



**Independent Schools  
Queensland**

choice & diversity

# Annual Report **2025**



## 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: Noosa Christian College



# Annual Report 2025

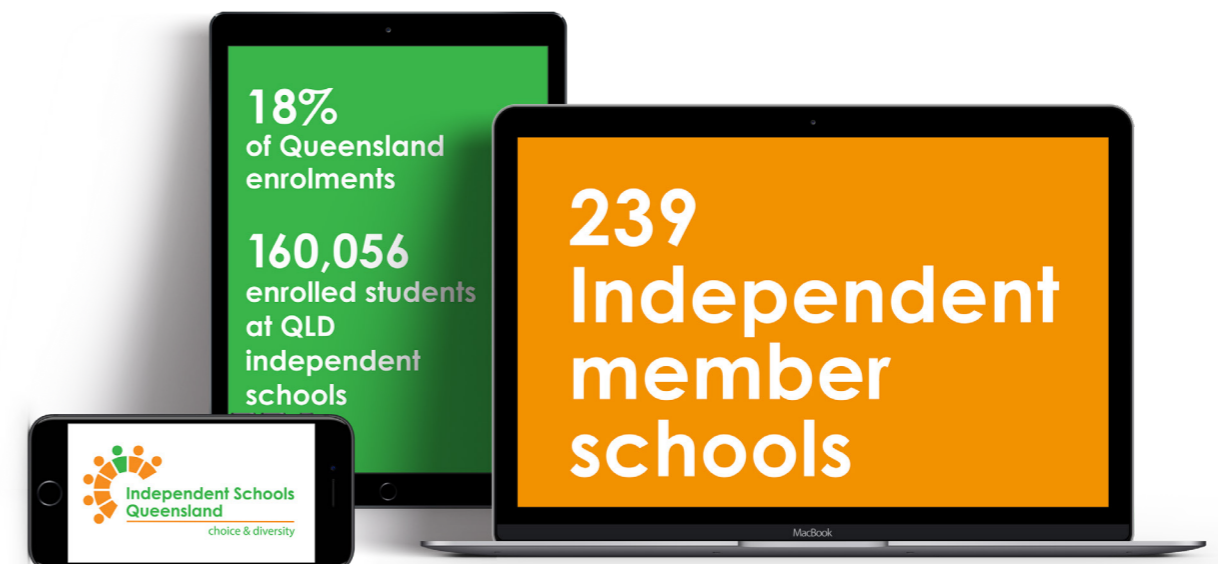
Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) is the peak state body for the independent schools sector. We represent the interests of member schools, fostering choice and diversity in education and protecting the autonomy of independent schools.

## 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

245	member schools
	239 independent schools
	6 Catholic schools
160,056	independent school students
5	special schools
30	special assistance schools

## INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

156	combined primary & secondary schools
31	primary only schools
52	secondary only schools
221	co-educational schools
9	girls only schools
9	boys only schools

Independent Schools in **37** Local Government Areas



30 SPECIAL ASSISTANCE SCHOOLS CATERING FOR 8,972 DISENGAGED STUDENTS



219 SCHOOLS EDUCATING 7,742 INDIGENOUS STUDENTS AND 15 MAJORITY INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS



75 SCHOOLS EDUCATING 1,648 FULL FEE PAYING OVERSEAS STUDENTS



191 INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OFFERING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING



118 MEMBER SCHOOLS OFFERING 130 EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES



32 SCHOOLS PROVIDING BOARDING



SCHOOL IMAGES FROM LEFT

1. Mastery Schools Australia 2. Hymba Yumba 3. Anglican Church Grammar School (page 2); 4. The Industry School 5. The Cathedral School of St Anne and St James 6. Ipswich Grammar School (page 3)



# Chair Report



**As Chair, I am proud of the way ISQ has remained focused on its core purpose throughout 2025.**

Independent Schools Queensland enters 2026 from a position of strength, underpinned by sustained confidence in Queensland's independent school sector and the continued relevance of choice and diversity within the state's education system. During 2025, independent schools educated 160,056 students, representing 18 percent of total school enrolments across Queensland. This growth reflects long-term trust from families and communities, in the contribution independent schools make to educational outcomes and social cohesion.

## The Board's Role in a Complex Environment

While enrolment growth remains a positive indicator, the Board is acutely aware that 2025 was characterised by heightened complexity for schools. Funding reform, regulatory requirements, workforce pressures and broader economic conditions have required careful navigation. In this context, the Board's role has been to ensure ISQ remains strategically focused, financially sound and well governed, while continuing to advocate strongly for the interests of member schools.

Throughout the year, the Board maintained a strong focus on organisational oversight, risk management and long term sustainability. This included monitoring the effectiveness of ISQ's advocacy positions, ensuring resources were directed to areas of greatest member need, and supporting investments that strengthen the organisation's capacity to serve schools into the future.

## Leadership and Governance

I acknowledge the leadership of Chief Executive Officer Mr Christopher Mountford and the Executive Leadership Team, who have demonstrated a clear commitment to accountability, transparency and strategic alignment. Their work has ensured ISQ continues to operate as a trusted and credible peak body in a dynamic policy environment.

I also thank my fellow Board members and committee representatives for their professionalism, diligence and willingness to contribute their expertise for the benefit of the sector. The collective strength of the Board remains central to ISQ's ability to govern effectively on behalf of members.

As Chair, I am proud of the way ISQ has remained focused on its core purpose throughout 2025. The Board looks forward to continuing its stewardship role in 2026, working alongside members, staff and stakeholders to ensure independent schools in Queensland remain strong, diverse and well supported.

**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.**

## Delivering services, insight and practical support for schools

Independent Schools Queensland's work in 2025 was firmly focused on delivery, ensuring schools had access to practical services, reliable advice and credible evidence to support decision-making in an increasingly demanding operating environment. Every area of the organisation remained focused on providing value to members and supporting schools to meet the needs of their students and communities.

## Operational delivery and member services

Throughout the year, ISQ continued to invest in service capability across professional learning, policy advice, school operations and wellbeing. Our teams worked closely with schools to provide timely guidance on regulatory change, funding arrangements and emerging issues, ensuring members were supported not only to remain compliant, but to plan with confidence.

Professional learning and engagement activity continued at scale, with a strong emphasis on relevance and accessibility for schools across metropolitan, regional and remote Queensland. This delivery model remains central to ISQ's value proposition as a service-oriented organisation.

## Research informing action

A major operational focus in 2025 was the delivery of the sixth edition of What Parents Want, reinforcing ISQ's commitment to evidence based advocacy. Conducted during Term 1, the research attracted strong participation and provided detailed insight into the motivations, expectations and decision-making processes of families choosing independent schooling.

Importantly, 2025 saw the introduction of secure, digital Individual School Reports, delivered through Microsoft Power BI. These reports translated sector-wide research into practical, school-level insights, enabling leaders to benchmark, plan and respond to their local communities with greater confidence.

## People first

None of this work would be possible without the expertise, commitment and professionalism of ISQ staff. Across every team, staff continued to put members first, adapting services and delivery models to meet evolving needs.

I also thank the ISQ Board, led by Chair Dr Phillip Moulds OAM, for its guidance and support throughout the year. Together, we remain focused on ensuring ISQ delivers practical value to schools while strengthening the sector's collective voice.

As independent schooling continues to grow and evolve, ISQ remains committed to supporting schools with insight, service and advocacy that makes a meaningful difference to our sector.

