

SUBMISSION

TO

THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

**NATIONAL INQUIRY
INTO RURAL AND REMOTE EDUCATION**

On behalf of member schools

**South Australian
Independent Schools
Board Incorporated
301 Unley Road
MALVERN SA 5061**

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION - Background and Context.....3

INDEPENDENT RURAL SCHOOLS4

COUNTRY AREAS PROGRAM (CAP).....6

BOARDING OF STUDENTS8

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS 10

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
AND STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS..... 12

TECHNOLOGY 14

TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE 15

CONCLUSION 16

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS 17

APPENDIX..... 19

INTRODUCTION - Background and Context

1. The South Australian Independent Schools Board (SAISB) represents 83 independent primary and secondary non-government schools, and within that group the interests and needs of over 32,000 students. It is a peak body in the sense that it has representatives from the key interest groups within the sector. These interest groups include the Anglican Schools Commission of South Australia, SA Department For Education, Lutheran Church of Australia, Christian Community Schools Ltd, Parent Controlled Christian Schools, unaligned Christian schools, Seventh Day Adventist School, Jewish School, Islamic School, Greek Orthodox School, Uniting Church Schools, Montessori Schools, and non-denominational schools.
2. The diversity of schools represented by the SAISB can be understood in various ways; in socio-economic terms it is to be noted that of the 32,000 students enrolled, 6,670 are on School Card; 1,276 are NESB/Aboriginal, 1,596 are in the special needs category and 3,562 receive fee remissions. The 1996 ABS census data indicates that 2,648 students (11.2% of enrolments) who attend independent (non-Catholic) schools in South Australia are from families that have an annual income of \$20,800 or less. In respect of Commonwealth funding categories, 70% of ISB member schools are in Commonwealth funding categories 9-12, 12.5% are in categories 4-8 and 17.5% are in categories 1-3 (high fee schools).
3. This data underpins the range of schools that come under the aegis of the SAISB and its central role and legitimacy as the representative agency of the non-government non-catholic cohort of schools.
4. The key strategic strengths of the SAISB in representing such a diverse sector are that it provides various forums where the views and beliefs of the interest groups can be debated and it can present both the common and different views of these deliberations. It can also provide a focal point for consultation with governments.
5. The key principles that underpin the SAISB policies in relation to the terms of reference covered by this inquiry are:
 - ◇ **equity** – all children, including those from rural and remote families, have the right to receive high quality education
 - ◇ **choice and diversity** – the primary responsibility for the choice of education rests with parents whether it be in government or non-government schools. Parents in South Australia who enrol their children at independent schools contribute on average 57% of the operating costs of their school
 - ◇ **entitlement** – all young people, including those who are rural and remote, are entitled to public funding and the use of government services that

SAISB SUBMISSION

enhance their access to school education, and their choice of school, government or non-government

- ◇ **partnership** – parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children in partnership with governments, schools, community service agencies and private organisations. These groups should co-operate to contribute significantly to the education of young people.

6. This submission is an outcome of the deliberations of a reference group consisting of Principals (Primary and Secondary) and senior staff and managers from member schools and senior staff of the ISB Office.

INDEPENDENT RURAL SCHOOLS

1. Within the SAISB membership a number of rural schools operate to provide educational choice and diversity to rural and country students and their families.

2. SAISB rural member schools include:

◇ Crossways Lutheran School	Ceduna
◇ Faith Lutheran Secondary School	Tanunda
◇ Glendale Christian School	Victor Harbour
◇ Glendale Christian School	Gawler
◇ Good Shepherd Lutheran School	Angaston
◇ Horizon Christian School	Balaklava
◇ Lobethal Lutheran School	Lobethal
◇ Loxton Lutheran School	Loxton
◇ Maitland Lutheran School	Maitland
◇ Tanunda Lutheran School	Tanunda
◇ Unity College	Murray Bridge
◇ Waikerie Lutheran School	Waikerie
◇ Whyalla Christian School	Whyalla

3. This group of independent rural schools have:

- ◇ small enrolments (ie; in most cases less than 100 students)
- ◇ a belief as non-government educational institutions in providing educational choice and diversity to rural families

4. The terms of reference of the Inquiry acknowledge that within the rural and remote regions there is reduced access, choice and diversity in relation to education

SAISB SUBMISSION

services. Independent rural schools increase access, choice and diversity for rural and remote families.

