

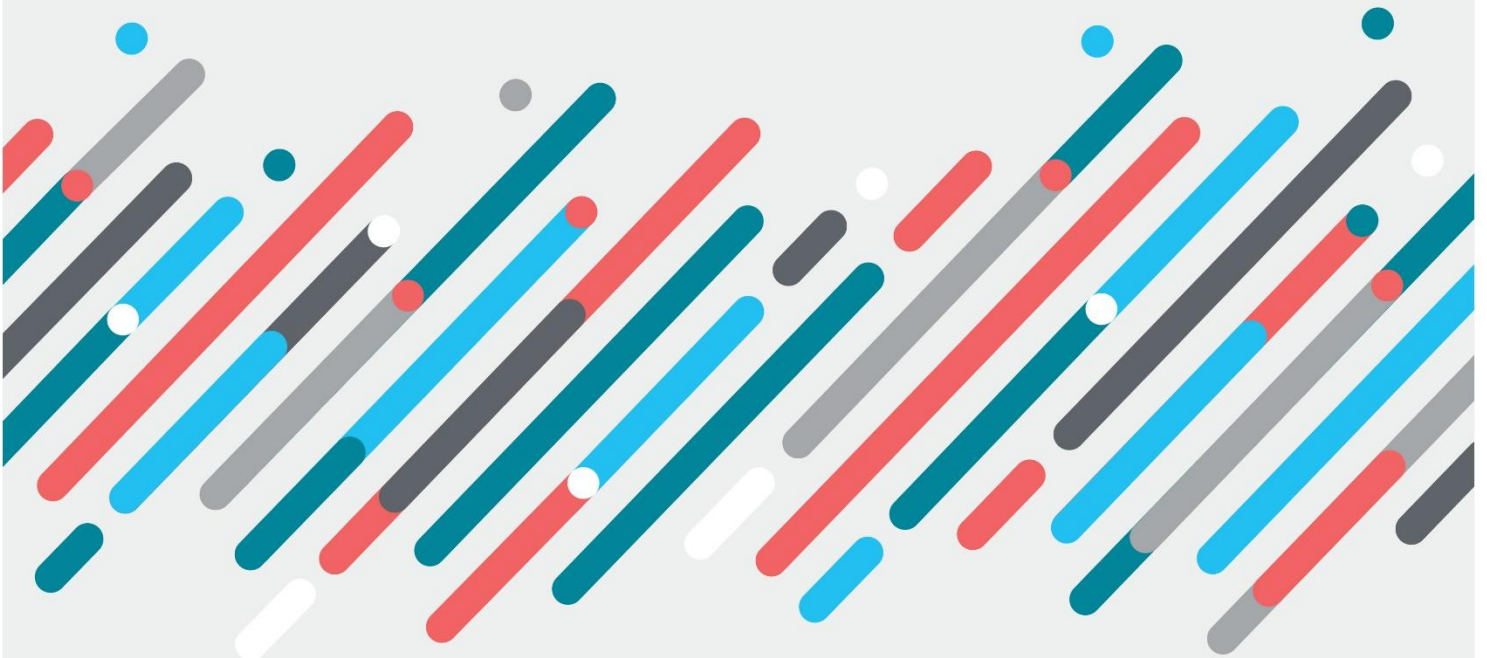


Australian Government
Department of Education

Choice and Affordability Fund Work Plan 2026-27

Independent Schools Victoria

Date agreed – 21 November 2025





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The document must be attributed as the Choice and Affordability Fund Work Plan 2026-27 – Independent Schools Victoria.

Summary of Work Plan 2026-27

In our 2024 Annual Report we highlighted that 2024 was a time for review and re-evaluation and to unpack the contemporary challenges faced by Independent schools while maintaining optimum support. Our research (Independent schools survey, Deputy Principal's Network, Business Managers Forum and follow up regional roadshows with individual schools/regional groups) brought into sharp focus that multiple and wide-ranging factors are impacting schools. These are increasing and changing the demands on schools and forcing them to adapt. The solutions and support offered by ISV must also continue to evolve, with 'one size fits all' solutions less effective than nuanced and customised approaches.

Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) supports a diverse community of schools. The broad diversity presents challenges in how ISV serves their varied needs. The unique perspectives of each school are critical, but so are the common goals including providing all students with access to excellent teaching and rich experiences regardless of socio-economic status, location, faith and other factors.