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

# ISQ Board and Committees

## 2025 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 2025 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<sup>^</sup>  
Board Chair

**Craig Bassingthwaighte**  
Somerset College  
Former Principal

**David Bliss**  
St John's Lutheran School  
Council Member

**Richard Brown**  
Nambour Christian College  
Board Director

**Dr Alan Campbell**  
Anglican Church Grammar School<sup>^</sup>  
Headmaster

**Ros Curtis AM**  
St Margaret's Anglican Girls School<sup>^</sup>  
Principal

**Alasdair Jeffrey**  
St Peter's Lutheran College  
Council Member

**Dr Andrew Johnson**  
Redlands College  
Principal

**Geoff McLay**  
Anglican Schools Commission  
(Southern Queensland)  
Commissioner

**Anna Owen**  
Sunshine Coast Grammar School  
Principal

**Andrew Wheaton**  
Whitsunday Anglican School<sup>^</sup>  
Principal

## 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 AM (Chair)**  
St Margaret's Anglican Girls School  
Principal

**Tony Andrews**  
Kairos Community College  
Principal

**Michael Barton**  
Djarragun College  
Principal

**Daniel Brown**  
Emmanuel College<sup>^</sup>  
Principal

**Dr Andrew Cousins**  
Clayfield College  
Principal

**Josh Counsel**  
Discovery Christian College  
Principal

**Kay Gleeson**  
Lourdes Hill College  
Principal

**Sharyn Ive**  
Carinity Education Shalom<sup>^</sup>  
Campus Director

**Chris Ivey**  
Somerset College  
Principal

**Tim Kotzur**  
St Peter's Lutheran College<sup>^</sup>  
Head of College

**Gary O'Brien**  
Cannon Hill Anglican College<sup>^</sup>  
Principal

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

**Craig Schmidt**  
Westside Christian College  
Principal

**Ross Waltisbuhl**  
Cooloola Christian College  
Principal

## Other ISQ Committees

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

### Finance and Risk Committee

**Geoff McLay (Chair)**  
**Craig Bassingthwaighte**

**Richard Brown**  
**Dr Andrew Johnson**  
**Anna Owen**  
**Toni Williams**

### Remuneration and Nominations Committee

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

<sup>^</sup> Reappointed in 2025

# Year in Review

2025 was a year of continued growth for the independent sector, with memberships sitting at 242 schools, providing choice and diversity in schooling for parents across the state.

In 2025, 160,056 students were enrolled in Queensland independent schools. Independent school enrolments represented 18 percent of all school enrolments across Queensland. Throughout the year, ISQ's work has been guided by its new 2025–27 Strategic Plan launched in 2025. The six strategic goals which helped guide ISQ's work throughout 2025 include:

01. Embracing new opportunities
02. Champion change and reform through effective advocacy
03. Supporting school leadership and the education workforce
04. Exceptional professional learning opportunities
05. Outstanding member services
06. An employer of choice



2025–2027  
Strategic Plan  
Excellence with Purpose



Throughout the year, 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.

## EMBRACING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

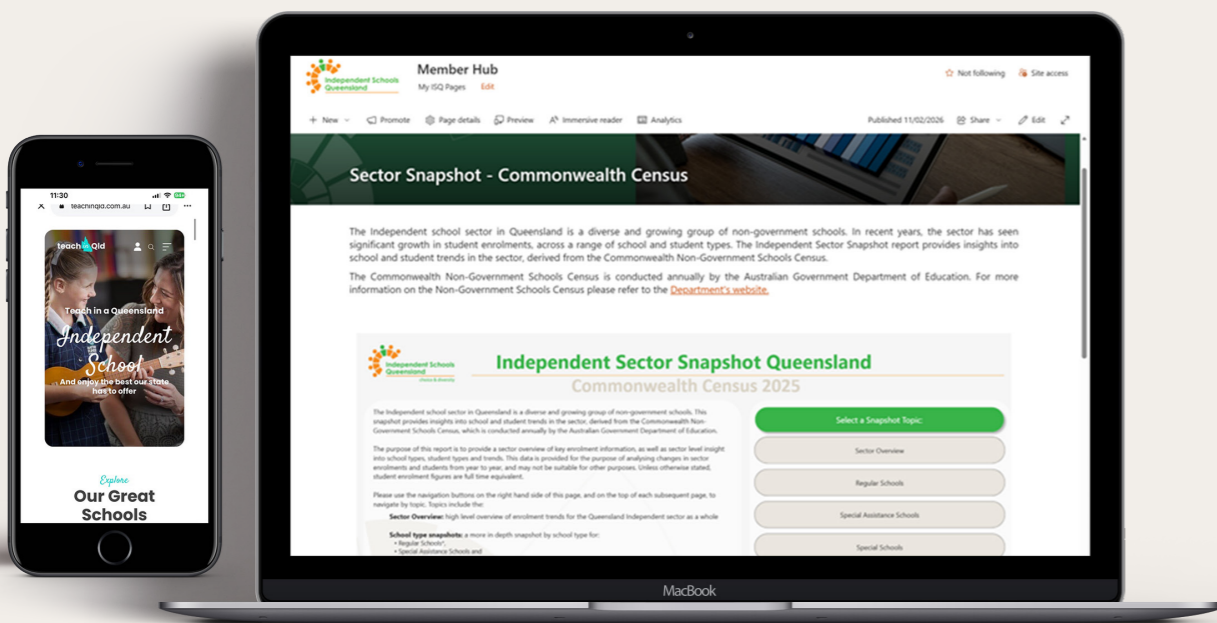


IMAGE: (L-R) Teach in Queensland website, Sector Snapshot on the ISQ Member Hub dashboard

### Teach in Queensland

The Teach in Queensland website and jobs board were developed and launched in 2025 as part of ISQ's commitment to workforce innovation. The [teachingqld.com.au](http://teachingqld.com.au) site was designed as a comprehensive resource for prospective teachers considering a career in the independent sector. It features detailed information about working in Queensland independent schools, highlights the benefits and pathways of the sector, and includes inspiring testimonials from current teachers sharing their experiences.

The website is widely used as a valuable tool in presentations to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students and is intended to also inform search engine results as the leading source of information about independent schools and teaching opportunities. Schools are actively encouraged to advertise roles on the platform, making it a central hub for recruitment across the sector.

### Workforce Innovation

#### PEOPLEBENCH SURVEY

ISQ engaged PeopleBench to study the Queensland independent school workforce. The study provides a detailed overview of workforce strengths, risks, and opportunities across the sector. *The State of the Independent School Workforce* was presented at the Queensland Independent Schools Summit, 31 July 2025. It is the result of a significant survey involving 2,927 staff members from 88 Queensland independent schools. This robust data set serves as an essential resource for guiding workforce strategy, planning, and innovation. Each participating school received a detailed interactive individual report, allowing them to benchmark their results against sector-wide trends. The report is used to inform priorities for many workforce innovation initiatives.

### Member Dashboards

#### INDEPENDENT SECTOR SNAPSHOT

Queensland independent schools operate in a fast-changing landscape, and must continue to stay abreast of changing demographic, social and economic circumstances. Additionally, schools can be complex business entities and require accessible information to optimise business planning. To support member schools in navigating these challenges, ISQ has developed a range of dashboards including the Independent Sector Snapshot.

During 2025, the Independent Sector Snapshot dashboard was developed and is now available to member schools. The dashboard provides a sector level overview of key enrolment information, trends and analysis by school and student characteristics. This dashboard assists schools to better understand their market, as they continue to navigate change and provide the services that their community needs.

The Snapshot is also available in the Decision Support Platform (DSP) as a new module. Future phases of analytics development are planned for 2026 with the vision of providing enhanced analytics capabilities on a range of topics, so schools can harness the power of data to make informed decisions.

### Partnerships engagement

Alliance Partnerships continue to play an important role in supporting the work of ISQ and strengthening connections between the independent school sector and industry. These partnerships are built on shared purpose, mutual benefit and a commitment to supporting schools through collaboration, knowledge sharing and sector engagement.

ISQ's Alliance Partners provide significant financial investment and strategic expertise, enabling opportunities to connect schools with trusted organisations across a range of industries including finance, technology, infrastructure, professional services and education support.

In return, partners gain meaningful opportunities to engage with the independent schooling community, build brand recognition and contribute thought leadership relevant to the sector.

During 2025, the ISQ Partnership Program continued to evolve with a stronger focus on engagement and value creation for both schools and partners. Tailored partnership benefits ensured alignment with partner priorities while supporting the needs of member schools. These benefits included bespoke networking opportunities, opportunities to contribute expertise through presentations or sector insights, and recognition through ISQ communications, digital channels and major events.

A key development was the introduction of Event Partnership opportunities, particularly through the Queensland Independent Schools Summit. Several organisations partnered with ISQ to support the summit, enhancing the event experience, while providing partners with valuable opportunities to connect directly with school leaders and decision-makers.

ISQ remains committed to developing partnerships with organisations that share its values and vision for a strong and sustainable independent schooling sector in Queensland.

### Procurement

ISQ Procurement focused on practical initiatives that strengthened value, choice and confidence for member schools, while laying foundations for future sector-wide benefits.

A major priority was the delivery of the 2025 Group Insurance Program. Through early engagement and close collaboration with specialist insurance brokers, participating schools achieved measurable premium savings alongside improved clarity around coverage and risk. This program continues to evolve as a strategic service rather than a once-a-year transaction.

Schools also gained access to the Queensland Government procurement portal, opening the door to a large pool

of fully vetted suppliers, competitive pricing and established contractual protections. ISQ supported schools through the onboarding process, helping translate government arrangements into practical options for the independent sector.

