



October 2024

Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027
Association of Independent
Schools of South Australia

Contents

#	Item	Slide number
1	Executive Summary	3
2	Purpose & Guiding Principles	5
3	Strategic Context	7
4	Strategies	22
5	Strategy #1	24
6	Strategy #2	28
7	Strategy #3	32
8	Strategy #4	36
9	Financial & Risk Considerations	40
10	Implementation Staging	43
11	Next Steps	45

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

- The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA) leads, supports, represents and advocates for the Independent sector in South Australia to enhance the success, sustainability and strength of its member schools. The AISSA provides a forum for debate on significant policy issues and plays a leadership role in providing advice and information, representing individual schools and the sector.
- The AISSA has strong member satisfaction and 100% membership uptake from eligible schools.
- This Strategic Plan 2025-2027 sets out the strategic direction and key strategic activities for the AISSA to achieve its objectives over the three years to December 2027
- The plan incorporates four strategies as set out below.

Strategy #1 Increase Engagement	Increasing engagement of our members with our services and with the sector overall
Strategy #2 Deliver Exceptional Services	Evolving the mix and quality of our services to meet the current and future needs of the sector
Strategy #3 Strengthen the Sector	Improving the strength and growth potential of the Independent school sector
Strategy #4 Enhance our Capabilities	Developing our people and systems to meet the needs of our members

Purpose & Guiding Principles

- Why do we exist?
- What is important to us?
- What does success look like?



Purpose & Guiding Principles

Purpose

The Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA) leads, supports, represents and advocates for the Independent Sector in South Australia to enhance the success, sustainability and strength of its member schools

Guiding Principles

Across all of its activities, the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia is committed to:

- the independence of member schools to develop in ways that embody their individual philosophies;
- the Independent sector offering genuine diversity that ensures parents have real choice in selecting their child's schooling; and
- integrity, excellence, collaboration and agility

Strategic Context

- What are the big issues that the strategy needs to address?

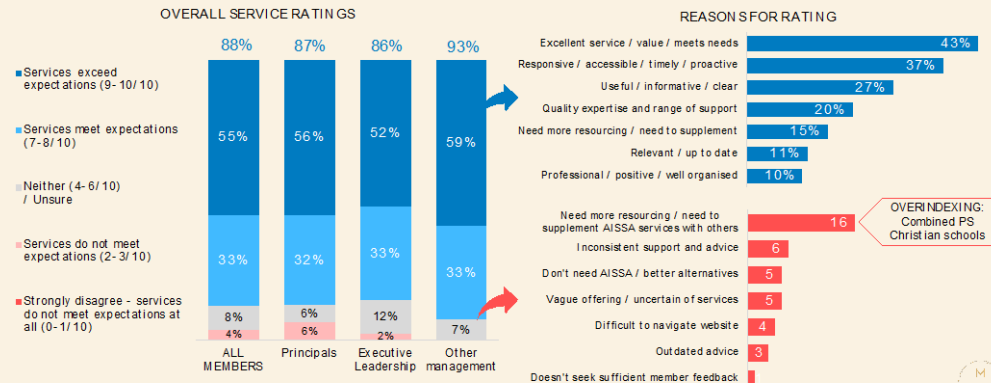
Key Themes from Stakeholder Consultation

Theme	Comment
Value proposition / Core purpose	Stakeholders highlighted both the high value that is placed on the AISSA's services and the need to keep growing that value in light of pressures on schools and potential alternatives in the marketplace.
Advocacy / Representation	Advocacy and representation were seen as particularly important and areas in which the AISSA performs well. Notwithstanding this, the political environment is seen to be challenging and perceptions of Independent schools do not always match reality.
Expertise / Reputation / Credibility	The AISSA has high credibility and a strong reputation for its expertise. However, stakeholders also highlighted the need to keep our expertise current (and ahead of schools' needs) and to ensure the right models are in place to deliver support.
Diversity of sector	The diversity of the sector was acknowledged as both a challenge for the AISSA and an area where the AISSA has made good progress (in understanding and allowing for that diversity).
Competition: other AISs / rise of mini-systems / other players	As one stakeholder said "the days of the package deal are potentially numbered". With pressure on the system there are many new models / participants emerging - multi-schools, mini-systems, interstate Association of Independent Schools (AISs) and commercial players. None provide a complete replacement for the AISSA's services but all have the potential to create pressure on our value proposition.
Reduction in funding / future funding at risk / more pragmatic focus / financial mgmt	The AISSA has already had to adjust for reductions in government funding. Stakeholders were not optimistic that further cuts to funding may occur in the future. This was combined with a desire to be more pragmatic in our approach and find both new revenue sources and more effective ways of delivering our services.
Greater engagement with our stakeholders	Deeper and more effective engagement with our schools was seen as a positive in recent years for the AISSA. It was also seen as essential to navigate the challenges ahead. Finding the right model for engagement was also key including fostering connections between schools.
Digitisation of services / Website	The website was identified as a high priority for enhancement. As a minimum this would provide more effective delivery of services for members and greater internal efficiency. However, it also represents an opportunity to move beyond a member-only model - e.g. through providing content or services to other sectors (e.g. Catholic education) or other jurisdictions
New opportunities / new services / new clients / collaboration	There was broad desire to see new and innovative approaches to service delivery and revenue generation. This could take many forms. Options canvassed included the expansion of services to other sectors, collaboration with interstate AISs to generate efficiencies and expanding philanthropic and sponsorship opportunities.
Structure of membership: incl. externals, fee for service (FFS)	Closely linked with exploring new opportunities around service delivery and revenue generation, several stakeholders flagged the potential to explore new models such as tiered membership models or expanded elements of fee for service.
Staff development and focus	Whilst the AISSA has a highly-skilled and well-respected team, there are improvement opportunities including in succession planning, staff development and operating model / structure to address some of the challenges / opportunities above.
Other	A range of other matters were flagged by stakeholders including providing greater strategic support for schools to address emerging challenges (incl. technology / future of education), specific faith-related issues, and teacher shortages.