5. In providing educational choice to rural families independent rural schools are committed to:
 - ◇ increasing the availability of both primary and secondary schooling to rural families
 - ◇ improving the quality of educational services to rural families, including technological support services
 - ◇ ensuring that rural students with disabilities, Indigenous students and students from diverse cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds have access to an education within their local setting that meets their individual needs.

6. For this group of rural schools the difficulties faced in delivering a competitive educational program include:
 - ◇ difficulty in attracting and retaining quality teachers and administrators
 - ◇ limited access to services provided by non-government school authorities such as the SAISB
 - ◇ difficulty in access to and the high cost of providing professional development for staff
 - ◇ high cost and availability of obtaining expert advice on the application of information technology to the development, delivery and management of a curriculum
 - ◇ high cost of purchasing current technology
 - ◇ high cost of building repairs in the country
 - ◇ difficulty in providing specialist programs, such as, languages, vocational education, music programs, or a diverse range senior secondary subjects due to difficulty in attracting staff and relatively small numbers of students
 - ◇ inequitable and inconsistent provision of transport for students to access independent schools (see section 8) in country towns
 - ◇ limited access to specialist career and course counselling for secondary students.

7. The SAISB considers that the services provided by independent rural schools must continue to be supported through recurrent funding, and that additional funding needs to be provided by the Commonwealth and State governments to assist these

SAISB SUBMISSION

schools overcome the difficulties caused through distance. Clearly these independent schools are providing choice and a valuable service to the rural communities they serve in line with the aims of this national inquiry.

8. The new Commonwealth funding arrangements for non-government schools, to be introduced in 2001, provides an opportunity to recognise the impact of distance (in addition to socio-economic indicators) on the provision of non-government school education in rural and remote areas.
9. It is also noted that in South Australia within the government, independent and Catholic education sectors no single sex schools exist in rural South Australia to provide the same choice of schooling available to metropolitan parents and students. Local single sex schooling is currently not a choice available to rural families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The SAISB recommends that:

1. **the Commonwealth recurrent funding levels for independent rural schools be enhanced through the recognition of distance/isolation in the funding formula**
2. **additional funding be provided by the Commonwealth Government to independent rural schools, through various existing programs, in order for them to address the difficulties they face in providing an educational service to a rural community**

COUNTRY AREAS PROGRAM (CAP)

1. The following independent sector schools receive CAP funding from the Commonwealth government
 - ◇ Crossways Lutheran School, Ceduna
 - ◇ Maitland Lutheran School
 - ◇ Waikerie Lutheran School
 - ◇ St John's Lutheran School, Eudunda
 - ◇ Loxton Lutheran School
 - ◇ Riverland Lutheran School, Glossop
 - ◇ Naracoorte Christian School
 - ◇ Whyalla Christian School
 - ◇ St Martin's Lutheran School, Mt Gambier
 - ◇ Horizon Christian School, Balaklava

SAISB SUBMISSION

2. The aim of the Commonwealth's Country Area Program is to improve the educational opportunities, participation, learning outcomes and personal development of rural and geographically isolated primary and secondary school students in both government and non-government schools.
3. The South Australian Independent Schools Targeted Program Authority Inc. administers the Country Areas Program on behalf of independent schools in South Australia.
4. The target group for the CAP funds are students in primary and secondary schools who are disadvantaged by geographic isolation.
5. Within the independent sector CAP funded schools have used the funds to:
 - ◇ access information technology, particularly internet, intranet and library software systems
 - ◇ fund excursions, student camps and attendance at cultural activities
 - ◇ support teachers' attendance at professional development activities for teachers
 - ◇ fund specialist teachers and visiting artists including art, drama and information technology
 - ◇ provide resources for literacy, numeracy, gifted and talented and learning assistance programs
6. The outcomes of these CAP funded programs provided by independent rural schools are:
 - ◇ improved access to technology to overcome distance
 - ◇ enhanced professional expertise in specialist areas of the curriculum
 - ◇ student access to a range of educational, cultural and sporting activities
 - ◇ opportunities for extension and support for students, incorporating the skills and resources of parents, the school and the community
7. Therefore, the SAISB strongly supports the continuation of the Country Areas Program with the identification of strategic priorities, determined in consultation with rural and remote families and communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The SAISB recommends that:

3. **the Country Areas Program be retained as a valuable strategy to assist rural schools to address issues raised by this national inquiry into rural and remote education**
4. **consideration be given by the Commonwealth to allocating specific funds for rural and remote students/schools in other Targeted Programs, eg Languages and Literacy**