During the year, ISQ completed a comprehensive salary packaging review and tender. This work resulted in a preferred provider recommendation while preserving each school's ability to select an alternative provider through the government panel if desired. The outcome delivers both value and flexibility, two priorities consistently raised by members.

ISQ also progressed work to broaden the supplier landscape available to schools. Initial relationships with First Nations suppliers were established, supporting schools seeking to advance their *Reconciliation Action Plan* commitments while increasing diversity of supply.

Beyond these major initiatives, procurement support was provided through sector events including the QISS Property Masterclass, Business Manager Forum and ICT Manager Forum. These engagements ensured that emerging issues, operational pressures and member feedback directly informed ISQ's priorities. Targeted assistance to individual schools delivered tangible operational benefits, including significant reductions in utility costs in some cases.

These outcomes demonstrate the impact of focused, evidence-based procurement support tailored to local circumstances. Taken together, the work undertaken in 2025 reflects ISQ's commitment to delivering member-first procurement services that are practical, transparent and responsive to the evolving needs of independent schools.

## EA Connect

This year marked the third year the EA Connect Professional Development (PD) Day was offered, as an opportunity for administration professionals in member schools.

Professional development opportunities for administrators in the education sector are limited, so when Lisa Beene (EA to the Principal at St Margaret's Anglican Girls' School) and Lisa Foster (EA to the Principal at Hillbrook Anglican School) suggested there was a gap in the market that ISQ could fill, ISQ answered the call.

The establishment of EA Connect responds to many of ISQ's Strategic Goals outlined in the 2025–2027 *Strategic Plan*: embracing new opportunities, supporting school leadership and the education workforce, and providing exceptional professional learning opportunities. ISQ offers two full days of professional learning annually, in March and August, and registrations consistently reached capacity.

A variety of topics were incorporated, with the March event maintaining a focus on technical learning, while the August program emphasised wellbeing and personal development. The event grew from an audience of 70 at the former ISQ Professional Learning Centre in Queen Street to 120 at the August event held at the Emporium Hotel.

EA Connect is about more than developing skills alone. It is an opportunity to recognise and reflect on the critical role EAs and administrators play in keeping our schools running smoothly, calmly and effectively – often behind the scenes in challenging circumstances. The role of the Executive Assistant in a school can feel isolated at times, requiring the regular management of sensitive information and acting as a confidant to the principal, staff, students, and parents.

EA Connect provides not only practical learning, but also a sense of connection, support, and perspective. It is hoped that when individuals attend an EA Connect PD Day, they leave with new skills, renewed confidence, a fresh perspective, and a reminder that they are not alone in the challenges and opportunities of the profession.

## Music Advisory Committee

Music education is a key priority for ISQ and its members.

To strengthen collaboration and elevate the profile of school music programs, ISQ established the Music Advisory Committee, a new initiative designed to provide strategic insight, sector expertise, and advocacy for music educators across Queensland.

Since its establishment, the committee has made a meaningful contribution to strengthening music education in independent schools by:

- Bringing together more than 120 school music educators at ISQ's Harmonise & Innovate events
- Coordinating school bands and student performers for the Queensland Independent Schools Summit, showcasing the depth of talent in independent schools
- Advocating for the ongoing advancement of music education across independent schools
- Providing responsive guidance to schools on music staffing, program development, and resource needs
- Contributing expert advice on issues affecting music programs in independent schools.

The Music Advisory Committee continues to play a vital role in supporting excellence in school music, strengthening connections across the sector, and championing the value of music education for all Queensland students.

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Jason Taggart**, Ormiston College (Chair)

**Julianne Moore**, Sheldon College

**Patrick Flaherty**, Australian Christian College – Moreton

**Sarah Schneider**, St Peters Lutheran College

**Paul Pardede**, Faith Christian School of Distance Education



PHOTO COURTESY OF GREG SULLIVAN, CANON AUSTRALIA

## The Queensland Independent Schools Summit

The Queensland Independent Schools Summit (QISS) was held from 30 July to 1 August 2025 at the Sheraton Grand Mirage Resort on the Gold Coast, bringing together over 350 leaders from across Queensland's independent school sector. Under the theme *Future Growth: Propelling School Leaders*, the summit explored leadership, risk, wellbeing, innovation, and the future of education in Queensland.

This year was the first year the summit was delivered in its expanded format, providing three days of professional learning, collaboration, and connection for school leaders, board members and sector partners.

The program began with a Property Masterclass run by the QIS Block Grant Authority (BGA), providing principals, business managers and board chairs with practical insights into strategic property planning, asset management and risk management.

Across the summit, delegates heard from an impressive lineup of keynote speakers. Dr Richard Harris SC OAM shared powerful lessons on leadership and risk drawn from his experience in the Thai Cave Rescue, while social entrepreneur Justine Flynn explored the balance between leadership, wellbeing and avoiding burnout. Global AI ethicist Dr Catriona Wallace offered a compelling perspective on the future of leadership in a technology-driven world, and leading demographer Simon Kuestenmacher delivered thought-provoking insights into population growth and the implications for education in Queensland.

Additionally, QISS provided valuable opportunities for the sector to connect and celebrate with delegates gathering at the Welcome Reception to join with colleagues and partners in a relaxed setting, while the Gala Dinner was a highlight of the event, bringing the community together for an evening of celebration, entertainment and networking.

Through inspiring speakers, practical learning and strong sector engagement, QISS 2025 demonstrated the collective strength of Queensland's independent schools and their shared commitment to innovation, collaboration, and future-focused leadership.

IMAGE: ISQ Education Services Deputy Director Anjulee Singh in conversation with keynote speaker Dr Richard Harris SC OAM during QISS, July–August 2025

# 02.

## CHAMPION CHANGE AND REFORM THROUGH EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

### Australian Government

#### FUNDING

ISQ continued its engagement with ISA and the Commonwealth Government regarding the 12-month rollover of 2025 'capacity to contribute' scores and other amendments to the Australian Education Regulations. Amongst various considerations, ISQ continued to advocate for changes which will give independent schools greater ability to plan and budget with certainty.

#### CHOICE AND AFFORDABILITY FUNDING & SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE FUNDING

Funding from the Choice and Affordability Fund (CAF) continued in 2025, providing direct financial assistance to independent schools adversely affected by the new funding arrangements, with the objective of supporting schools to transition sustainably to those arrangements while maintaining choice and affordability for Queensland families.

ISQ continued to administer CAF funding across three priority areas: Transition Assistance, Special Circumstances Funding, and Choice and Affordability of Schools.

Under the Transition Assistance funding priority, ISQ provided direct financial assistance to independent schools experiencing adverse impacts from the new funding arrangements and which, under previous policy settings, would have been eligible for support through the former National Adjustment Assistance Fund. This assistance supported schools to manage funding volatility and maintain continuity of educational provision during the transition period.

Under the Special Circumstances Funding priority, ISQ provided direct financial assistance to independent schools impacted by a range of special circumstances, including natural disasters and extreme weather events. This funding assisted affected schools to recover from the impacts of these events, minimise operational disruption, and continue the delivery of educational activities to their communities.

The allocation of Transition Assistance and Special Circumstances funding for Queensland independent schools continued to be informed by the ISQ Choice and Affordability Fund Reference Group. The Reference Group comprises individuals appointed by the ISQ Board who are independent of any individual independent school and who collectively bring skills, expertise and experience in financial assessment, program management, and independent school governance and management.

Schools and independent auditors certified that CAF funding distributed during 2025 was used for the purposes for which it was provided. ISQ continued to meet its reporting obligations to the Commonwealth through the preparation of an annual report on the distribution of CAF funding and ensured that these reports remain publicly accessible for the duration of the CAF program.

Under the Choice and Affordability of Schools priority, ISQ continued to facilitate projects that support schools to maintain affordability and informed choice, and to support the implementation of structural adjustments where such adjustments are required because of changes in funding arrangements.

In accordance with the Agreement, ISQ continued to pursue the following Priority Objectives:

- Maintain and improve choice in schooling for Queensland families, supporting the improvement of educational standards and competition across the schooling system
- Maintain and improve opportunity and diversity within the schooling system through a vibrant and sustainable independent schooling sector in Queensland
- Plan for and support structural adjustments for schools adversely impacted by the new funding arrangements.

Throughout the year, ISQ delivered a range of centralised, scalable initiatives aligned with these objectives, with a particular focus on supporting schools to better manage cost pressures and to strengthen their understanding of market and enrolment dynamics. These initiatives were designed to operate at scale and were available to all ISQ represented schools.

