

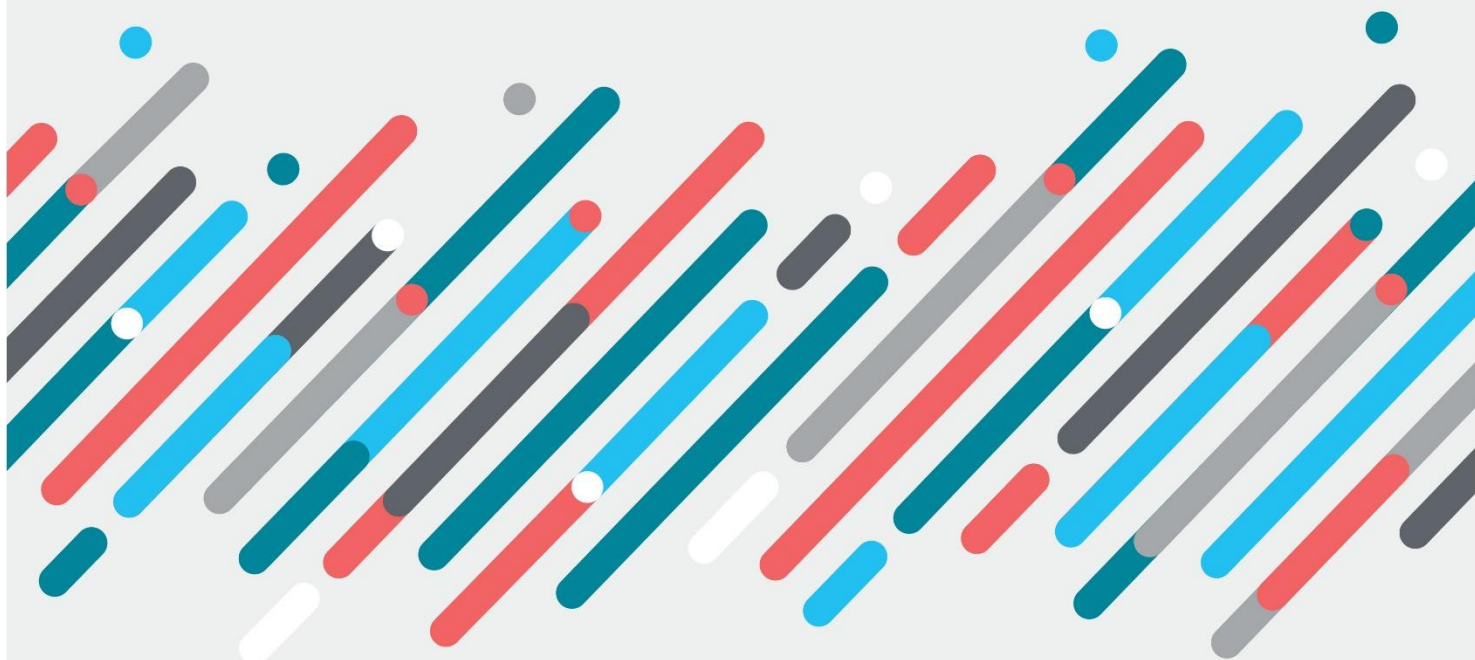


Australian Government
Department of Education

Choice and Affordability Fund Work Plan 2026-27

Independent Schools Tasmania

Date agreed – 21 November 2025





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The document must be attributed as the Choice and Affordability Fund Workplan 2026-27 Independent Schools Tasmania.

Work Plan 2026-27

From 2020 to 2025, Independent Schools Tasmania (IST) has utilised Choice and Affordability Funding to address sector challenges and strengthen support for non-government schools across Tasmania.

In 2026–2027, IST will continue to focus funding across four established projects, each aligned with identified priorities. These projects represent targeted, sustainable strategies that extend beyond IST’s normal service provision and are designed to ensure equitable access, improved outcomes, and strengthened wellbeing for students, schools, and communities.

Project 1 – Special Circumstance Funding (Priority c)

The Choice and Affordability Fund will continue to support schools and students impacted by special circumstances or located in rural, regional, or remote communities. Funding will remain available to provide short-term emergency support for schools facing unanticipated challenges, including natural disasters or significant financial disruptions.

As a contingency, \$100,000 pa will be set aside in 2026 through 2027, to provide assistance for schools in eligible situations.