The importance of embracing diversity has been clearly articulated through our research, including more granular segmentation and facilitation of effective collaboration. Schools also need access to support beyond normal service provision. This is the focus of our plan. Schools will be encouraged to be closely involved with the creation of solutions that they identify as valuable by being party to the process in delivering services that will help them remain viable and thrive by delivering the culture and services they promise to the families that entrust them with their child's care and education.

ISV will create a series of forums for key roles or for specific groups to workshop solutions identified in this plan and beyond. The forums will include the key criteria of the Choice and Affordability Fund at the centre as a framework for input. School representatives will be integral to an ongoing process of continued improvement to refine approaches, designs and useability to ensure currency and identify future refinements. All schools will be appraised, on a regular basis, of progress of all projects.

Risk	Response: How the risk will be managed
Availability/ability of school personnel to attend and participate in workshops, review prototypes and test solutions in their own environment.	Other forms of input will be made available; questionnaires; virtual attendance, assistance with travel costs for remote and regional schools.
Pace of change surpasses project objective.	Annual reviews of each initiative will be built into individual project plans to evaluate status and current relevance. This process will inform decisions on stopping, continuing or adjusting programs that will be recorded in our Annual Reports.

Budget for 2026–2027

Priority	Activities/Initiatives	FY 2026		FY2027	
		Centralised	Distributed	Centralised	Distributed
A Choice & Affordability	Safeguarding your School's Future	\$1,829,046.00		\$1,636,508.00	
B Transition Assistance					
· Regional assistance (Regional)		\$54,225.00	\$ 5,213,562.00	\$59,647.00	\$ 10,938,302.00
· Transition assistance (NAAF)		\$175,692.00	\$ 930,327.06	\$193,261.00	\$ 1,833,684.55
· Additional assistance (Other)		\$85,256.00	\$ 1,909,272.94	\$74,692.00	\$ 3,728,013.45
C Special Circumstances Funding		\$56,283.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$58,535.00	\$500,000.00
D Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students	Dynamic Funding for Emerging School Challenges	\$267,863.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$538,660.00	\$3,000,000.00
	Professional Learning	\$817,772.00		\$262,451.00	
	Digital Enablers	\$2,345,546.00		\$2,595,017.00	
E Student Wellbeing and Support	Targeted Wellbeing Support	\$825,134.00		\$894,139.00	
Administrative costs		\$305,970.00		\$526,258	
Total		\$6,762,787.00	\$ 9,203,162.00	\$ 6,839,168	\$20,000,000

Note: As per section 45 of our agreement, ISV has varied the funding allocated to transition assistance (priority b) in response to increased demand for greater financial support, particularly in the near-term years. Schools feel strongly that this support will enable them to better prepare for change and ensure sustainability and for the priorities of the fund to be achieved according to the specific needs of independent schools.

***Assistance for regional schools has been quarantined in the ISV CAF budget 2026 – 2029 and will be provided to the eligible schools within the CAF period.*

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Safeguarding your School's Future
Priority	A – Choice and Affordability

Description

ISV will build on existing work and develop new supports to provide schools with digital services that will help schools to diagnose and more effectively manage susceptibility to risks. Digital services are critical to ensuring delivery is scalable and efficient, ensuring ISV service exists beyond the grant funding. These digital services will be aligned to risks that schools are focused on including:

- Financial/economic performance
- Educational performance
- Funding forecasting and management
- Social, demographic and cultural factors
- Student, parent and community engagement
- Employment and salary data

Support will be provided to schools to make data-driven decisions that enhance strategic decision making where there are gaps in information. Schools will be better enabled to plan operationally, set measurable goals and build capability in leaderships, teaching and engagement and to recognise where they may face pressure to their short- and long-term sustainability.

Eligible schools

All Victorian Independent schools that ISV are approved to represent.

Timeframes

Activities will be delivered within the current Work Plan period of 2026-2027.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Automated data integration	<p>Accuracy and quality. High data integrity by minimising errors during extraction and loading process.</p> <p>System performance and efficiency. Meets and exceeds performance benchmarks.</p> <p>Scalability and flexibility. Scalable to accommodate growing data volumes, new data sources and demands of schools with specific needs.</p>
Provision of insights for school leadership into areas of strength and need	Improved capacity / confidence of principals to lead schools as measured by parents, board members and other members of the community.

Key stakeholders	
Participating schools and their parents	The activity helps schools align their philosophy with the need and wants of existing and prospective parents and will assist parents in choosing a school that is right for their child.
Eligible school leadership teams	Resources will be adopted by participating school leadership teams who will be supported by ISV.