BOARDING OF STUDENTS

1. A number (10) of independent schools respond to the needs of rural and remote families and students through offering boarding facilities. These boarding facilities are a valuable service to a group in the community who are at risk of being educationally disadvantaged through geographical isolation.
2. Boarding Houses aim to create a friendly and caring atmosphere where students can live happily and develop the necessary social and community skills to be successful members of society. Services provided for students in boarding houses include:
 - ◇ chaplaincy and counselling
 - ◇ medical care
 - ◇ appointments with specialists and dentists
 - ◇ after hours emergency and accident care
 - ◇ banking
 - ◇ activities and outings on weekends
 - ◇ tutoring
3. Resources required for the provision and maintenance of boarding facilities are high. The provision of the boarding facility and services is labour intensive (the ratio of staff per students is necessarily very high). The ongoing upgrading of facilities and buildings, particularly in regard to technology advancements, leisure activities and accommodation is costly.
4. Over the last 10 years there has been a decrease in the number of boarding students enrolled at South Australian independent schools (refer **Appendix**).
5. This recent decline in the number of boarders has been caused by several factors including:
 - ◇ a decline in the rural population, particularly in school age children
 - ◇ depressed economic conditions in some rural areas
 - ◇ improved distance education technology and the availability of non-government schools in some rural areas

SAISB SUBMISSION

- ◇ rising costs of boarding.
6. Many families now choose to delay sending their children to boarding schools until Years 10/11, contributing to the overall decline in student numbers.
 7. Staff working in boarding schools report that bridging courses are needed for boarding students who arrive in Year 10 in order to induct them into the life of boarding. These bridging courses are required to both address the educational standards of the students and the lifestyle transition into the boarding community within a city environment. Boarding schools state that the provision of such courses require additional resources.
 8. It has also been observed that the transition into boarding is more difficult for students of 15/16 years than younger students. Adolescent students are dealing with many issues and serious cases of homesickness can occur. Whereas younger children who more openly show their feelings and seek help seem to deal with the transition and adjust more quickly. There are many issues to deal with besides that of learning when students come to board, and significant resources are required to support students.
 9. SAISB member schools with boarding facilities believe that rural and remote students and families need additional public funds so that they can get to the “educational door” of their choice. At the moment the situation is not equitable. The choice of boarding is not available to all rural students due to the economic downturn in rural areas.
 10. Many rural and remote parents want the socialisation outcomes of education for their children provided through a boarding experience. Such aspects cannot be met to the same degree through distance education.
 11. No new boarding houses have been established in SA non-government schools recently. New non-government schools are not adding boarding to the services they provide. This service continues to be provided through existing boarding schools.
 12. Boarding costs per student are increasing as numbers decline and facilities are upgraded. Member schools with boarding facilities remain committed to providing a unique educational experience for young people from rural areas. Despite the overall decline in the number of boarders, several independent schools are upgrading their boarding facilities because of their belief in providing a high quality educational opportunity for rural families and to meet the expectations of parents.
 13. All of the independent boarding schools are high fee schools and it is automatically assumed by many in the community that families who send their children to board at these schools are rich. Many rural and remote parents make considerable sacrifices to educate their children through boarding schools in the city. Examples quoted include significant loans and overdrafts, and the sale of farm equipment.

SAISB SUBMISSION

14. For some rural families education involves the mother moving to Adelaide. Families buy a house in Adelaide rather than paying boarding fees. The purchase of a house is seen as a more profitable use of family funds.
15. The Commonwealth Government provides a non-means tested Isolated Children's Allowance to families of \$3500 per annum. Students must be under 19 years of age, in full secondary schooling and meet several criteria related to the definition of isolation. A means tested allowance to a maximum of \$877 per student is also available to families. This allowance is not available to families with an income above \$27325. The State government provides a per capita grant to schools of approximately \$1000 per year. It also provides a grant to families of \$1080 per secondary student per year. The later grant is payable to families who are eligible for the Commonwealth's Isolated Children Allowance and are resident in South Australia.
16. The independent sector recognises that there is a tension between students leaving the rural area to board and maintenance of the rural infrastructure. It acknowledges that in students coming to boarding schools the situation for the rural/country school and community is often exacerbated.
17. However, the current situation with regard the access to boarding school as an option is not equitable. This choice is not available to many economically disadvantaged rural and remote families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The SAISB recommends that:

5. **Commonwealth and State Governments recognise that boarding schools continue to provide a viable educational option for rural and remote families**
6. **greater financial support be provided to families of boarding students and schools providing boarding services**
7. **boarding allowances provided by the Commonwealth and State governments be increased and the formulae used to determine these grants be reviewed to provide more equitable access to boarding as a choice of education for more rural and remote families**

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Indigenous Student Support Programs

1. A wide range of strategies and support services are provided within the independent sector in South Australia to assist schools to meet the needs of rural Indigenous students.