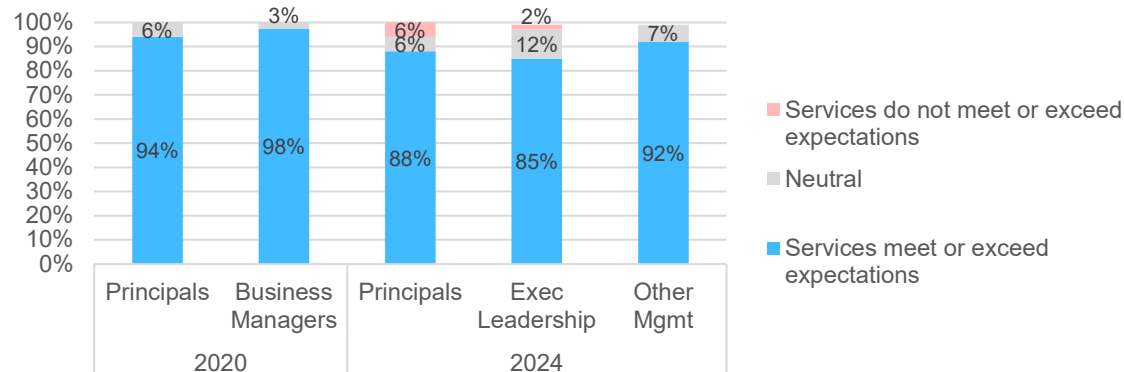
Satisfaction is high, but has slipped from 2020

The majority of members agreed that the AISSA's services meet or exceed their expectations.

AISSA's strengths include their provision of an excellent service which relies on responsiveness and accessibility, and provision of useful and clear information and resources. Of the very few members who gave a negative or neutral rating, they believe the AISSA needs to increase their services to reduce the need the school has to utilise other services.



Overall Service Ratings 2020 vs 2024



Observations

- The AISSA is performing well, with high service levels.
- However comparison with previous survey results suggests small areas of dissatisfaction have appeared.
- Whilst unsurprising in a resource constrained environment, there is value in exploring and responding to such issues.
- It is noted that the most recent survey has an expanded reach, however there are still insights to be examined around member satisfaction.

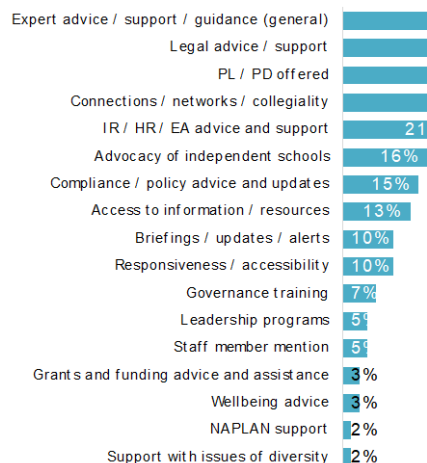
Satisfaction is generally high across key service areas, however there are hotspots for focus

	ALL MEMBERS	 Principals / Heads of Schools	 Executive Leadership	 Other Management
Service rating (7-10/10 meeting / exceeding expectations)	88%	87%	86%	93%
Key priority area with highest satisfaction (7-10/10 satisfaction)	83% IR & HR Management advice	84% IR & HR Management advice	83% Leadership Support & Development	96% IR & HR Management advice
Key priority area with lowest satisfaction (7-10/10 satisfaction)	73% School Improvement Support	75% School Improvement Support	62% Representation & Advocacy	71% Leadership Support & Development
Educational advice & support rating (7-10/10 meeting / exceeding expectations)	84%	84%	83%	Not asked
Professional learning rating (7-10/10 meeting / exceeding expectations)	77%	76%	81%	Not asked
Top membership benefit	Expert advice / support / guidance	Expert advice / support / guidance	PL offered	Expert advice / support / guidance
Top way to optimise membership value	Maintain / strengthen PL offers	Maintain / strengthen PL offers	Better communication / proactive engagement with members	Provide PL more broadly
	n=132	n=63	n=42	n=27

M

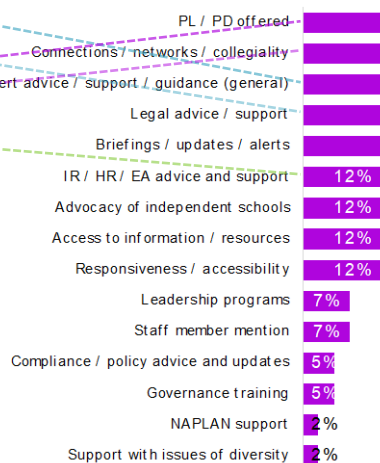
Different users value different aspects of the AISSA offering