Key activity throughout the year included the release and enhancement of a self-service data dashboard, providing schools with accessible information on school funding, school characteristics and trend analysis to support local decision-making. ISQ also progressed the development and release of an additional dashboard module, enabling schools to explore sector data and enrolment trends across a range of focus areas, supporting schools to better understand their operating environment and market position.

In parallel, ISQ continued work on initiatives to support schools in managing non-labour cost pressures through group procurement arrangements. ISQ advanced coordinated purchasing mechanisms that improve access to competitive suppliers, reduce administrative burden, and strengthen value for money outcomes for schools, particularly smaller and low fee schools. These arrangements remained available to all represented schools on an optional basis, supporting local decision-making while contributing to affordability objectives at a system level.

Collectively, these initiatives supported schools to strengthen their financial sustainability, inform strategic and structural decision-making, and reduce upward pressure on school fees, contributing to the overarching CAF objective of maintaining and improving choice and affordability for Queensland families.

#### SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES GRANTS

ISQ administered \$1.8m in direct financial assistance to 39 Queensland independent schools that were impacted by special circumstances in 2025, including priority areas such as:

- Schools impacted by natural disasters and extreme weather
- Schools in rural, regional and remote locations.

Special Circumstances funding was prioritised for schools requiring short term emergency assistance when unexpected circumstances or events caused severe and temporary financial difficulty.

These situations were assessed in accordance with the specific criteria set out by the Australian Government.

All Queensland independent schools were eligible to apply for one-off direct financial assistance, to support schools and students who have been impacted by drought or other natural disasters. These payments assisted schools to recover from the impacts of natural disasters including Tropical Cyclone Alfred, prolonged monsoonal rainfall, associated flooding and other extreme weather. Payments were utilised by schools to support activities including:

- Repairing damage to school buildings and equipment, such as roofing, carpet, information technology equipment, electrical equipment, and shade sails
- Water extraction and mould remediation
- Cleaning, tree works and removal of debris to ensure safe access
- Fee relief and other support to students who had been significantly impacted (e.g. families who had lost their homes).

Represented schools who are in rural, regional and remote locations were also invited to apply for direct financial assistance, to support the continuation of their educational activities. These payments were utilised by schools to support sustainable service delivery in their specific context, including improving access to staff professional development, engagement of consultants to review school financial sustainability, provision of additional support services for students, and the update or improvement of systems and technology.

These programs are funded by the Australian Government, through the Choice and Affordability Fund.

### Queensland Government

#### FUNDING

ISQ continues to be highly active in representing Queensland independent schools through funding and policy advocacy involving the Catholic Education Queensland Limited (CEQL), the Queensland Office of Non-State Education, and the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board.

Government funding for independent schools is determined according to the Queensland Bilateral Agreement under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement, signed on 24 March 2025.

Under the agreement, the Queensland government will contribute 20 percent of the nationally determined Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) for non-state schools in Queensland.

#### GOVERNMENT POLICY

ISQ was actively involved at the national and state level to ensure that 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 regarding policy changes to the 'Gonski' model of Commonwealth funding, and the State Recurrent Grant distribution model.

Throughout the year, ISQ offered consultations, produced forecasts, and conducted scenario analyses, offering crucial support for schools with their budgeting and planning, as well as advice to current and future schools.

## School planning

Throughout the year, 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.

Establishing a new school is complex. 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 (BGA) continued in 2025 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 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.

## Boarding

### QUEENSLAND BOARDING SCHOOLS STANDARD

In 2025, 32 ISQ member schools operated boarding facilities, collectively accommodating 3,826 boarding students, representing 2.4 percent of total enrolments across the independent school sector.

In 2025, ISQ played a substantive role in the co-design process of the development of a Queensland Boarding Schools Standard as part of the Queensland Government's review of the Non-State Schools Accreditation Framework. This work aimed to ensure the framework remained fit for purpose, supported the provision of high-quality education, and maintained public confidence in Queensland's non-state schools.

ISQ represented independent schools on both the Non-State Schools Accreditation Framework Review Implementation (NSSAFRI) Taskforce, Stakeholder Reference Group, and Boarding Working Group.

Consideration of the Queensland Boarding Schools Standard will continue into 2026 through the Stakeholder Reference Group.

### AUSTRALIAN BOARDING STANDARDS

In 2025, ISQ was invited by Standards Australia to participate in consultation workshops to determine the scope of work required for the revision of the Australian Boarding Standards (AS 5725:2015). ISQ was endorsed by ISA to represent independent school boarding facilities nationally on the Technical Committee. Revision work is scheduled to commence in 2026.

### External Committees

Throughout 2025, ISQ continued to uphold its pivotal advocacy role by actively contributing to a broad range of state and national curriculum committees. This included ongoing representation in key forums led by Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB), Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority (QCAA), Independent Schools Australia (ISA), and Queensland College of Teachers (QCT), among others.

Through this engagement, ISQ ensured the interests of Queensland independent schools were represented in curriculum, assessment and professional standards discussions at both state and national levels. A significant focus in 2025 was the completion and launch of the revised Non-State Schools Accreditation Framework (Educational Program Guideline).

ISQ played a strong advocacy role throughout the review process, ensuring the framework appropriately recognises the diversity of the independent school sector. ISQ supported schools to interpret and implement the new guidelines compliantly.

ISQ's representation on these committees has ensured that the perspectives and needs of Queensland independent schools are actively considered in state and national decision-making processes.

This engagement has also enabled the timely sharing of relevant information regarding policy changes, emerging developments, resources and services across the sector. Updates and key insights continued to be communicated via the Member Hub (curriculum leaders updates) and promoted through the weekly Teaching and Learning newsletter, ensuring school leaders receive prompt access to information arising from these forums.

## School Choice Counts Campaign

In 2025, Independent Schools Queensland played a key role in supporting the national School Choice Counts campaign led by Independent Schools Australia, launched in the lead-up to the Federal Election. The campaign sought to protect family choice in education and highlight the importance of fair and sustainable government funding arrangements for non-government schools.

Throughout the year, ISQ worked closely with schools, parent networks and sector partners to distribute campaign resources, support consistent messaging and ensure school communities were well-informed about the policy issues affecting independent education. This included providing campaign bulletins, template communications and guidance to help schools engage families in a neutral and appropriate manner.

The campaign emphasised that independent school families should not be penalised for their education choices and that any changes to funding policy would have direct consequences for affordability, student support and parental choice. ISQ's contribution focused on reinforcing these messages within Queensland, while maintaining a clear commitment to non-partisan advocacy.

School Choice Counts strengthened sector-wide advocacy efforts and helped ensure the voice of Queensland's independent school communities was represented clearly and responsibly during a critical national policy discussion.



## Research

### WHAT PARENTS WANT

ISQ continued its long-standing commitment to evidence-based advocacy through delivery of the sixth edition of the *What Parents Want* research, the longest-running survey of its kind in Australia. The study provides critical insight into the motivations, expectations and decision-making processes of families choosing independent schooling, supporting both sector-wide advocacy and school-level planning.

The survey was conducted during Term 1 and attracted strong participation from independent school communities across Queensland. ISQ led the end-to-end delivery of the project, including survey design, sector engagement, data analysis and reporting. Findings were consolidated into the *What Parents Want 2025 Survey Report*, which was published in August and shared with members and stakeholders to inform policy discussions, enrolment strategies and public commentary.

A significant enhancement in 2025 was the introduction of secure, digital Individual School Reports delivered via Microsoft Power BI. These interactive reports provided participating schools with tailored insights into their own parent communities, alongside state-wide benchmarking, enabling more strategic use of the data at a local level. ISQ developed supporting communications, usage agreements and guidance materials to ensure schools could confidently access and apply the findings.

The research was actively leveraged throughout the year through member communications, presentations and sector briefings, strengthening ISQ's advocacy narrative and reinforcing the value proposition of independent schooling in a competitive and evolving education landscape.