SAISB SUBMISSION

2. Independent schools have access to literacy and numeracy programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in South Australia, through the Commonwealth Targeted Programs and other initiatives.
3. Independent schools have access to a wide range of support services that create an awareness and understanding of the needs of Indigenous students. The SA Independent Schools Targeted Programs Authority Inc. receives funds from the Commonwealth to deliver these services, in particular through the Literacy program.
4. A number of programs operating within the independent sector deliver direct support to students as well as providing the opportunity for Indigenous students to develop their friendship network with Indigenous students from other independent schools.
5. Strategies, which have increased the successful participation, retention and achievement of rural Indigenous students within the independent sector include:
 - ◇ a Camps program (focussing on life skills, leadership and vocational skills)
 - ◇ use of E-mail by students to enhance their communication and development of relationships with each other at different schools
 - ◇ videoconference sessions for students and parents
 - ◇ combined schools / Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) committee meetings and social events
 - ◇ prompt access to the Aboriginal Tutoring Support Scheme (ATAS).

Indigenous Students at Independent Boarding Schools

6. In 1998 four (4) independent schools with boarding facilities provided boarding for 19 Indigenous students (seven boys and twelve girls). In 1999, two (2) independent schools with boarding facilities are providing for 16 Indigenous students (four boys and twelve girls).
7. Data gathered for the past three (3) years shows that Indigenous boarding students who have achieved the SACE have been girls.
8. Indigenous boy boarders have not been well represented at the senior years (11 and 12), relative to Indigenous girl boarders. A smaller number of Indigenous boys enrol and a greater percentage do not complete their senior years of schooling.
9. The overall attendance rate for Indigenous students boarding in independent schools is consistently high (96% attendance). This attendance rate is equal to that of their non-Indigenous boarding peers, and is well above the non-boarding Indigenous students and non-boarding non-Indigenous students. Clearly boarding is a positive factor in increasing attendance rates for Indigenous students.

SAISB SUBMISSION

10. Improved educational outcomes for Indigenous students who access school education through independent boarding schools is related to the consistency of academic and personal support provided, as well as to the arrangements for ATAS to take place on the school site.
11. Homesickness mitigates against the retention of some Aboriginal students in boarding schools. It is a significant factor, which accounts for a number of Indigenous boarding students leaving within the first six months of their arrival at the school.
12. In summary, the issues for the independent sector in meeting educational needs of rural and remote Aboriginal students are:
 - ◇ differential rates of participation, retention and achievement for Indigenous boys and girls
 - ◇ increasing the access of Indigenous students to independent schools with boarding facilities
 - ◇ improving the retention of Indigenous students in boarding facilities as the academic and personal support provided by this structure (if the student is retained) leads to success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The SAISB recommends that:

8. **the literacy and numeracy support provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the Commonwealth Government initiatives be retained**
9. **Commonwealth and State Government funds be allocated and targeted towards improving the participation, retention and achievement for Indigenous students, particularly in the senior years**
10. **Commonwealth funds be allocated to investigate and establish increased access for rural Indigenous students to independent boarding schools**

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

1. The South Australian Independent Schools Commonwealth Targeted Programs initiative supports special learning needs programs and special education programs for rural students in rural independent schools.
2. The objectives of these programs are to improve the educational participation and outcomes for young people with disabilities, and young people with learning needs.