Principal Feedback



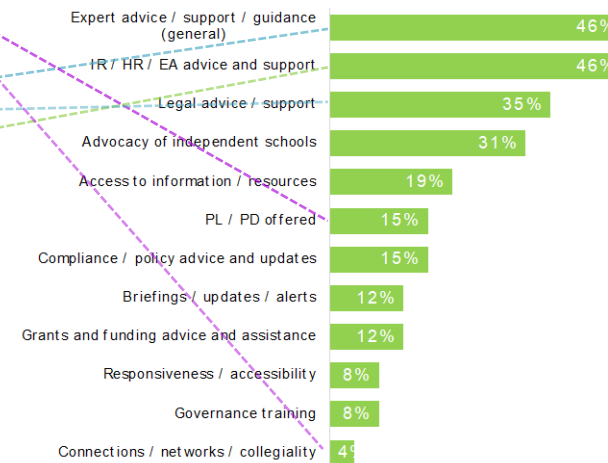
Q5. What are the key benefits to you of your school being an AISSA member?
Base: All Principals who gave feedback, n=61

Executive Leader Feedback



Q5. What are the key benefits to you of your school being an AISSA member?
Base: ELT who gave feedback, n=41

Manager Feedback



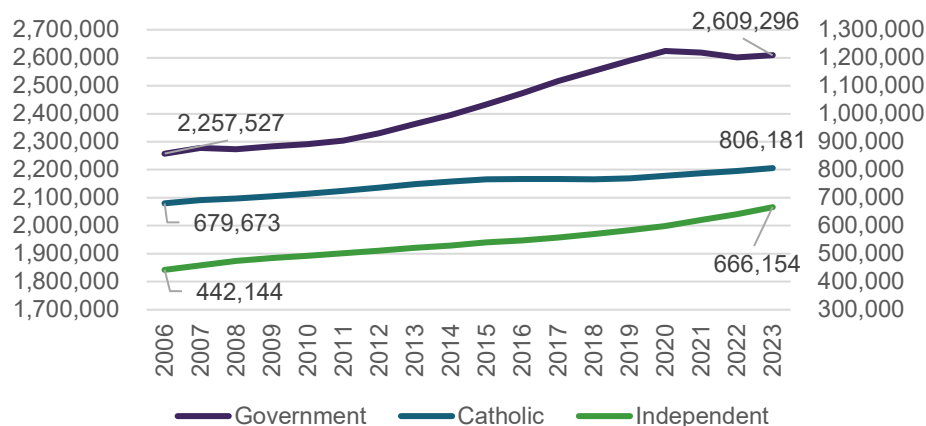
Q5. What are the key benefits to you of your school being an AISSA member?
Base: All Other Managers who gave feedback, n=26

Observations

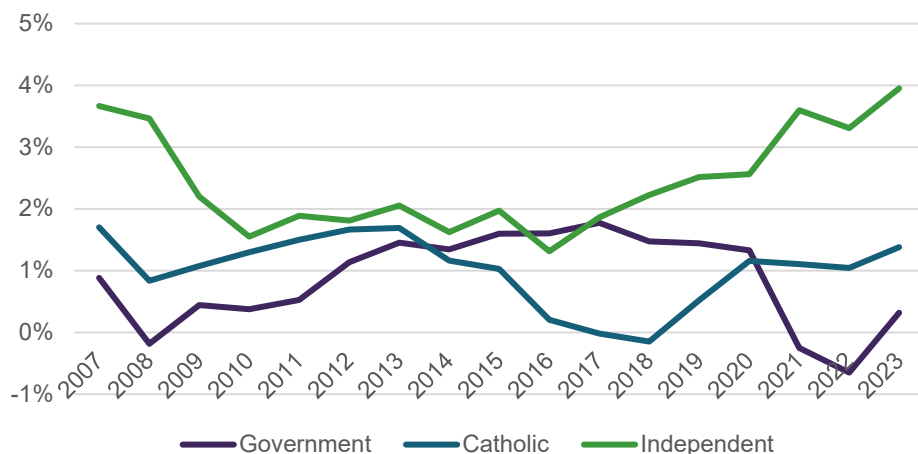
- Whilst both principals and managers had expert advice as their #1 item, Executive leaders valued PL / PD and connections / networks most of all.
- Highlights the need to understand all stakeholders and appropriately tailor services.

Nationally the Independent Sector is growing student numbers faster than other sectors however SA total student growth is below average

Student Enrolments by Sector (National)



FTE enrolment growth by Sector 2010 - 2023



Student Enrolments by State 10 year growth (%)

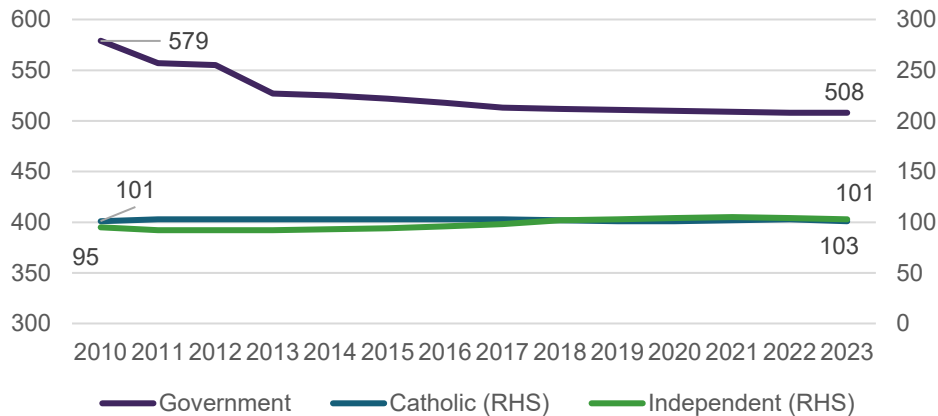


Observations

- Growth in Independent school student numbers nationally supports negotiating position for focus and funding from federal government.
- In absolute terms, Independent schools remain the smallest cohort, but the gap to the Catholic sector is steadily closing.
- SA growth being lower may mean less relevance for the AISSA on the national stage.