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative	Transition Assistance for schools to the Direct Measure of Income Funding (Regional Assistance Schools, former National Adjustment Assistance Fund and other transition schools)
Priority	B – Transition Assistance

Description

ISV will continue to provide distributed funding transition assistance to nominated Regional Assistance Schools, other Victorian Independent Schools that either experience reduced funding as a result of the move to the DMI funding methodology compared to the former SES funding methodology, or are eligible under the former National Adjustment Assistance Fund (NAAF). These schools will be required to submit a Sustainability Plan to ISV in early 2026 for the period 2026 - 2027 and annual updates to ISV for each of those years. ISV will ensure compliance with these reports and provide direct assistance to schools for development and completion of plans.

Plans must demonstrate alignment with the CAF funding priorities, including how the plan:

- Delivers a positive impact to the school community
- Demonstrates effective and efficient use of funding
- Helps the school to transition by 2029 to its new funding entitlement under the DMI.

These schools will also be able to access other ISV initiatives supported by the CAF. The development and implementation of these initiatives will be supported by centralised expenditure of the CAF covered in other parts of this report.

ISV is focused on distributing funding to schools that need greatest assistance. ISV may increase the distribution to schools in 2027 if schools present a compelling need and would advise government of any distributions to schools that are not on the list provided in this workplan. A supporting rationale would accompany any such distribution plans.

Eligible Schools

12 Nominated Regional Assistance Schools, 12 National Assistance Fund Schools and other schools as listed in **Schedule 1 – Indicative school level distributions 2026 – 2027.**

Timeframes

Funding will be provided for the current plan period of 2026 and 2027, subject to schools providing agreed plans and updates.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Each eligible school provides ISV with concise updated plans for each year of funding. Funding will be made available each year upon ISV's approval that plans and prior year outcomes clearly meet CAF priorities.	All schools submit plans within published time limits and grant payments will be made within 20 business days of sustainability plan/plan update receipt and approval.
Key stakeholders	
Eligible school principals	Plans will be prepared by participating principals and assisted by ISV.

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative Priority	Special Circumstances Funding C – Special Circumstances Funding
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Description

ISV will allocate a portion of CAF funding to help schools who experience a significant and unexpected event that negatively impacts their school community. This may include natural disaster, a critical incident or emergency that affects infrastructure, resources, or the school community. ISV will manage the application and assessment of any such need and establish a principled and transparent approach to deciding what funds would be distributed to ensure the viability and protection of that school community. A reporting mechanism to capture how the funds were used would be part of the process ISV would facilitate.

Eligible schools

All Victorian Independent schools that ISV are approved to represent are eligible to access funding through this initiative.

Timeframes

Activities will be delivered within the current Work Plan period of 2026-2027. Schools will be able to apply for funding at any point.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Access to funding support where schools and their students are affected by special circumstances and in areas affected by pandemics, drought or other natural disasters.	Schools will be advised of the outcome of their application within 5 business days of receipt by ISV. Successful applicants will receive funding within 20 business days of receipt of their application so that their urgent need is met and they are able to continue to operate throughout the crisis.

Key stakeholders	
Victorian Independent Schools	ISV will ensure that schools eligible to access funding support under this initiative are aware of it and are provided with information on how to access support in a timely manner.
System Authorities	ISV will ensure System Authorities are aware of which of their member schools are eligible for funding and why and the supports available.

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative Priority	Dynamic Funding for Emerging School Challenges D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students
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Description

The Dynamic Funding for Emerging School Challenges initiative is intended to provide schools with an opportunity to apply for funding that meets the specific needs of their school not covered by normal service provision or other CAF initiatives, including Special Circumstances grants. Examples of the sorts of challenges that would be targeted under the grants include those that relate to the impact of digital technology (including the impact on students, teachers and schools), addressing issues related to access and equity for specific student cohorts, and investing in innovation projects that will help ensure long term sustainability. Grant applications may include projects that meet the national priorities such as grants for small and regional school networks, the specific requirements of Jewish, Islamic and other diverse communities.

To ensure the grant application is a robust process, ISV will develop clear:

- Application criteria that ensure alignment to CAF priorities, and support school sustainability
- A process for assessing applications
- Reporting and acquittal expectations

Eligible schools

All Victorian Independent schools that ISV are approved to represent.

Timeframes

Applications will be invited during the current Work Plan period of 2026-2027.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
All schools will have an opportunity to receive financial support for an initiative specific to their unique circumstances	Schools feel supported that their unique needs are recognised
Respond to emerging needs of diverse school clusters	Improved student engagement Positive impact on student outcomes
Key stakeholders	
Victorian Independent Schools	School communities are provided with a solution to a need that is not centrally available or that cannot be funded by their own resources.

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative Priority	Professional Learning D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students
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Description

ISV has undertaken a review of its professional learning activity to identify how it may adapt its PL portfolio to better reflect the diversity and complexity of the independent school sector. The review included extensive engagement with member schools benchmarking against other education associations and investigation of new opportunities to future-proof the sector. This has reinforced the need for a tailored and collaborative approach with our schools and the importance of continuing to adapt professional learning to emerging needs.

Our Professional Learning portfolio will be broad in reach but carefully segmented to reflect the distinct challenges and opportunities across different school contexts, including those of educationally disadvantaged schools.

CAF funding will help ISV build internal capability to assess the needs of independent schools, tailor responses, and develop tools to measure impact of PL on participating schools.

Eligible schools

All Victorian Independent schools that ISV are approved to represent.

Timeframes

Programs will take place during the current Work Plan period of 2026-2027.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
Schools are better prepared for transition	Improved access to PL and capacity building Participation by high needs schools in PL and capacity building programs Satisfaction with support provided Positive impact on; understanding, preparedness for change, practice, models (business, operating, engagement and learning)
Schools feel supported to make transition	Positive sentiment from schools about the relevance, quality and accessibility of PL and capacity building programs
Responsiveness of ISV to school needs	Number of schools consulted on relevant learning priorities, and active participation of schools in co-design activities. Value added across all relevant segments

Key stakeholders	
Victorian Independent Schools Principals Teachers School Operations Staff	Schools have an opportunity to attend professional development and learning that specifically identified as a need and to network with other school's sharing a similar need.

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative Priority	Digital Enablers D – Strengthening outcomes for schools and educationally disadvantaged schools and students
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Description

The need for digital solutions has become increasingly critical as agility and responsiveness to operational and compliance requirements demand greater scalability. To meet the current and emerging needs of independent schools, ISV will invest in scalable digital enablers that support more efficient, data-driven and resilient service delivery.

Service Platform

isEducation serves as ISV's primary digital platform and infrastructure that provides a range of products and services that support member schools. These support school needs in areas of compliance, communication, and data analysis. ISV will expand the platform's capabilities to deliver greater strategic value and enhanced support to our highly diverse school sector. This will result in an improved user experience allowing for intuitive engagement as members access core products and services.

Improving resilience of cyber security

To support digital services to our schools, ISV will undertake a comprehensive review and upgrade of its existing digital infrastructure to meet the Essential Eight security framework. This work will strengthen ISV's capacity to engage securely with schools and improve safeguards of sensitive information across all services. The initiative will establish an ongoing program of cybersecurity vigilance, incorporating regular assessments, monitoring, and rapid response protocols to mitigate emerging risks. By proactively upgrading and reinforcing our platforms, ISV will enhance digital resilience, ensure business continuity, and maintain the confidence of both schools and government stakeholders.

Eligible schools

All Victorian Schools that ISV are approved to represent will benefit from this initiative.

Timeframes

Activities will be delivered within the current Work Plan period of 2026-2027.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
More stable technology platform	Faster processing of transactional requests from schools Business continuity / uptime of applications.
Greater functionality in technology platform	Additional school facing services offered.
Better understanding of cyber vulnerabilities arising from implementation of new services under the CAF workplan	Minimise risk of potential cyber breaches.
Key stakeholders	
Victorian Independent Schools Members Parents Students ISV	All members of all school communities will be able to access additional digital services and support through highly responsive platforms and be assured that the systems are resilient and do not pose cyber threats when integrating with their own systems.

Activity/Initiative

Activity/Initiative Priority	Targeted Wellbeing Support E – Student Wellbeing and Support
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Description

ISV will prioritise initiatives that address the growing pressures faced by teachers, including workload demands, mental health, and stress management. Responsive and proactively delivered programs will aim to strengthen teacher resilience, support professional wellbeing, and create conditions that enable sustained engagement and effectiveness in the classroom.

In parallel, ISV will deliver targeted wellbeing programs to respond to increasing challenges faced by students, including declining engagement and attendance, rising mental health concerns, and the complexity of child safety requirements. These initiatives will focus on promoting positive health and wellbeing outcomes, ensuring students are supported to thrive both academically and personally.

Activities will include:

- Providing responsive support to underperforming schools facing issues e.g., low NAPLAN results.
- The provision of support for schools with mandatory training needs.
- A range of wellbeing programs that consolidates prior pilot activity and aligns with national and parental expectations for safe and supportive learning environments.
- Engaging with schools to understand teacher needs and requirements
- Developing programs that respond to teacher pressures

Eligible schools

All Victorian Independent schools that ISV are approved to represent.

Timeframes

Activities will be delivered within the current Work Plan period of 2026-2027.

Objectives/expected outcomes	Indicators of success
These responses aim to build school capacity, improve teacher student outcomes and help to create safe, respectful and inclusive learning environments	Positive feedback and case studies from participating schools

Key stakeholders	
Victorian Independent Schools. Teachers Students Victorian Government Parents	Evidence-based programs to support staff, students and parents.

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



Rachel Holthouse, Chief Executive

Date: 31 October 2025

Schedule 1 – Indicative school-level distributions 2026–2027

Priority B – Transition Assistance

AGEID	School Name	2026	2027
	Regional Schools identified by DoE		
16082	Bacchus Marsh Grammar	\$32,350.00	\$49,366.24
16351	Ballarat Clarendon College	\$971,670.00	\$2,146,410.03
16352	Ballarat Grammar	\$32,350.00	\$49,366.24
16354	Braemar College	\$721,430.00	\$1,592,326.81
17709	Geelong Baptist College	\$32,350.00	\$49,366.24
16353	Gippsland Grammar	\$213,680.00	\$483,391.40
14225	Girton Grammar School	\$613,200.00	\$1,357,534.75
16355	Goulburn Valley Grammar School	\$840,050.00	\$1,849,414.26
15826	Kardinia International College	\$687,670.00	\$1,528,007.20
15836	Newhaven College	\$32,350.00	\$49,366.24
4012	St Paul's Anglican Grammar School	\$783,670.00	\$1,734,386.37
16712	The Hamilton and Alexandra College	\$32,350.00	\$49,366.24
	Transition assistance - National Adjustment Assistance Fund		
2428	Brighton Grammar School	\$61,501.53	\$118,417.98
4217	Firbank Grammar School	\$61,501.53	\$118,417.98
2176	Ivanhoe Grammar School	\$93,184.13	\$179,421.19
828	Kilvington Grammar School	\$89,456.77	\$172,244.34
837	Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School	\$134,185.15	\$258,366.51
29056	Melbourne Grammar School	\$20,500.51	\$39,472.66
857	Mentone Grammar School	\$123,003.05	\$236,835.97
860	Methodist Ladies' College	\$45,427.26	\$107,652.71
872	Mount Scopus Memorial College	\$49,969.99	\$118,417.98
912	Penleigh & Essendon Grammar School	\$149,094.61	\$287,073.90
1113	St Leonard's College	\$102,502.54	\$197,363.31
	Additional Transition Assistance schools		
16324	Aitken College	\$53,813.84	\$103,615.74

15834	Bayview College	\$68,490.34	\$131,874.57
3419	Beaconhills College	\$41,932.86	\$80,739.53
2482	Billanook College	\$73,801.83	\$142,101.58
758	Carey Baptist Grammar School	\$45,427.26	\$87,467.83
15837	Casey Grammar School	\$58,706.00	\$113,035.35
29729	Cornish College	\$73,801.83	\$142,101.58
2179	Eltham College	\$41,932.86	\$80,739.53
4219	Flinders Christian Community College	\$53,813.84	\$103,615.74
29065	Geelong Grammar School	\$66,626.65	\$128,286.15
797	Haileybury	\$60,569.68	\$116,623.77
821	Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School	\$72,683.62	\$139,948.53
1281	Melbourne Girls' Grammar School	\$33,313.33	\$78,945.32
856	Mentone Girls' Grammar School	\$72,683.62	\$139,948.53
17293	OneSchool Global	\$129,153.20	\$248,677.77
5517	Overnewton Anglican Community College	\$41,932.86	\$80,739.53
17252	Peninsula Grammar	\$83,283.32	\$197,363.31
29172	Southern Cross Grammar	\$50,319.43	\$96,887.44
1126	St Margaret's School	\$41,932.86	\$80,739.53
1183	St Michael's Grammar School	\$49,969.99	\$96,214.61
1275	Strathcona Baptist Girls' Grammar School	\$46,126.14	\$88,813.49
17867	The Geelong College	\$225,505.60	\$434,199.28
1286	Toorak College	\$90,854.53	\$174,935.66
1288	Trinity Grammar School	\$49,969.99	\$96,214.61
15317	Trinity Lutheran College	\$68,490.34	\$131,874.57
16713	Westbourne Grammar School	\$172,204.27	\$331,570.36
28672	Woodleigh School	\$41,932.86	\$80,739.53