### BRIEFINGS

Briefings is an Independent Schools Queensland publication that provides thought leadership and research-informed commentary for the independent schooling sector. During the year, ISQ staff contributed three substantial research features, addressing key issues shaping contemporary education practice:

- Briefings, Vol 29-1 | **PEDAGOGICAL MODELS: Insights and Best Practices**  
Louise Brauer Education Services Manager
- Briefings, Vol 29-2 | **RESEARCH FEATURE: Trauma-aware Education**  
Sarah Coomb Psychologist
- Briefings, Vol 29-3 | **RESEARCH FEATURE: Navigating Artificial Intelligence in Education**  
Kate Crowe Workforce Innovation Manager

IMAGE: *What Parents Want* 2025 Survey Report

# 03.

## SUPPORTING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND THE EDUCATION WORKFORCE



### 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) and Australian Professional Standards for Principals. Online and in-person learning was available across topics including beginning teacher support, from provisional to full registration portfolio building, coaching, the middle leader's program as well as a range of bespoke principal masterclasses and principal roundtables to bring school leaders from around the sector together for invaluable learning and networking opportunities.

IMAGE: Curriculum Leaders Forum, February 2025

### Employee Relations

ISQ continues to support school leaders in navigating the complex landscape of employee relations. As well as assisting numerous member schools and systems with enterprise agreement negotiations, ISQ assisted school leaders with over 1,200 employee relations matters including the emerging impact of new industrial relations laws impacting schools.

In relation to these new laws and other industrial matters relevant to schools, ISQ held its first two-day Employee Relations and Human Resources Conference with workshops on negotiations skills and workplace investigations and included other notable speakers such as Vice President Ingrid Asbury of the Fair Work Commission.

The ISQ Employee Relations team delivered employee relations information and bespoke training sessions to schools, school boards, school leaders of systems employers and other forums such as the Association of School Business Administrators (ASBAQ) professional development day.

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

### Workforce Innovation

ISQ's workforce innovation efforts were anchored by the launch of the Teach in Queensland website and jobs board, which quickly became a key recruitment and information hub for both schools and aspiring teachers. A sector-wide workforce study in partnership with PeopleBench gathered insights from 2,927 staff in 88 independent schools, culminating in the *State of the Independent School Workforce* report, an essential resource for school and sector planning. The team actively deepened university partnerships, highlighted by the QUT student bus tour, providing Initial Teacher Education students firsthand experience in independent schools. Engagement with the Teacher Workforce Reference Group

ensured initiatives remained relevant and responsive. In recognition of the growing importance of technology, the team welcomed an AI advisor at year's end to help schools embed artificial intelligence into workforce development and practice.

### Parent Engagement

#### GUIDING SCHOOLS IN EFFECTIVE PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Assisting school communities to develop effective partnerships with parents was a key priority in 2025 through targeted programs and regular events.

Our flagship Mastering Parent Engagement (MPE) program, a joint initiative between Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network (QIS Parents Network) and ISQ, welcomed 11 new schools, while another nine schools advanced into our spin-off second year program – Mastering Parent Engagement Plus. Both programs featured in-person events, interspersed with webinars and scaffolded support, with MPE Plus also providing school leadership teams with additional dedicated coaching to further refine parent engagement practices in their communities. The program is resulting in schools re-imagining their parent-teacher interview process, streamlining the number of channels they use to communicate with parents and inviting parents in as important allies in their child's education and wellbeing.

In late 2025, QIS Parents Network and ISQ also launched a third stream of the program, called Mastering Parent Engagement Collective. This program creates an ongoing community of practice for advanced schools who are moving towards school-wide implementation of parent engagement initiatives and practices.

An online module Communication: The key to engaging parents, was also launched during 2025. The course is available on Connect&Learn to any interested educators or school community members and was provided at no cost to schools participating in the MPE suite of programs.

In addition, independent school communities were supported with a variety of educator-facing and parent-facing events and webinars.

Those opportunities included:

- Working With Families to Address School Refusal (in-person event, March 2025)
- Screen, Social Media & Our Kids (webinar, March 2025)
- Helping Your Child to Thrive at School (parent webinar, May 2025)
- Strengthening Parent Engagement Through Effective Communication (school-facing webinar, June 2025)
- What the Social Media Ban Means for Your Family (webinar, October 2025)
- Smartphone Delay Movement: What Happens When a Community Says 'Not Yet' (webinar, December 2025).

### School Governance Program

Throughout the year, ISQ's School Governance Program was delivered continuously, with 48 modules completed and strong participant endorsement reflected in a Net Promoter Score of 89. In addition, four school boards participated in ISQ's bespoke school governance training, providing targeted support to strengthen governance capability.

ISQ held three governance events during the year, offering professional learning on contemporary governance topics, including navigating difficult decisions, strategies to unlock new revenue streams, and effective management of the chair-principal dynamic.

ISQ further strengthened its governance support through the facilitation of nine in-depth board and operational reviews. ISQ also continued to serve as a trusted advisor to board chairs and directors, providing confidential advice and guidance on complex and sensitive governance matters.

EYES ON SOCIAL

**16,424**  
Social channel  
followers

**11,769**  
LinkedIn followers  
(up 1,419)

**1,749**  
Facebook followers  
(up 539)

Post impressions up  
**67%**  
to 286,745

Post link clicks up  
**52%**  
to 32,181

Post reactions up  
**42%**  
to 4,954

Post shares up  
**42%**  
to 276

Video views up  
**36%**  
to 18,292



**Building school marketing and communication capability**

Approaches to marketing and communications across Queensland's independent schools differ, with some institutions employing specialist staff, while others depend on existing employees to manage these functions alongside core duties.

Across the year, ISQ supported independent schools to better serve their communities by strengthening school marketing and communications capability. This work included delivering tailored one-on-one media and communications advice, providing marketing and media issues management support to schools, building positive media profiles, highlighting staff and student achievements across traditional and

social media, administering an online marketing and communications network, and delivering practical media training for school leaders.

ISQ continued to deliver high-quality member services by hosting events including the Schools Marketing and Communications networking events, media training sessions, and emergency management communications and media issues management training delivered through the New Business Managers Forum and New Principals Program. In 2025, two networking events were held on 31 March and 28 October at ISQ South Bank, attracting more than 120 attendees across both sessions. ISQ also maintained consistent communication with members through marketing and communications updates and the ISQ Marcomms Facebook group during the 2025 reporting year.

IMAGES: 2025 Schools Marketing and Communications networking events 31 March (top) and 28 October (bottom)



**School Business Management**

ISQ continued to provide comprehensive advice to school leaders, including principals, deputy principals, and business managers, on a broad range of compliance and school operational matters.

The Business Managers Program included seven School Operations Focus Area Updates, individual business manager inductions, and four professional development events. Events included the New Business Managers Induction and Business Managers Forum. Both events were expanded from one-day to two-day programs, incorporating a networking dinner, with each event reaching full capacity. In addition, two webinars were delivered to provide compliance updates, including a session on wage theft and a second session focusing on understanding agentic AI. Each webinar attracted more than 70 participants.

Designed for school leaders, the School Management series, comprised of eight live online modules were further expanded to include an additional three elective modules, including Financial Management and Reporting, ECEC Operating Essentials and Unpacking International Education. Covering a range of topics, from enrolment to work, health and safety, the sessions attracted strong numbers of participants, including current and aspiring principals, deputy principals and department heads, business managers, enrolment, teaching, and risk and compliance staff. The series will continue in 2026 under the new title, the Executive Management Suite.

The School Services team's annual regional visits, which took place in the Darling Downs region, provided an opportunity to build relationships and contextualise support and services for member schools. Undertaken in August, the events included a Safeguarding workshop for school leaders and business managers, a Governance Breakfast, and visits to 10 member schools.

**School Transport**

The Non-State Schools Transport Assistance Scheme, jointly delivered by Independent Schools Queensland and Catholic Education Queensland Limited (CEQL), provides financial support to assist non-state school students to access safe and affordable transport. CEQL administers the Scheme on behalf of all non-state schools in Queensland, with applications submitted via [schooltransport.com.au](http://schooltransport.com.au).

In 2025, the Queensland Government provided more than \$9.2 million to support the Scheme, funding over 8,400 student applications across more than 230 school communities.

IMAGE: Business Managers Forum, July 2025

# 04.

## EXCEPTIONAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



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



### In-person and online learning

#### A SPECIALIST PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROVIDER

In 2025, ISQ continued to deliver a broad range of both online and in-person events. ISQ hosted a total of 318 professional learning events. This included 109 in-person events delivered in Brisbane. In addition, ISQ continued to extend professional learning opportunities to member schools across regional Queensland, hosting 54 in-person events at regional member schools and external conference venues. A further 155 events were delivered online or in a hybrid format.

A key enhancement to Connect&Learn was the introduction of the new events platform, delivering a more intuitive and streamlined registration experience. Additional improvements included enhanced course search functionality and support for VET Activity Funding.

The provision of tailored, timely professional learning remains a core function of ISQ, and we continue to seek opportunities to evolve and strengthen our offerings.

### eLEARNING

During 2025, 22,677 education professionals and school staff were active users of ISQ's online learning platform, Connect&Learn, an eight percent increase from 2024, generating more than 52,000 logins across the year.

This engagement resulted in the issuance of more than 25,567 certificates across 103 courses, compared with 74 courses delivered in 2024. Child Protection Training for Teachers was the most accessed course, completed by 11,425 participants, representing a 26 percent increase from the previous year.

As part of ISQ's ongoing investment in a modern digital learning ecosystem, more than 4.5 million xAPI statements were captured in 2025, enabling deeper insights into user engagement within Connect&Learn. Notably, January 2025 alone recorded over 3.6 million statements, largely associated with Child Protection compliance requirements.

IMAGES: What Good Maths Looks Like participants, March 2025; Be You Postvention Workshop and Networking Lunch, July 2025



### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND EVENTS

**318**  
professional learning opportunities

**163**  
in-person events

**54**  
of these events hosted in regional Queensland locations

**155**  
events delivered online or hybrid format

**22,677**  
active C&L users

**103**  
courses with **25,567** certificates issued

**11,425**  
Child Protection participants

# 05.

## OUTSTANDING MEMBER SERVICES

### International Education

International education for CRICOS-registered member schools operated in a transitional environment shaped by significant changes to migration and student visa settings. The Australian Government's updated Migration Strategy strengthened visa integrity measures, revised genuine student requirements and reprioritised visa processing. However, it also increased complexity and uncertainty for schools and international families as the reforms led to longer processing times, greater scrutiny of applications and less predictable enrolment pipelines. The impacts were felt most heavily by schools with smaller international cohorts and as a result, four member schools relinquished their CRICOS registrations, reducing the total to 75 during the reporting period.

Navigating through this period of regulatory consolidation and heightened risk management, ISQ continued to support member schools to strengthen governance, quality and student wellbeing, and to pursue market diversification and innovation in recruitment and program strategies. Regulatory compliance remained a priority.

ISQ delivered eight International Education professional development activities throughout the year. These activities strengthened sector capability and supported member schools to maintain quality international education offerings amid ongoing market and policy uncertainty. International education was also featured at ISQ's inaugural Queensland Independent Schools Summit, providing school leaders with a forum to examine the internationalisation of education from a school perspective, including global trends, policy settings, student wellbeing and future-focused practice.

#### INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

Advocacy remained a core focus of ISQ's international education work, as ongoing Commonwealth and State Reforms continued to affect international students and CRICOS-registered schools. ISQ maintained active engagement with government and sector stakeholders through consultations on migration, visa integrity and international education policy, ensuring the Queensland independent school context was represented in policy development.

Offshore curriculum licensing remained a key strategic priority. As a member of the Offshore Schools Stakeholder Reference Group, alongside the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, the Department, and Catholic Education Queensland Limited, ISQ continued to advocate for non-state schools to be afforded the opportunity to deliver the Queensland Certificate of Education offshore. ISQ led early sector input on governance and delivery models, authorisation requirements and quality assurance settings to support a framework for non-state participation in Queensland's offshore curriculum delivery.

Despite a brief pause during a period of departmental transition, the Schools International Stakeholder Forum sustained its collaborative focus, strengthening engagement between ISQ, Education Queensland International, Catholic Education Queensland Limited, school representatives, the Department and Study Queensland. This partnership supported coordinated responses to emerging policy and market developments, including engagement with tertiary providers to strengthen priority enrolment pathways from schools.

At the national level, ISQ contributed to coordinated advocacy through the ISA/AIS International Education Reference Group, including engagement with the Education Visa Consultative Committee and stakeholder consultations supporting implementation of the Australian Strategy for International Education 2021–2030. ISQ also provided sector input to the Inquiry into the Development of Asia Capability in Australia and the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2025.

ISQ continued to strengthen international market engagement through partnerships with Trade and Investment Queensland and Study Queensland, including sector briefings, roundtable consultations and participation in the Queensland Schools Roadshow in Taiwan with 14 member schools. ISQ also supported regional capability building through collaboration with Study Toowoomba and extended global engagement through participation in the 24h for Change in Education project, showcasing Queensland independent school innovation on an international platform.

### ISQ Advisory

ISQ's Advisory Services play an increasingly important role supporting member schools as they navigate a rapidly evolving and increasingly complex operating environment. Across governance, compliance, curriculum, leadership, operations and strategy, schools are facing heightened expectations alongside growing regulatory, workforce and community pressures. ISQ's Advisory Services responds to this complexity by providing trusted, tailored and sector-aware support grounded in a deep understanding of the Queensland independent schooling context.

ISQ delivered more than 50 advisory projects for member schools, reflecting strong and enduring relationships across the sector. This work has most frequently focused on core areas of governance and board effectiveness, curriculum quality and assurance, and strategic reviews. The level of repeat engagement and referrals highlights the value schools place on having access to advice that is practical, independent and informed by sector-wide insight. Advisory engagements have supported schools to strengthen governance and compliance arrangements, improve teaching and learning practices, plan for sustainable growth, and respond confidently to change.

Looking ahead, ISQ Advisory Services will continue to grow as a core strategic capability within ISQ. By scaling impact while maintaining quality and trust, ISQ aims to further strengthen its role as a thought leader and trusted partner for independent schools across Queensland. Through collaboration, shared learning and evidence-informed advice, Advisory Services will support schools to navigate change with confidence and to continue delivering high-quality educational outcomes for their communities.

### Child Safeguarding

ISQ received a grant from the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) to enhance the capability and confidence of schools in Queensland's independent

school sector, in the lead up to the implementation of the Child Safe Standards on 1 January 2026.

Key activities in 2025 included partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants to strengthen cultural capability, developing a school readiness survey to support schools in targeting their implementation, and delivering a professional development roadshow in eight locations across Queensland.

The project also expanded ISQ's Safeguarding Forum with an additional event focused on the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle. Further grant deliverables will be undertaken in 2026 prior to the grant's closure on 30 June 2026.

### Curriculum

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

Throughout 2025, the Education Services team continued to work collaboratively across the organisation, particularly with the Student Services team, to provide cohesive, high-quality support for schools and curriculum leaders. Teams worked from a shared evidence base, using consistent research and aligned resources to ensure seamless guidance for members. This collaboration was reflected in joint planning and frequent co-presentation at professional learning events, enabling schools to engage with integrated expertise while strengthening visibility and connection across the organisation's work.

#### CURRICULUM EVENTS

Throughout the year, ISQ hosted three mixed-mode Curriculum Leaders Forums, attracting between 125 and 200 people at each event. The first forum of the year supported leaders who are new to Queensland, new to the sector or new to leadership to understand the legislative requirements for curriculum. The Term 2 and Term 4 forums were specifically designed to provide essential information to curriculum leaders within the sector. Keynote speakers included NSSAB and AITSL representatives, Marlena Katene and Dr Amy Berry. The sessions were

repeated in regional locations each term to provide networking opportunities. Of the six regional curriculum leader events planned for the year, three regions took up this opportunity.

### Vocational Education and Training

Queensland continued to lead the nation in Vocational Education and Training (VET) participation and achievement for young people aged 15 to 19 in 2025, recording the highest enrolments and outcomes of any state or territory. Independent Schools Queensland played a significant role in this success through sustained growth, targeted professional support and strong sector advocacy.

Participation in VET in Schools programs across independent schools continued to increase, with 216 schools offering nationally recognised qualifications from Certificate I to Diploma level. A total of 32,610 students were enrolled in VET programs, representing a six percent increase on the previous year, with Certificates II and III remaining the most popular pathways for students in Years 10–12.

Thirty independent schools were registered with the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority or the Australian Skills Quality Authority as training organisations, enabling them to deliver training and issue qualifications directly. This strengthened schools' capacity to respond flexibly to student needs while maintaining high standards of quality and compliance.

Experiential learning remained central to effective VET delivery, with more than 5,000 students participating in work experience or structured work placements. Engagement with Gateway to Industry Schools Program initiatives also increased across several sectors, particularly Agribusiness, which recorded significant growth aligned with regional workforce priorities.

ISQ recorded 1,555 students commencing school-based apprenticeships or traineeships, an increase of almost 18 percent on 2024. Professional learning and workforce



## ISQ PROGRAMS

In 2025 there were numerous programs and events for schools to engage in. Including several national and international speakers.

**537 attendees**  
Curriculum Leaders Forums

**12 schools**  
Maths Program

**240 attendees**  
What Good Maths Teaching Looks Like

**4 schools**  
Multi-School Organisation Project

**76 attendees**  
Carl Hendrick event

**112 attendees**  
Tom Sherrington event

capability building remained a key focus, alongside targeted support for member school RTOs transitioning to the new Standards for RTOs 2025.

Throughout the year, ISQ continued to advocate for independent schools through key advisory and governance forums at both state and national levels.

## Education Services programs

The Education Services team led 18 schools through three programs over the year.

The Maths Program involved 12 schools participating in professional learning and termly mentoring, then showcasing their work at the Term 4 Teaching and Learning Showcase. The professional learning event, the Mathematics Masterclass was open to all schools and sectors and saw participation from 102 people in total. A large-scale event, What Good Maths Teaching Looks Like, was launched and featured multiple experts from around the nation. The event reached capacity three months in advance with over 240 participants.

The Multi-Schools Organisation project involved four schools that participated in leadership days each term as well as whole school online events. This program developed collegiality and support for small schools and was highly valued by the leadership teams.

The Cognitive Science Program involved two schools that participated in bespoke work throughout the year. This program expanded due to demand throughout the year. ISQ experts led a two-day workshop to develop a pedagogical model and implementation plan, supporting over 40 schools with this work. ISQ was also offered opportunities to host international speakers Tom Sherrington and Dr Carl Hendrick, and were well received by members.

All events received positive feedback with above 90 percent satisfaction rates, such as: *"Thank you for reigniting my passion for math and giving great insight into better teaching and assessment practices". "Excellent, engaging presentation. The strategies shared were highly relevant, I am going home more knowledgeable!"*.

## Professional capacity in teaching

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

In 2025, ISQ continued to provide high-quality leadership development and support through a suite of leadership development programs, with:

- Over 25 early career teachers participated in ISQ's Beginning Teacher's Program in partnership with YXL Institute. This Program allowed new teachers to network, engage in meaningful and practical discussions about classroom practise including High Impact Teaching Strategies (with over 1000 strategies modelled), and a leadership opportunity for all beginning teachers to share their successes over the course of the year in the final workshop.
- Over 20 middle leaders participated in the Middle Leaders Coaching Program, delivered in partnership with expert facilitator Tammy McCartney, and trained in Growth Coaching International's specialist coaching program, Introduction to Leadership coaching. All participants went on to recommend the program to colleagues.
- Over 50 emerging and experienced school leaders (both teaching and corporate staff) participated in ISQ's flagship Leadership Essentials Program delivered in partnership with Thriving Minds Global led by Gayle Pacchini. This program explored fundamental leadership capability building including giving feedback, emotional intelligence, coaching and leading change
- Over 150 principals and school leaders attended events as part of the 2025 Executive Leadership Suite including masterclasses, principal briefings and roundtable.
- 100% of participants in the New Principals Program (18 participants) reported the program had improved their leadership skills
- All participants in the Aspiring Principals Program (22 participants) reported the program was excellent and had increased their leadership capacity.



## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education

Over 7,700 First Nations students were enrolled in 225 member schools in 2025. In 13 of these schools, most students were of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage.

This year, ISQ supported the 31 member school sites providing boarding to 794 First Nations students from regional, remote and very remote communities. First Nations student boarders came from Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia, New South Wales and the Torres Strait Islands.

Throughout the year, ISQ provided continued support to schools to:

- Enhance teacher confidence and ability to respond to First Nations students' learning needs including providing targeted assessment and learning support for those with English as an Additional Language/ Dialect (EAL/D)
- Improve First Nations perspectives in whole school strategic planning
- Increase the employment and professional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in member schools.

More than 100 school staff participated in ISQ Indigenous education in-person and online professional learning events to support quality teaching and learning. These events included:

- Indigenous Bandscales Two-Day Intensive Training and Moderation
- Support events for principals of schools with large enrolments of First Nations' students
- Targeted whole-of-school on-campus professional learning events.

## Individual school support

Together with daily email and phone support, more extensive development of the Member Hub supported leaders to develop their own curriculum and compliance knowledge.

Over the course of the year, the team provided email and/or phone support to over 90 percent of member schools, also providing individual paid service of Professional Development sessions for 11 schools.

## Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALT) program

ISQ continued to build upon its success as the first Queensland-based certifying authority of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALT). Concluding the eighth full year, ISQ certified 29 Highly Accomplished Teachers and 22 Lead Teachers and renewed a total of 11 teachers including eight Highly Accomplished and three Lead Teachers at the five-year renewal stage. Since 2017, ISQ has certified 219 Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Queensland's independent schools which makes up 47 percent of Australia's independent school HALTs. These teachers exemplify excellent practice and mentor early career teachers in our sector which lifts capability and contributes to the long-term retention of teachers in independent schools.

IMAGE: Bandscales for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D Learners Training 2-Day Intensive December, 2025



## 2025 ISQ International Study Tour

The inaugural ISQ UK Study Tour delivered significant strategic value for Queensland's independent schooling sector.

The 10 delegates including board chairs, principals and system leaders gained firsthand insight into the governance, leadership and operational models of high performing MultiAcademy Trusts (MATs).

The study tour collectively deepened understanding of how structured collaboration can strengthen school improvement at scale. The tour highlighted the benefits of centralised services, coherent curriculum design, evidence-based pedagogy and robust data practices, offering practical lessons for reducing operational burden and enhancing teaching quality.

Leaders observed effective approaches to inclusion, staff development and workforce pathways, informing local strategies for capability building and retention. Importantly, the tour strengthened cross sector collegiality, enabling school and system leaders to share challenges and co-design solutions relevant to Queensland's context.

The insights gained are already shaping thinking around system coherence, leadership pathways, shared services and teaching and learning frameworks, positioning ISQ schools to respond confidently to emerging educational challenges.

Read insights from the ISQ International Study Tour in *Briefings Volume 30, Issue 1*.

## Student Services

### SUPPORTING WELLBEING IN SCHOOLS

ISQ delivered a comprehensive program of support, to assist member schools in strengthening inclusive education practices and enhancing student wellbeing, consent and respectful relationships education (CRRE) through whole-school approaches.

More than 2,200 school staff from 196 member schools participated in one of 44 professional learning events delivered in-person or online. These events focused on strengthening school capability to support student wellbeing and respond effectively to the learning needs of students with additional needs, including students with disability. Eight member schools also participated in two regional cross-sector NCCD moderation events conducted in partnership with the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and the Department of Education.

Four member schools participated in the year-long Inclusive Education Program, which supported schools in strengthening their inclusive education models by adapting a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support approach.

Three schools engaged ISQ for a Learning Support Review, and three schools underwent an NCCD Mock Audit to assess their compliance.

Professional learning supporting schools to meet their obligations to provide reasonable adjustments for students with disability included NCCD moderation activities, ISQ-run NCCD moderation sessions, including an online option for rural and remote schools, Leading Whole School Inclusive Learning, a two-day Behaviour Series, a term-based Inclusive Education webinar series, Strengthening Multi-Level Prevention System – Tier 1 and Tier 2, and Complex Case Collaboration. Complementing these activities, more than 6,700 school staff registered for at least one disability related Connect&Learn module, including more than 5,300 registrations for the Disability Standards for Education course.

ISQ also delivered a range of professional learning opportunities to strengthen school capacity to support student and staff wellbeing. This included the Supporting Whole School Approach to Student Wellbeing workshop, the Be You Postvention Leadership webinar, Be You Postvention Planning, including an additional session for the SAS context, and a Be You Postvention Review workshop. ISQ continued its partnership with EVOLVE Therapeutic Services to deliver webinars on Trauma-Informed Practice, Polyvagal Theory, and Vicarious Trauma,

established a new partnership with the Black Dog Institute to provide Youth in Distress training, and strengthened its collaboration with ED-LinQ to deliver Youth Mental Health First Aid training.

Student Wellbeing Forums were delivered across five locations and attended by approximately 160 independent school staff.

Delivered in partnership with clinical staff from Ed-LinQ (Queensland Department of Health), Be You, My Mind Check, Dovetail and Kids Helpline, the forums connected schools with regional and national wellbeing services. Sessions addressed topics including student engagement and attendance, responding to alcohol and other drug use in school settings, available wellbeing supports and respectful relationships education, and included an ISQ update on the Child Safe Reforms.

ISQ also administered key wellbeing funding programs. In 2025, Commonwealth National Student Wellbeing Program (NSWP) funding was provided to 81 schools and State Government Student Wellbeing Officer Program (C/SWO) funding to 17 member schools to support the provision of pastoral care services.

Under the federally funded Consent of Respectful Relationships Education (CRRE) program, 480 members participated in ISQ-delivered professional learning to support the development and embedding of whole-school approaches to Consent and Respectful Relationships Education. Events included Respectful Relationships in Action, five regional CRRE forums, Beyond the Screen: AI Consent in the Digital Age, CRRE Planning Your Year Ahead, Bringing Your School's Faith and Values into Consent and Respectful Relationships, and support relating to the ISQ Safeguarding Form.

In 2025, the Students with Disability state funding model became 100 percent NCCD-informed for the first time. ISQ distributed \$29.3 million in targeted state funding for Students with Disabilities to schools, supporting 22,685.9 student FTE across 228 schools in Semesters 1 and 2.

## Kindergarten programs

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC)

This year, 118 member schools offered 130 early childhood services, incorporating approved sessional and long day care kindergarten models. ISQ supported member schools to meet State and Federal ECEC regulatory requirements, advocated via state working groups and committees, and provided targeted support to the 38 members of the ISQ Central Governing Body for Kindergartens.

Over \$20 million in Queensland Government kindergarten funding was administered by ISQ incorporating Queensland Kindergarten Funding (QKF), Kindy Uplift, Kindergarten Inclusion Support Scheme (KISS), Kindergarten Capital Works Upgrade funding and two targeted programs. The Queensland Kindergarten Funding scheme included Free Kindy, ensuring families had access to 600 hours of an approved kindergarten program at no cost. ISQ continued to support the implementation of the funding model via management of a secure portal for the reporting of enrolment and attendance data to the Department of Education.

ISQ provided Kindy Uplift Advisory Support to 103 early childhood services, including sessional and long day care kindergarten programs. Kindy Uplift, a Queensland Government initiative, is designed to respond to children's learning and development needs by strengthening educator capability and promote inclusion across six priority areas: cultural safety, inclusion and responsiveness; social and emotional learning; physicality; executive



function; oral language and literacy; and mathematics and numeracy. ISQ delivered five Kindy Uplift Forums across the state to assist early childhood leaders to design responsive programs, select high impact supports, and align initiatives with Quality Improvement Plans.

The Independent Schools Kindergarten Network (ISKN) was established in 2025 to strengthen professional learning across the independent school early childhood sector. Throughout the year, ISQ delivered seven online professional learning sessions that enabled educators to explore evidence informed approaches and consider strategies to enhance outcomes for young children.

Representation of services at a state level included ISQ participation on the Excellence in ECEC Stakeholder Advisory Group, Regulatory Advisory Committee, and consultation on on-going Child Safety developments. Additional engagement occurred through working groups and initiatives to ensure early childhood perspectives were embedded within emerging State and national policy, regulatory reform and system priorities.

Partnership with Independent Schools Australia (ISA) continued in 2025, alongside collaboration with AIS early childhood representatives across jurisdictions to support coordinated national sector advocacy.

IMAGES: Briefings article: *Learning from UK Multi-Academy Trusts: Insights from an ISQ Study Tour*; UK Study Tour MAT Visit 4 – Oxford Diocesan Board of Education

IMAGE: Rivermount College Kindy Orientation Day, January 2026

# 06.

## AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

### Fun & Wellbeing Committee

The ISQ Fun & Wellbeing Committee plays an important role in fostering a positive, inclusive, and supportive workplace culture. The Committee is committed to designing engaging initiatives that promote staff wellbeing across social, physical, and mental/emotional domains, helping to ensure ISQ is a great place to work. Meeting monthly, committee members collaborate to plan activities.



### FUN & WELLBEING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Rachel Wolfson People & Culture Manager
- Seraphine Nollette Legal Counsel
- Sarah Coomb Psychologist
- Annette Butterworth Executive Assistant
- Glenn Hammond eLearning Specialist
- Kate Crowe Workforce Innovation Unit Manager
- Loree Wilkinson Project Coordinator Workforce Innovation Unit

### FUN & WELLBEING ACTIVITIES

Throughout 2025, the committee coordinated a diverse range of initiatives aimed at strengthening connection, encouraging participation, and supporting staff wellbeing. These included a Valentine's Morning Tea; staff walking challenges; an International Women's Day interactive wall; The Resilience Project workplace wellbeing webinar lunchtime discussion group; and the sharing of information about key wellbeing days, webinars, and events.

Additional activities included State of Origin team-colour days, Office Coffee Roulette, Riverfire family event, Melbourne Cup lunch, and a variety of Christmas competitions and end-of-year activities.

### 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 2025, through staff-led morning teas, raffles, and other various fundraising activities, ISQ staff raised \$1,600 for Act for Kids. Act for Kids is a for-purpose organisation that delivers evidence-led professional therapy and support services to children and families who have experienced or are at risk of harm. Established in 1988, their dedicated team of psychologists, speech therapists, early education specialists, counsellors, occupational therapists and family support workers have helped thousands of children and families for over 38 years. Act for Kids operates 34 centres with a team of more than 490 staff from Adelaide all the way up to the Cape York Peninsula.

**IMAGE:** (above) ISQ's Employee Relations Deputy Director Peter Ruffini with Tracey-Anne from Act For Kids at the ISQ Staff Meeting, October 2025; (page 31 clockwise from top) St Peters Lutheran College, Immanuel Lutheran College, Anglican Church Grammar School





as at  
31 December  
2025

ISQ STAFF  
IN 2025

47

total staff  
(excluding BGA)

## Independent Schools Queensland

### Executive

**Christopher Mountford**  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Stuart McDowall**  
Chief Operating Officer  
**Yvonne Ries**  
Education & School Services Director

### Organisation Services

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

### Education and School Services

#### SCHOOL SERVICES

**Jane Simmonds**  
School Services Deputy Director  
**Rebecca McKinnon**  
School Services Manager  
**Angelin Achari**  
School Services Advisor  
**Courtney Downward**  
School Services Advisor  
**Fran Myers-Baird**  
Early Childhood Advisor  
**Alison Giles**  
Administration Officer  
**Seraphine Nollette**  
Legal Counsel

#### EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

**Peter Ruffini**  
Employee Relations Deputy Director  
**Bonnie Bradford**  
Senior Employee Relations Advisor  
**Cameron Young**  
Senior Employee Relations Advisor

### EDUCATION SERVICES

**Anjulee Singh**  
Education Services Deputy Director  
**Angela Lovejoy**  
Education Services Project Coordinator  
**Therese Imhoff**  
Education Services Support Officer  
**Kate Crowe**  
Workforce Innovation Unit Manager  
**Loree Wilkinson**  
Workforce Innovation Project Coordinator  
**Candace Neville**  
AI Advisor  
**Louise Brauer**  
Education Services Manager  
**Edwin Choi**  
Education Services Advisor  
**Melanie Alexandra**  
Vocational Education Services Advisor

### STUDENT SERVICES

**Hayley McDonald**  
Student Services Manager  
**Anne Wachtel**  
Student Services Advisor  
**Christina Mitchell**  
Student Services Advisor  
**Sarah Coomb**  
Psychologist  
**Laura Newman**  
Behaviour Intervention & Wellbeing Advisor

### Operations Advisory & Strategic Projects

**Thomas Booth**  
Head of Advisory & Strategic Projects  
**Todd Wellard**  
Project Manager  
**Jo Butler**  
Business Project Manager  
**Ashleigh Lau**  
Data Analytics Manager  
**Gitanjali Bhat**  
Senior Data Analyst

### eLEARNING AND ICT

**Julian Davis**  
eLearning and ICT Support Manager  
**Glenn Hammond**  
eLearning Specialist  
**Dominic Campbell**  
Applications Administrator

### COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS

**Beth Kitson**  
Communications Manager  
**Tracey Maree**  
Graphic Designer  
**Jenna Harp**  
Venue and Programs Coordinator  
**Kate Paterson-Smith**  
Venue and Programs Coordinator

### FINANCE

**Stan Lysuik**  
Senior Accountant  
**Tony Yan**  
Assistant 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, Finance (retired,  
December 2025)  
**Maria Brookes**  
Financial Officer  
**Shannon Service**  
Senior Administration Officer  
**Renae Lewis**  
Administrative Coordinator  
**Kristy-Lee Cristea**  
Project Officer

## Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network

**Amanda Watt**  
Executive Director





# 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.



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

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

**COVER IMAGE:**  
St Pauls' School