The number of SA Independent schools has grown more strongly than other sectors with a slight dip in recent years. Both Independent and Catholic sectors are still considerably smaller than the government sector.

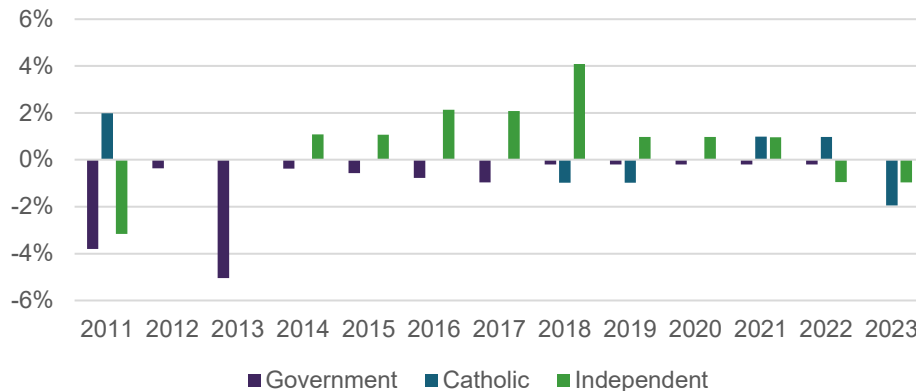
SA School Numbers



Observations

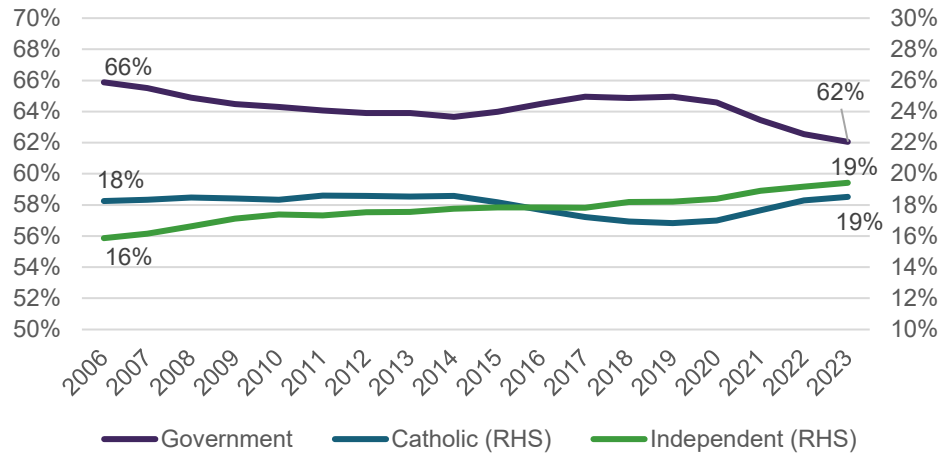
- Although new Independent schools have been growing faster than other sectors this is not guaranteed to continue.
- Other sectors have a centralised planning and investing function which is not applicable to Independent schools.
- Politically, there is a much more vocal push for greater investment in public education.

SA Schools by Sector - Growth rate

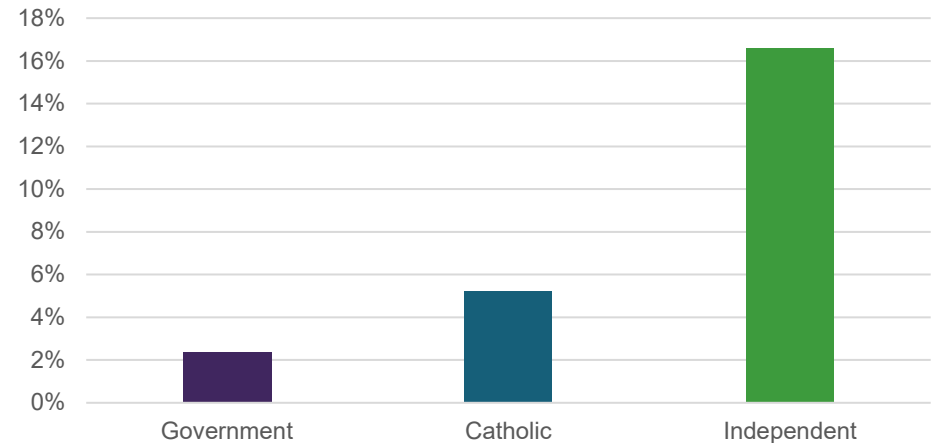


Although the government sector dominates, the SA Independent Sector has grown as a percentage of students, passing the Catholic sector as the second largest