Project 2 – Strengthening Outcomes for Schools and Educationally Disadvantaged Schools and Students (Priority d)

Tasmania’s independent schools are dispersed across diverse communities, many of which experience social and educational disadvantage. The Choice and Affordability Fund will continue to strengthen outcomes for these schools by providing access to professional learning, curriculum support, and capacity building. This project also supports schools in meeting curriculum, registration, and compliance requirements, and in developing approaches to improve student learning and engagement across varied contexts.

Project 3 – Student Wellbeing and Support (Priority e)

Student wellbeing remains central to effective learning and development. This project will continue to provide schools with support in embedding inclusive practice, strengthening wellbeing initiatives, and ensuring safe, supportive, and respectful learning environments. Guidance on national data collection processes and wellbeing-related professional learning will also remain a core focus.

Project 4 – Transition Assistance (Priority b)

Tasmania has a small number of independent schools directly affected by transition arrangements to the Direct Measure of Income (DMI) model for capacity to contribute. This project will continue to provide targeted support to schools eligible for regional assistance, while also offering broader guidance to the sector in understanding and managing changes to recurrent funding models.

Conclusion

The continuation of these four projects under the Choice and Affordability Fund in 2026–2027 ensures that IST can provide sustainable, targeted, and equitable support to independent schools across Tasmania. These initiatives directly strengthen capacity in schools, improve student outcomes, and enhance wellbeing, while providing contingency for schools experiencing special circumstances.

Beyond Normal Service Provision

IST’s core work includes representation, advocacy, and communication on behalf of member schools, including participation on cross-sectoral state and national bodies. All projects identified in this plan extend beyond IST’s normal service provision and are specifically enabled through Choice and Affordability funding.

Overarching Risk Management

Risk	Treatment: How the risk will be managed
Risk 1: A Consultant/s employed with CAF funding resigns.	The position will be advertised immediately, and a replacement employee found within a 3-month timeframe.
Risk 2: Schools do not engage with the support and/or professional learning opportunities provided by the Education Consultant/s.	Regular reports are collated and reviewed by the Executive Director. If in sufficient or inappropriate engagement is identified, appropriate action is taken to ensure a school re-engages.

Budget for 2026–2027

Priority	Activities/Initiatives	2026		2027	
		Centralised	Distributed	Centralised	Distributed
A – Choice & Affordability B – Transition Assistance B – Transition Assistance D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students E – Student wellbeing and support F- Special Circumstances	Regional Transition Assistance General	\$0 \$484,000 \$484,000	\$0 \$460,125 \$38,978 \$100,000	\$0 \$582,000 \$582,000	\$0 \$460,125 \$38,978 \$100,000
Administrative costs		\$32,000		\$36,000	
Total		\$1,000,000	\$599,103	\$1,200,000	\$599,103

Other funding sources - Nil

Activity/Initiative	Project 1 – Special Circumstance Funding
Priority	C – Special Circumstances Funding

Description

The Choice and Affordability Fund will support schools and students impacted by special circumstances or in priority areas such as rural, regional and remote locations and areas affected by natural disasters.

Circumstances that may cause a school to require short term emergency assistance remain unknown so a contingency (\$100,000 p.a.) will be set aside in 2026 and 2027 to provide assistance for schools.

Situations that arise may be:

- **Unexpected** (The incident could not have been reasonably foreseen)
- **Causing severe financial difficulty** (Where a school faces a real prospect of having to cease a large part of its educational activities or significantly lower its educational services)
- **Short term** (Schools should be able to overcome their financial difficulty and resume operations and must provide a five-year business and recovery plan)
- **Due to a special need** (Schools have exhausted all other options to remedy the financial situation of the school)

Should the full funds set aside for special circumstances funding through 2026 - 2027 not be needed, they will be either kept for future special circumstances funding or transferred to other priorities in a future work plan.

Eligible schools

All represented schools.

Timeframes

The assistance will be delivered to an eligible school in the amounts and times of need indicated by its five-year business and recovery plan, once reviewed and accepted by IST.

Outcomes

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Any school receiving assistance will overcome its financial difficulty and resume viable operations	• School provides a five-year business and recovery plan to IST • The business and recovery plan is reviewed in a timely manner by IST • Tasmanian Schools Registration Board confirms that with appropriate intervention, the school meets the standard to retain registration • School remains open • School returns to a financially sustainable position

Key stakeholders

- Any school being assisted by this activity
- Any affiliated body the school may be a member of (e.g. Steiner Education Australia)
- Tasmanian Non-Government School Registration Board (NGSRB)
- The Australian Department of Education

Activity/Initiative	Project 2 – Strengthening Outcomes for Schools and Educationally Disadvantaged Schools and Students
Priority	D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students

Description

The entirety of Tasmania is identified as a regional zone with students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds presenting in schools across all areas of the state. As such, our independent schools are located across a vast area, often operating within quite isolated contexts.

