich Adventist School  
 Ipswich Girls' Grammar School including Ipswich Junior Grammar School  
 Ipswich Grammar School  
 Islamic College of Brisbane  
 Jabiru Community College  
 John Paul College  
 Josiah College  
 Jubilee Christian College  
 Kairos Community College  
 Kimberley College  
 King's Christian College  
 Kingsley College  
 Kluthuthu Christian College\*  
 Kutta Mulla Gorinna Special Assistance School  
 Lighthouse Christian School  
 Living Faith Lutheran Primary School  
 Livingstone Christian College  
 Lourdes Hill College  
 Lutheran Ormeau Rivers District School  
 Mackay Christian College  
 Mancel College  
 Maridahdi Early Childhood Community School  
 Marist College Ashgrove  
 Mastery Schools Australia (Springfield)  
 Matthew Flinders Anglican College  
 Mawarra Independent School  
 Men of Business Academy  
 Ming-De International School Toowoomba  
 Montessori International College  
 Montessori Noosa

Moreton Bay Boys' College  
 Moreton Bay College  
 Mueller College  
 Mungalla Silver Lining School  
 Music Industry College  
 My Independent School  
 Nambour Christian College  
 Noosa Christian College  
 Noosa Pengari Steiner School  
 Northpine Christian College  
 Northside Christian College  
 Ohana College  
 OneSchool Global QLD  
 Ontrack College Emerald  
 Ormiston College  
 Pacific Lutheran College  
 Parklands Christian College  
 Peace Lutheran College  
 Peace Lutheran Primary School  
 Peregrine Beach College  
 Pinnacle Academic College\*  
 Prince of Peace Lutheran College  
 Radiant Life College  
 Redeemer Lutheran College  
 Redeemer Lutheran College, Biloela  
 Redlands College  
 Rivermount College  
 Riverside Adventist School  
 Riverside Christian College  
 Rockhampton Girls Grammar School  
 Saint Stephen's College  
 Samford Valley Steiner School  
 Sheldon College  
 Silkwood School  
 Silver Lining School - Ficks Crossing  
 Sinai College  
 Somerset College  
 Somerville House  
 South East Brisbane Steiner School\*  
 St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School  
 St Andrew's Anglican College  
 St Andrews Lutheran College  
 St Hilda's School  
 St James Lutheran College  
 St John's Anglican College  
 St John's Lutheran Primary School  
 St John's Lutheran School  
 St Luke's Anglican School  
 St Margaret's Anglican Girls School  
 St Michael's College  
 St Patrick's College Townsville

St Paul's Lutheran Primary School  
 St Paul's School  
 St Peters Lutheran College - Indooroopilly  
 St Peters Lutheran College - Springfield  
 St Philomena School  
 Staines Memorial College  
 Stuartholme School  
 Suncoast Christian College  
 Sunshine Coast Grammar School  
 Tamborine Mountain College  
 Tec-NQ  
 The BUSY School (Cairns)  
 The Cathedral School of St Anne and St James  
 The Glennie School  
 The Kooralbyn International School  
 The Lakes College  
 The Rainforest School  
 The River School  
 The Rockhampton Grammar School  
 The School of Total Education  
 The SCOTS PGC College  
 The Southport School  
 The Springfield Anglican College  
 The Sycamore School  
 The Village School Gold Coast  
 Toogoolawa School  
 Toowoomba Anglican School  
 Toowoomba Christian College  
 Toowoomba Grammar School  
 Townsville Christian College  
 Townsville Grammar School  
 Trinity Anglican School  
 Trinity College (Gladstone)  
 Trinity Lutheran College  
 Victory College  
 Wadja Wadja High School  
 Warwick Christian College (incl. SDFLH)  
 West Moreton Anglican College  
 Westside Christian College  
 Whitsunday Anglican School  
 Whitsunday Christian College  
 Wisdom College  
 Y Schools Queensland - Brisbane South, Acacia Ridge  
 Y Schools Queensland - Logan, Kingston  
 Y Schools Queensland - Moreton Bay, North Lakes  
 Y Schools Queensland, Ipswich  
 Yarranlea Primary School  
 YOS Lawnton



**Independent Schools Queensland**  
Level 7, 189 Grey Street, South Brisbane Q 4101  
P (07) 3228 1515 E office@isq.qld.edu.au

[www.isq.qld.edu.au](http://www.isq.qld.edu.au)

COVER IMAGE:  
Kimberley College