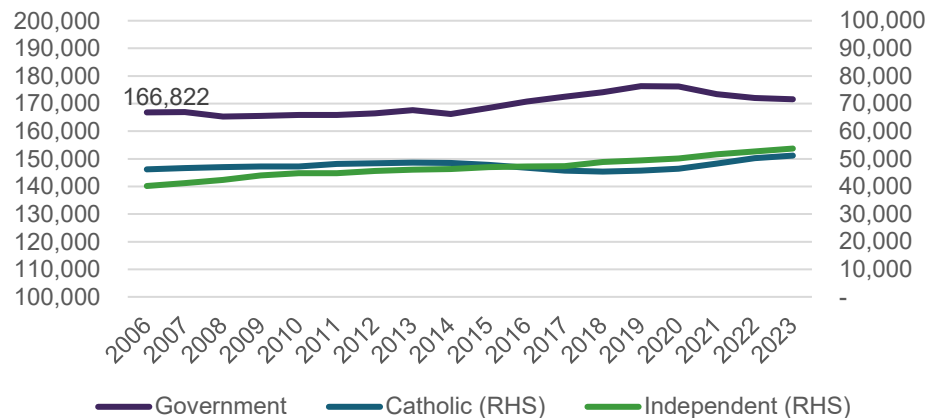
SA students by sector (%)



SA students by sector 10 year growth (%)



SA students by sector (FTE)



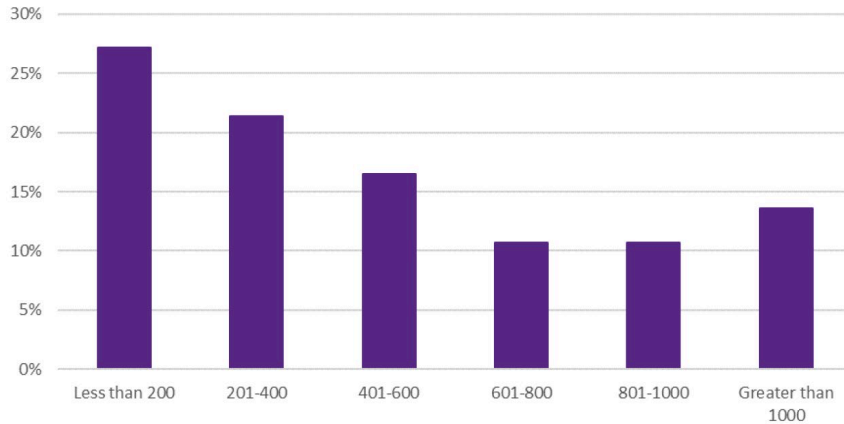
Observations

- Two thirds of South Australian students attended government schools 20 years ago, this has fallen to be now closer to 3 in 5.
- The share of students for the Independent sector has grown steadily over the last 15 years, reaching over 19% in 2023.
- Government numbers have fallen in the last four years, reversing a trend of taking market share from the Catholic sector.

The AISSA's membership is diverse

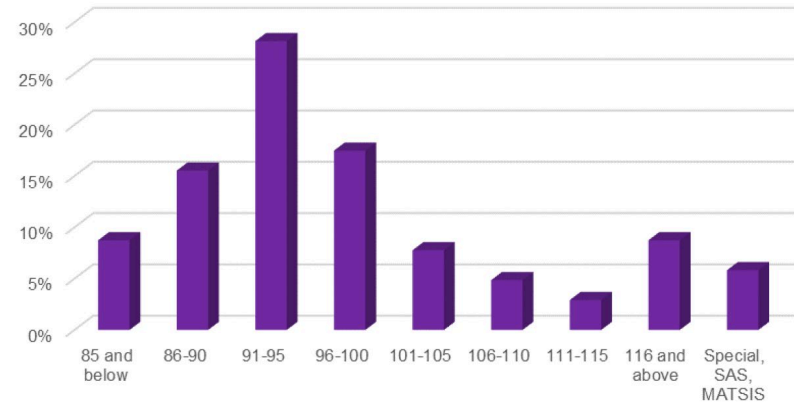
School Size

Percentages of SA Independent Schools by Size of School 2023
(Source: Department of Education 2023)



Socio-economic (DMI Band)

Percentage of SA Independent Schools by DMI Band 2024
(Source: Department of Education 2023)



Observations

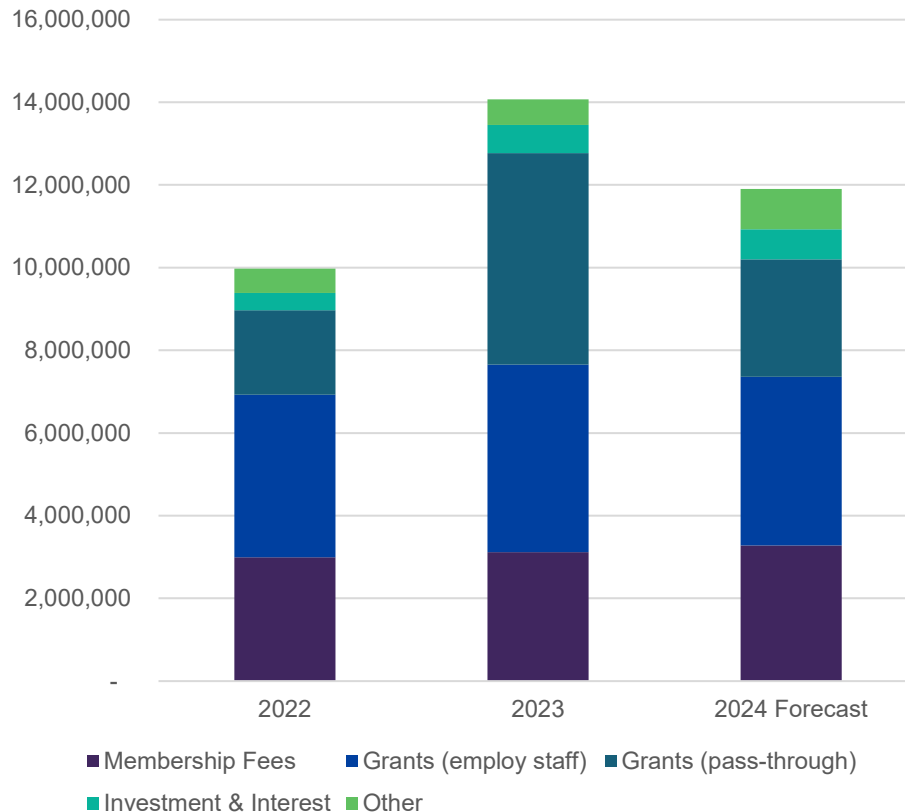
- The Independent sector is extremely diverse.
- School size and socio-economic background of cohorts varies widely across the AISSA membership.

The AISSA's membership is diverse



The AISSA's revenue continues to come primarily from government program funding and membership subscriptions however the portion of government funding available to directly fund AISSA programs has been materially reduced

Income Sources



Observations

- Despite recent cuts, government funding remains the AISSA's key revenue source, representing more than half of the total. This is closely tied to specific programs.
- Membership subscription funding is also significant at nearly 30% of funding. This is less tied to specific activities.
- All other revenue sources collectively make up less than 10% of total revenue.
- Given its inherent uncertainty, reducing reliance on government funding is likely to be of value, however growing new sources of income is a challenge.

Digitisation of services / Website

Principals see the AISSA website as a hub for policy templates and examples, requiring more user-friendly navigation and search function.

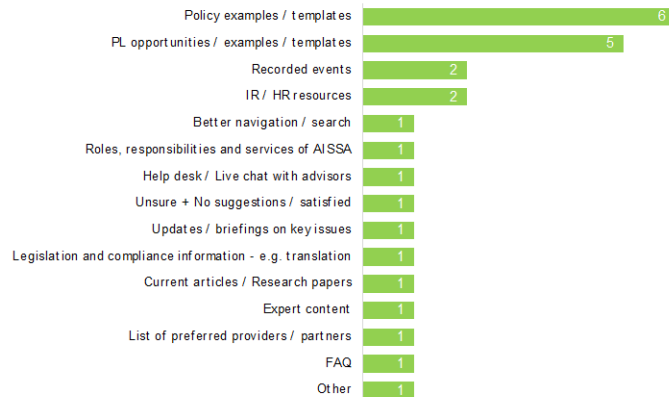
WEBSITE NEEDS

Executive leaders want a more user-friendly website, with policy examples, and professional learning opportunities and templates.

WEBSITE NEEDS

Managers believe the AISSA website needs to be a hub for policy templates and examples, PL opportunities, recorded events, and resources.

WEBSITE NEEDS



Q18. The AISSA is planning to upgrade the member website, to deliver advanced functionality, as well as greater ease of access to professional learning registration and the resources contained in the member portal. What would you like to access or be able to do via the AISSA website?
Base: All Other Management, n=27