SAISB SUBMISSION

3. Within the independent sector the following programs currently operate to support rural students with disabilities and special needs:
 - ◇ The School Support Component of the Commonwealth Special Education Program provides funds via the SA Independent Schools Targeted Programs Authority Inc. to fund 2.4 staff who offer the following services to independent school:
 - assistance with the enrolment and ongoing support of students with disabilities
 - grants for capital equipment and minor building modifications to provide essential access to school for students with disabilities
 - funding for Psychological and Speech Assessments
 - Special Education Key Teacher Grants which allocate a small additional per capita grant for each student with a moderate to severe disability in schools with more than 3 students with disabilities. Educational accountability is attendance by the nominated teacher at 2 days of professional development activities.
 - professional development opportunities in disability awareness; learning difficulties; the implications of disability legislation, and curriculum development
 - ◇ Non school organisations such as Cora Barclay Centre for the Hearing Impaired, Crippled Children’s Association, Autism Association, Down Syndrome Society, Townsend School and Access Assistants offer a visiting teacher service for students with disabilities who meet their criteria
4. The outcomes of such programs are:
 - ◇ increased access, participation and achievement of students with disabilities in independent school
 - ◇ professional development of principals, teachers, school assistants and the school community in all issues related to the education of students with disabilities
5. Teachers in independent boarding schools have observed that within their school’s student cohort there are more students with special learning needs among the boarders. They believe that this pattern may be due to lack of early intervention during their primary education. Bridging classes are available to these students. This area requires greater investigation and research both at the individual school level and at the school sector level.
6. Some teachers have also observed within their school’s student cohort that there are more boys with special learning needs amongst the boarders. More

SAISB SUBMISSION

investigation and research is needed both at the school and sector level to verify this observation, identify the causes and establish strategies and resources to address the issue.

7. Students with medical conditions including Cystic Fibrosis, kidney disease, diabetes, and asthma are accommodated and supported within boarding houses. The care and support of these students requires additional time and at times the specialised training of staff. Such care is resource intensive.
8. In summary, the main issues for the independent sector in providing educational services to rural and remote students with learning needs, and rural and remote students with disabilities are appropriate levels of funding and expertise to support students' educational needs, and teacher and management professional development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The ISB recommends that:

- 11. students with disabilities from rural and remote areas are funded according to their educational needs, particularly in the areas of transport, equipment and building modifications, individual educational support and therapy services**
- 12. schools that enrol students with disabilities from rural and remote areas be provided with additional funds to support teacher professional development in the area of disability and associated curriculum issues**
- 13. the Commonwealth undertake a project to determine the special learning needs of students from rural and remote areas that enrol at boarding schools**

TECHNOLOGY

1. The potential of technology for reducing rural and remote students' isolation and lack of access to information is enormous. Currently due to high costs, technology is widening the gap between students in city locations and rural and remote locations.
2. Independent rural schools face significant challenges in providing their students with access to technology that is equivalent to that provided to students in city schools. Examples of the technology difficulties faced by rural schools include:
 - ◇ server provision - an independent school on Yorke Peninsula reported that there was no server on Yorke Peninsula until recently and currently it is not able to meet the demand

SAISB SUBMISSION

- ◇ STD phone calls are expensive in country areas and this makes the use of IT inequitable between the country and the city, and limits rural school students' access to information
 - ◇ other rural schools struggle within their resources to have access to the most basic of technology to aid communication – for example fax machines. This particularly applies to small independent schools that do not have the resources of a large government system
 - ◇ the costs of installing, maintaining, servicing technology equipment, and accessing technical expertise and staff professional development in relation to technology, is far greater in rural areas.
3. The utilisation of information technology for the benefit of rural and remote students raises a range of questions about what constitutes a “school” as an institution. Current outmoded legislative/regulation definitions could restrict a more flexible approach to the provision on education to rural and remote students. The ISB considers that the potential of information technology to significantly improve the access to quality education for rural and remote families must not be impeded by traditional definitions of attendance and schooling.

RECOMMENDATION

The SAISB recommends that:

- 14. the Commonwealth and State governments allocate additional resources to non-government schools that will ensure equitable and reliable access in rural, remote and metropolitan regions to information technology that can be used for educational and management purposes**

TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE

1. There are many anomalies between States and transport companies in the pricing and concessions for boarding students returning home from school. This is another illustration of inequity for rural and remote parents and their children.
2. Access to bus transport is a major issue for students attending independent rural schools. There is limited and inconsistent access to bus transport for non-government students in rural areas.
3. In addition there is limited access for independent rural school students to the State Government school bus services in South Australia that currently operate in rural and country regions. This is yet another example of discrimination against families who choose to send their children to a non-government school. If they enrolled their children at a government school this service would be available.

SAISB SUBMISSION

4. The lack of access to buses for rural independent students also limits their access to community resources and events in larger urban centres that can enhance their breadth and quality of education. Without consistent and good access to buses it is difficult for independent rural schools to organise excursions for their students to these activities held in metropolitan and larger urban areas.
5. The major issue for independent rural schools is equitable, reliable and consistent access to bus transport and services for their students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The SAISB recommends that:

15. **the Commonwealth and State governments initiate policies to ensure there is equitable, reliable and consistent access for independent rural school students to bus transport**
16. **action be taken to ensure there is state and nation wide consistency and equity in transport provisions for boarding students**

CONCLUSION

1. Through the development of this submission the South Australian independent schooling sector has identified some major issues in relation to education for rural and remote students.
2. These issues are related to the principles of:
 - ◇ *equity*
 - ◇ *choice*
 - ◇ *entitlement*
3. It is critical that:
 - ◇ *equitable access* exists for all rural and remote students and their families to the range of educational strategies and services provided. Face to face local schooling, boarding school and distance education, or combinations of these, must be well resourced and viable options (government and non-government) for all rural and remote families.
 - ◇ parents are able exercise their *choice* in selecting the educational services most appropriate to their children's needs, culture and beliefs
 - ◇ rural and remote students' *entitlement* to public funding and the use of government services enhances their access to school education, and choice of school, non-government or government

SAISB SUBMISSION

4. In particular, the independent sector highlights the following six areas as *issues to be most urgently explored* and addressed in order to change educational access and outcomes for rural and remote students:
 - ◇ increased recurrent funding for independent schools in rural areas, based on the impact of isolation on access to educational services
 - ◇ allocation of specific funds within Targeted Programs (eg literacy) for students attending rural; and remote non-government schools
 - ◇ perceived gender differences for rural and remote students in relation to participation, retention and achievement and the outcomes of schooling
 - ◇ differential rates of participation, retention and achievement for rural and remote Indigenous male and female students
 - ◇ access to up-to date technology and technological support services in rural and remote South Australia
 - ◇ withdrawal of educational support services from families when their children move from the government to the non-government sector.
5. Creative thinking and additional resources need to be applied to create more equitable access for all rural and remote students to education.
6. South Australia provides some excellent models of school education for children from rural and remote areas – local independent schools in rural areas, distance education, boarding schools or combinations of these. However, these need to be resourced, particularly in relation to targeted groups of students, to ensure equitable access and outcomes for all students.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

INDEPENDENT RURAL SCHOOLS

The SAISB recommends that:

1. **the Commonwealth recurrent funding levels for independent rural schools be enhanced through the recognition of distance/isolation in the funding formula**
2. **additional funding be provided by the Commonwealth Government to independent rural schools, through various existing programs, in order for them to address the difficulties they face in providing an educational service to a rural community**

COUNTRY AREAS PROGRAM

SAISB SUBMISSION

The SAISB recommends that:

3. the Country Areas Program be retained as a valuable strategy to assist rural schools to address issues raised by this national inquiry into rural and remote education
4. consideration be given by the Commonwealth to allocating specific funds for rural and remote students/schools in other Targeted Programs, eg Languages and Literacy

INDEPENDENT BOARDING SCHOOLS

The SAISB recommends that:

5. Commonwealth and State Governments recognise that boarding schools continue to provide a viable educational option for rural and remote families
6. greater financial support be provided to families of boarding students and schools providing boarding services
7. boarding allowances provided by the Commonwealth and State governments be increased and the formulae used to determine these grants be reviewed to provide more equitable access to boarding as a choice of education for more rural and remote families

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

The SAISB recommends that:

8. the literacy and numeracy support provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the Commonwealth Government initiative be retained
9. Commonwealth and State Government funds be allocated and targeted towards improving the participation, retention and achievement for Indigenous students, particularly in the senior years
10. Commonwealth funds be allocated to investigate and establish increased access for rural Indigenous students to independent boarding schools

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES and STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The SAISB recommends that:

11. students with disabilities from rural and remote areas are funded according to their educational needs, particularly in the areas of transport, equipment

and building modifications, individual educational support and therapy services

12. schools that enrol students with disabilities from rural and remote areas be provided with additional funds to support teacher professional development in the area of disability and associated curriculum issues
13. the Commonwealth undertake a project to determine the special learning needs of students from rural and remote areas that enrol at boarding schools

TECHNOLOGY

The SAISB recommends that:

14. the Commonwealth and State governments allocate additional resources to non-government schools that will ensure equitable and reliable access in rural, remote and metropolitan regions to information technology that can be used for educational and management purposes

TRANSPORT

The SAISB recommends that:

15. the Commonwealth and State governments initiate policies to ensure there is equitable, reliable and consistent access for independent rural school students to bus transport
16. action be taken to ensure there is state and nation wide consistency and equity in transport provisions for boarding students

APPENDIX

BOARDERS IN NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS PERIOD 1985 - 1999

YEAR	NUMBER
1985	1561
1990	1461
1995	1281
1999	1168