In 2020, IST established a new role and appointed an Education Consultant to work alongside schools to support them in all aspects of academic progress and development. A second Educational Consultant was appointed in 2024. These two roles are now split across the north and the south of the state.

The Education Consultants work within schools as well as providing regular support and guidance via phone, emails and webinars. These roles have assisted schools to feel less isolated and educationally disadvantaged through the provision of regular, relevant professional learning and support that is targeted to their unique school contexts.

The Education Consultants works with schools within the context of the Australian Curriculum and assist schools to fulfil their registration requirements for Tasmanian Independent Schools in order to meet the needs of students from a diverse range of backgrounds. They are expected to source, organise and deliver professional learning to our schools, in order to address a range of educational issues associated with the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. The Executive Director maintains oversight of the project liaising on a regular basis with the Consultants and school leaders.

Additional Project 1: This project will support Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) for Tasmanian Independent Schools. Between 2004 and 2019 annual funding has been provided to independent schools via a range of agencies, under relevant National Partnerships.

From 2019 - 2023, IST used its accumulated funds to employ a part-time consultant to support the uptake of VETiS programs, including Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbAs) and the more general Vocational Learning and Career Education initiatives. CAF was used in 2024 – 2025 to employ a VETiS consultant which had a significant impact on the uptake of VET programs amongst independent schools and strengthened outcomes for schools and students in this area of vital life-long learning.

An allocation of \$60,000 in 2026 and \$60,000 in 2027 will be used to continue to employ a consultant part-time.

Additional Project 2: This project will continue to provide training for school board members and leaders to improve school governance, financial management and regulatory compliance. This vital support had previously been funded by the Australian Government Non-Government School Reform Support Fund (NGRSF) which ceased in 2023. CAF was used in 2024 – 2025 to provide this support to schools.

An allocation of \$20,000 in 2026 and \$20,000 in 2027 will be used to continue this support.

Eligible schools

All represented schools.

Timeframes

2026-2027

Outcomes

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
The IST Education Consultants will: • Conduct comprehensive consult visits in schools, providing assistance with each school's strategic planning which includes strategies to assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds. • Review school specific data to identify relevant school-based interventions. • Facilitate professional learning sessions focused to improve student outcomes, with a focus around support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. • Regularly promote best practice and current research to all IST schools. • Conduct visits to individual schools to deliver Professional Learning sessions, review current practice and provide exemplars for future practice. • Ensure ongoing liaison with ACARA, peak bodies and external consultants to review current best practice and inform IST schools accordingly. • Liaise and network with cross- sector representatives to ensure alignment and support for Tasmanian independent schools. • Liaise with other IST consultants to provide coordinated school support across all learning areas and phases of learning. • Represent the Tasmanian independent sector on relevant state and federal committees.	The IST Education Consultant/s will: • Maintain a daily diary of all school visits and hold records of all communications with IST schools, demonstrating evidence of ongoing quality support to 100% of the independent schools across Tasmania. • Facilitate a minimum of 10 PL sessions per year (both in-school and/or online) for independent schools across Tasmania per calendar year and collate and analyse 100% of feedback forms collected from attendees. • Represent IST in specified curriculum committees and events. • Ensure all (100%) of Tasmanian Independent Schools within the identified region benefit from ongoing, pertinent curriculum advice and have access to a range of quality outsourced PL opportunities with records maintained to provide evidence of the support offered and levels of school take-up. • Record evidence of planning support and documentation, outlining academic improvement (gain either qualitative or quantitative) over time in a minimum of 5 schools per calendar year, with priority support provided to schools with high numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. • Retain records of attendance at state and federal committees.

Key stakeholders

All Tasmanian independent schools.

Activity/Initiative	Project 3 – Student Wellbeing and Support
Priority	E – Student Wellbeing and Support

Description

In an attempt to enhance student wellbeing and support across Tasmanian Independent Schools, in 2020, IST appointed a full-time Inclusive Education Consultant to work across the state. This new role was advertised, and an PD and Business Plan was developed. A second Consultant was appointed in 2023.

The Inclusive Education Consultant's roles now encompasses supporting independent schools to embed inclusive practice and wellbeing initiatives within their schools. Assistance with NCCD provisions and submissions forms an additional component of this project.

The Inclusive Education Consultants are responsible for developing and leading school-based professional learning, and utilising empirical research to underpin professional learning around the provision of inclusive practice and wellbeing within schools. Their roles involve working in an instructional coaching capacity to support K-12 classroom leaders and teachers and they have provision within their budget to provide resources and additional professional learning opportunities, as required.