Observations

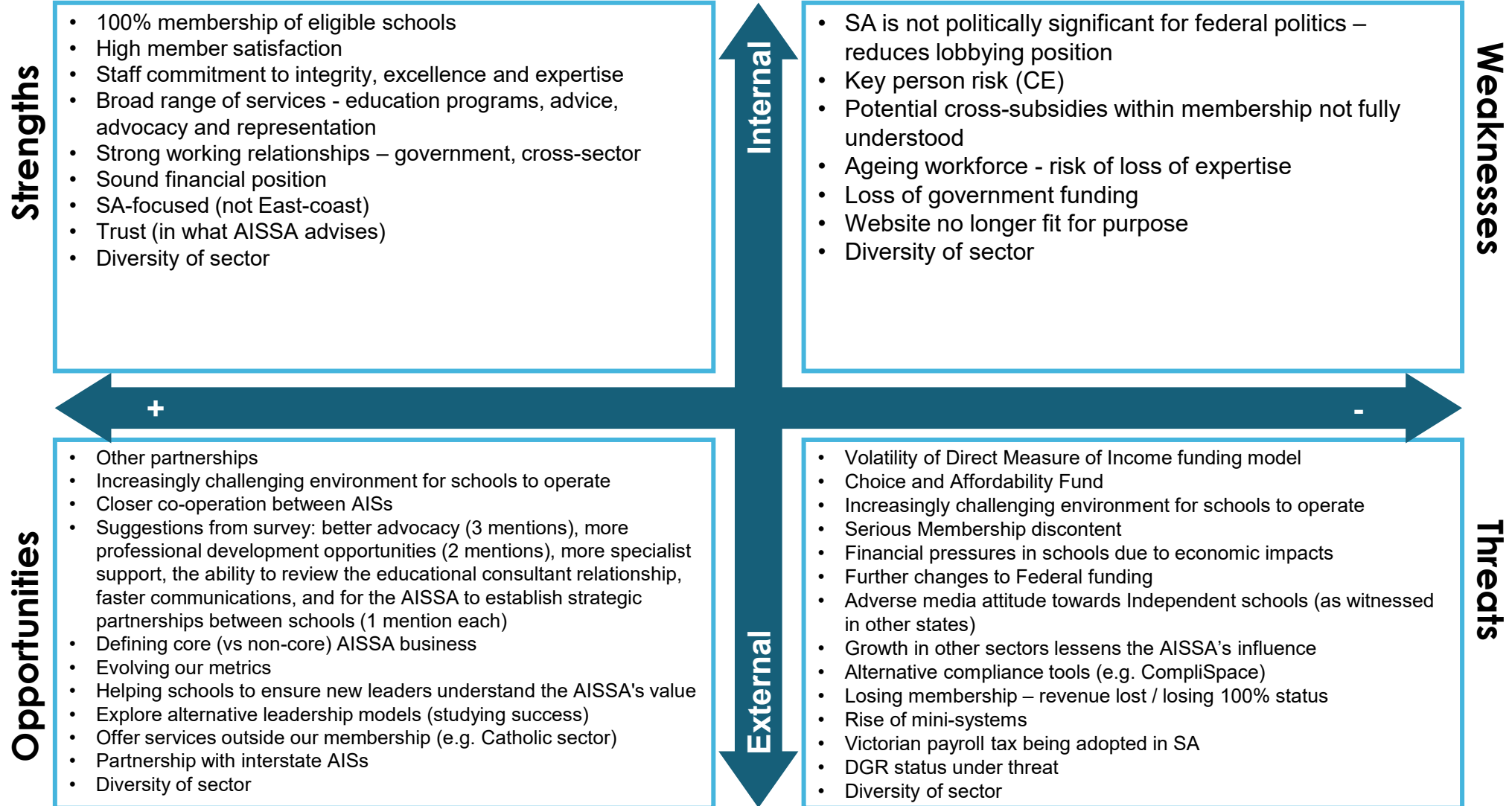
- Stakeholders flagged the website as a key focus for improvement.
- Website enhancements have been flagged as the driver for:
 - Improved user experience;
 - reduced administrative cost; and
 - leveraging fee for service opportunities (within and beyond membership).

PESTLE Analysis - trends impacting on the AISSA

PESTLE Analysis

Political	Economic	Social	Technological	Legal	Environmental
• Less 'natural allies' in politics • Potential for further funding cuts • More vocal push for increased investment in public education • Current re-negotiation of national school reform agreement (and consequently bilateral agreement)	• Continued cost of living crisis makes fee affordability challenging • School focus on cost management due to both economic and government funding considerations • Increase in gig economy jobs – unstable employment and income makes fee paying harder	• Potential for SA to retain / grow population due to increased e-commuting • Increasing (& unrealistic) expectations of parents • Schools being expected to support student development in non-traditional areas • Emphasis on student wellbeing and student agency • Staff demographics - longevity / change • Retention of early years teachers • Future leaders / leadership paradigm (long hours /modelling) • Mindset: less membership, more consumerist • Increase of school avoidance	• Accelerated adoption of remote teaching tools • Use of data to enhance outcomes – from education to marketing and beyond • Possibility of virtual schools taking market share • Efficiencies / job losses as a result of increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) • Implications of technology for the type of world that students will enter (and therefore the education that they need)	• Freedom of Religion legislation • Privacy and Child Protection • Increasing risk focus for schools, in particular managing OH&S risks	• Campaigns against Independent school funding by external organisations – Defence of Government Schools (DOGS), AEU - could impact public standing of the sector and impact enrolments and government policy • Media in all states is clearly anti-Independent schools

SWOT analysis



Strategic Context - Summary

Competition is rising - from many sources

- Historically the AISSA has had alternatives to its services - usually from private providers.
- However the level of competition is intensifying and now comes from new sources including other AISs and 'mini-systems' (groups of schools).

Pressures on schools are high and increasing

- The compliance burden on schools continues to grow.
- At the same time, cost of living pressures are squeezing schools both from revenue and expense perspectives.
- Independent schools also face a less friendly media environment.

Government funding for the AISSA is uncertain

- The AISSA has already had to adjust for reductions in government funding.
- Further funding cuts are possible, together with the potential for future funding to be more pass-through in nature.
- There is a desire for the AISSA to reduce its reliance on government funding.

There are many opportunities

- The AISSA has identified opportunities to improve its offerings and its financial position.
- These include generating revenue from new sources (other sectors, other AISs), as well as improving services and reducing costs through partnering.

Strategies

- What will we do to achieve our strategic objectives?

Strategies

Four strategies have been identified

Strategy #1
Increase Engagement

Strategy #2
Deliver Exceptional Services

Strategy #3
Strengthen the Sector

Strategy #4
Enhance our Capabilities

Strategy #1

Increase Engagement

Increasing engagement from our members with our services and with the sector overall



Increasing engagement from our members with our services and with the sector overall

Current Situation / Rationale

- It is important that our membership understands, and actually derives, the value from being a member.
- Ensuring each member can access the exceptional services that the AISSA provides, and feels as though they are a contributing member of the broader Independent school community.
- Deeper engagement (and collaboration) with external relationships e.g. other AISs, ISA, and multi school organisations provides value to all parties and strengthens the membership.
- It is critical to understand what member schools want and why some schools do not engage with the AISSA.
- It is important that our members are deriving sufficient value to continue to be a member.
- Greater engagement also means we will have better understanding of our members' needs which can drive improvement and impact.
- Understanding the needs and individual contexts of member schools enables the AISSA to be more agile in responding to emerging areas of need and supporting members to navigate these areas.
- As well as being of benefit to the AISSA and its member schools, contribution from member schools provides a sense of value to the contributor and builds trust and connection.
- Schools are fluid; for example, changes in staffing meaning that building relationships with schools is ongoing.
- There needs to be mutual value for external relationships to work.

Strategic Goal/s

- Optimal level of awareness and access to services - schools know we are proactive and reactive (not just dealing with crises).
- Schools can see value in the AISSA services individually and AISSA membership as a whole.
- Effective mechanisms for communicating value / impact and enabling access (e.g. AISNSW annual report example).
- The AISSA tells the story of the great work it (and member schools) undertakes and develops, with a focus on articulating what the Independent school sector does well.
- Strong relationships and inter-dependence built through deep and effective engagement.
- Member schools are more likely to contact the AISSA as a result of "references" from other member schools.
- Schools see themselves and act as contributors and not just consumers - the AISSA is a convenor / connector as well as a centre of excellence.
- Feel confident that someone accessing some services separate to us, is not an overall threat.

Key Assumptions

Key Assumptions - Strategy #1

Assumption	Data	How critical is this?*	Is this true?**
90% plus membership from our target market makes our lobbying and representation efforts more effective. Zero defections nationally lowers the risk.	Anecdotal feedback from government leaders and ISA	1. High	Yes - likely
There is a material risk that we could lose our 100% membership	This has occurred in other states. Rise of mini-systems/other membership groups	1. High	Uncertain
The services we offer are valuable	Member satisfaction survey "Delivers valuable services to its members"	2. Medium	Yes - likely
Members that use a higher range of services may be more aware of the range of services on offer.	Anecdotal feedback from schools	2. Medium	Yes – probable
Some services are like insurance – having it available is more important than regularly using it.	Ad hoc nature of use of some services – e.g. legal advice	2. Medium. Succeeding in increasing utilisation of some services could have adverse financial and workload impacts on the AISSA	Yes – likely
Adjustments to the AISSA's offering will only increase engagement if they are well-directed and well-received by members.	Feedback and observations of other AISs and ISA.	1. High	Yes - likely
The AISSA needs to know what schools think/want to ensure service delivery is meeting their needs.	Member satisfaction survey and other pulse check / informal feedback	1. High	Yes - likely

* 1 = High, 2 = Medium, 3 = Low

** Yes - likely / Yes - Probable / No / Uncertain / Inconsistent / Not yet assessable

Strategy #1 – indicative activity

Indicative Activity

Activity

Find a simple and effective way to collect data and track contact, engagement and understand impact (CRM and EDM).

Develop a continuous feedback approach including:

- pulse-checks (between large surveys)
- link session-level assessments to overall satisfaction
- share aggregated attendee feedback with decision-makers in schools

Implement strategies to enhance partnerships including identifying where the strengths are in individual schools that could be utilised for the benefit of all.

Identify areas where the AISSA can add value; for example, templates for administrative tasks such as forms/applications[†].

Develop and implement a regional engagement strategy.

Develop and implement an organisation-wide comms strategy and new website, informed by proactive engagement with school decision-makers.

Develop/strengthen relationships and opportunities to collaborate with external stakeholders, e.g. other AISs, ISA, multi-school systems.

Strategy #2

Deliver Exceptional Services

Evolving the mix and quality of our services to meet the current and future needs of the sector



Evolving the mix and quality of our services to meet the current and future needs of the sector

Current Situation / Rationale

- This focus area covers:
 - sharpening what we currently offer / tailoring offerings in direct response to member feedback
 - providing new offerings (including to both members and non-members).
- Sharpening includes both doing things more effectively and efficiently.
- Tailoring services to better meet increasing sector diversity.
- Exploring opportunities for new services and revenue.
- Anticipating new service requirements in schools ahead of demand .
- Providing Principal and other school leadership support and mentorship but not on an ad hoc basis.
- Offerings for internal and external stakeholders bring new revenue into the organisation which can reduce financial pressure on our member schools.
- Enables us to be leaders in our field.
- Reinforces the value of membership / increases our influence.
- Ensures our internal sustainability - self-reinforcing focus.
- Build networks that can provide new opportunities and synergies.
- Entrepreneurial mind set and measured risk taking.

Strategic Goal/s

- Fit for purpose organisational structure (see Enhance our Capabilities).
- Fit for purpose website - integral to delivery of services and effective data collection.
- Maintain 100% membership.
- Material new revenue sources from outside membership including sponsorship arrangements.
- Partnerships with: ISA or other AISs (e.g. Cybersecurity support with ISA), other sectors (CESA, DFE) other organisations (AICD, AHISA, universities, or RTOs).
- Potentially becoming an Registered Training Organisation.
- Brokering deals with “added value services”.
- Providing greater support to school Business Managers.

Key Assumptions

Key Assumptions - Strategy #2

Assumption	Data	How critical is this?*	Is this true?**
Improving our offering both lowers risk AND creates value for members	Anecdotal – but not guaranteed. Need to ensure that any changes improve our offering without just adding cost and activity.	1. High – as there is not certainty that we materially reduce defection risk it is important to ensure any uptake in improved services creates value.	Yes - likely
Education and schools are changing and becoming more complex.	Educational research. Compliance demands. