

# COALITION OF REGIONAL INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS AUSTRALIA INC

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### REGIONAL SCHOOLS HIT BY NEW FEDERAL FUNDING MODEL

164 regional independent schools across Australia will together be stripped of \$180 million each year when a new Commonwealth funding model is fully implemented. An analysis by the Coalition of Regional Independent Schools Australia (CRISA) shows this as a seemingly unintended consequence of the new DMI funding model.

This analysis shows regional independent schools losing funding annually at an average rate of \$760 per student: by contrast this loss is \$287 per student across metropolitan independent schools.

The Chair of CRISA, Stephen Higgs, said today that he 'deplores this loss of funding because, it will result in a significant loss of educational opportunity for young people in regional Australia. And this at a time when we are doing all we can to improve outcomes for these young people who face real disadvantage, as the Federal Government itself acknowledges.

'This goes against what we need in regional Australia – we need more parental choice and greater investment in all schools, not depriving some schools of funding based on a simplistic formula concocted in Canberra.

'These funding cuts diminish the affordability of independent education for families, many of whom sacrifice a great deal to contribute to the cost of their children's education. The Government's Choice and Affordability Fund highlights the importance of these dimensions of schooling, but the Fund, while welcome, will provide only about 10% of what regional schools lose.'

The DMI funding cuts also hit regional communities, threatening jobs and the school choices available to local families. Those funding dollars are pulled out of circulation in the regional economy, at a time when many of these communities are trying to recover from the devastation of drought, fire and flood.

CRISA represents more than 40 regional and outer-metropolitan independent schools from right across Australia, serving 40,000 students and their families. Stephen Higgs today called for a response which recognises the important role independent schools play as part of the backbone of our regions, and acknowledges the economic realities of life and work in regional Australia.

'Our Principals right across Australia have enough on their hands already,' he said, 'without having to deal with unfair funding cuts. We need urgent Ministerial intervention to stand up for regional Australia and reverse these cuts.

'We have heard from many Coalition Members of Parliament who are stunned that an outcome of the Federal Government's non-government school funding policy means money being stripped from schools in country Australia. They rightly ask why the Federal Government would undermine its own stated commitment to both parental choice in school education and growth in regional Australia. We agree, and ask Federal MPs across the nation – and all who support school choice for regional families - to advocate change to this unfair policy.

'For our part, we will not stop our campaign until this issue is addressed and will highlight this issue in the public domain all the way to the Federal election and beyond if needed,' he concluded.

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