The Executive Director maintains oversight of the project liaising on a regular basis with the Consultants and school leaders.

Eligible schools

All represented schools.

Timeframes

2026-2027.

Outcomes

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
The Inclusive Education Consultants will: • Conduct a variety of face-to-face consultancies, tailored professional learning sessions, briefings, group presentations, session facilitation and instructional coaching. The audience for these may be individuals or groups of people including principals, school executives, classroom teachers and professional support staff within Tasmanian independent schools. • Provide responsive, pastoral support to schools about student issues that may arise within a school context to minimise impact and assist the school to plan effectively and in a timely manner to best respond to the pastoral and specific needs and interests of their students. • Support the specific learning needs of identified students at whole-school, whole-class and individual levels within Tasmanian independent schools. • Guide and support schools in understanding and applying relevant processes associated with the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD). • Support school executives and teachers in the education of students with identified needs, K- 12, providing assistance with appropriate planning practices. • Respond to schools' requests for support regarding student pastoral and wellbeing matters and provide timely, professional guidance in consideration of appropriate evidence-base and legislative context. • Deliver effective professional learning both face-to-face and online for staff within independent schools, on other interrelated topics, as well as developing associated resources. • Represent IST and the independent school sector on committees and in a variety of inclusive education and wellbeing forums in a professional manner.	The Inclusive Education Consultants will: • Maintain a daily diary of all school visits and hold records of all communications with IST schools, demonstrating evidence of ongoing quality support to 100% of the independent schools across Tasmania. • Facilitate a minimum of 10 PL sessions per year (both in-school and/or online) for independent schools across Tasmania per calendar year and collate and analyse 100% of feedback forms collected from attendees. • Represent IST in specified curriculum committees and events. • Ensure all (100%) of Tasmanian Independent Schools within the identified region benefit from ongoing, pertinent advice and have access to a range of quality outsourced PL opportunities with records maintained to provide evidence of the support offered and levels of school take-up. • Record evidence of work with Tasmanian independent schools to construct proactive wellbeing and inclusion school planning, with records retained per calendar year, in a minimum of 5 schools per calendar year. • Retain records of attendance at state and federal committees.

Key stakeholders

All Tasmanian independent schools.

Activity/Initiative	Project 4 – Transition Assistance
Priority	B – Transition Assistance

Description

There are no Tasmanian independent schools that would have met the criteria to have access to support through the National Adjustment Assistance Fund.

The Choice and Affordability Fund has provided regional assistance for five eligible schools during their transition to the Direct Measure of Income for capacity to contribute during 2022 to 2025. This project will continue that support for 2026 – 2027.

The Choice and Affordability Fund will also provide support for schools in general to transition to a new capacity to contribute model for recurrent funding if required.

Eligible schools

Schools that meet the following nationally agreed criteria:

- ARIA greater than zero
- DMI CTC higher than SES score by 3 or more points
- Receive less Commonwealth funding in any year from 2022 to 2029 under DMI than 2019 indexed SES funding
- Average fee levels below a specific benchmark (\$20,000 in 2020)

Timeframes

Annual payments in 2026 and 2027.

Outcomes

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Any school assisted will gradually adjust its fees and/or expenditure over the period 2026-2027 to enable the school to continue viable operations beyond 2029 without further additional financial assistance	Before each annual payment, the Chair of the school board provides a financial assurance letter stating that: - The Board of (name)school, at its meeting on (date), reviewed a 10-year financial plan for the school that incorporated appropriate assumptions, including per student funding based on the school's current CTC (DMI) score and including CAF transition assistance funding. - In the opinion of the Board, the school will, throughout the 10-year period of the plan: - Be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due and payable. - Meet the requirement under the Australian Education Act to be financially viable; and - Comply with Tasmanian Registration Standard 6 – that the school has sufficient financial resources to provide the education for which it is registered. Schools will provide annual financial reports for 2026 and 2027 as evidence of achievement of planned progress.

Key stakeholders

- Any school being assisted by this activity
- Non-Government School Registration Board (NGSRB)

2026-27 CAF Workplan NGRB Sign Off

This 2026-27 CAF Workplan is submitted in fulfillment of the workplan requirement in part 4 of the CAF Agreement and I understand that, once approved, the work plan forms Attachment A to the CAF Agreement.

**Name and Position of the
person signing off on behalf of
the NGRB:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Simon Matthews, Executive Director

Date: 27 October 2025