



Independent Schools
Queensland

choice & diversity

Submission to:

ShapingSEQ 2023 Update



20 September 2023

About Queensland Independent Schools

Community confidence in the independent schooling sector remains strong with more than 145,000 students enrolled in 236 independent schools across Queensland. These schools educate approximately 16.5 percent of the state’s total school-age population and 20 percent of all secondary students.

Independent schools are valued institutions and a pivotal part of Queensland’s education system. They are valued schooling choices for families, hubs of human and community connection, places of intellectual, civic and social development, employers and employment generators, education innovators and change-makers.

Independent schools are as unique as the communities they serve and offer parents a choice in the education of their children. Common to all independent schools is their commitment to strong student outcomes, high standards of behaviour, and the welfare and wellbeing of students.

Many independent schools educate international students or specialise in the education of students with disability. There has also been strong growth in the number of Special Assistance Schools for students who have disengaged from mainstream schools, and trade training schools that combine senior year studies with practical vocational education and training.

Over the past decade years, enrolments at Queensland independent schools have increased by more than 28% percent. This growth is a clear indication that parents value an independent education and are prepared to invest their after-tax incomes in their child’s schooling.

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) is the peak body representing Queensland's independent schooling sector. Independent Schools Queensland represents the interests of its member schools, fosters choice in education and protects the autonomy of independent schools. ISQ is a not-for-profit organisation and membership to ISQ is voluntary.

Submission

Independent schools in Queensland play a pivotal role in the enhancement and provision of social infrastructure across Southeast Queensland. These institutions offer a unique blend of academic excellence and community engagement that contributes significantly to the overall development of students and the broader society.

Additionally, these schools often invest in state-of-the-art facilities and resources, not only benefiting their own students but also the broader community. From libraries and sports facilities to cultural centres, these institutions often serve as hubs for educational and cultural events that enrich the lives of residents in Queensland.

More Queensland parents than ever before are also actively choosing to send their children to independent schools.

Between 2013 and 2023, enrolments across the Queensland independent school sector have increased from 113,942 to 145,466 students. This represents an increase of 28% over the past decade.

At present this growth in student numbers has been accommodated by existing schools filling out current streams or adding new streams. Many of these schools are either at capacity or have no further desire to add new streams due to strategic reasons.

A demographic study undertaken by Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) in 2023 based on Queensland Government data, forecasts that in the 20 years from 2021 to 2041 the number of school-aged children in Queensland will increase by 13%, or approximately 117,000 students.

To cater for this additional enrolment growth over the next 20 years, ISQ's forecasting indicates the need for approximately 13 new independent schools in key growth areas predominantly in Southeast Queensland.

For this reason, it is imperative that there is adequate and timely provision of future school infrastructure and importantly, the availability of suitable land for new school construction to accommodate the projected growth of school-aged children in Queensland.

As it currently stands, the draft *ShapingSEQ 2023 Update* lacks sufficient detail around what, if any provision of land will be given to accommodate new schools, which will be required to meet the growing demand of parents choosing to send their children to independent schools in Queensland.

Independent Schools Queensland, on behalf of the Queensland independent schooling sector, is asking for consideration to be made around well-located, well-serviced land within a close proximity to the proposed urban footprints in identified high growth areas to be allocated or identified for new school sites.



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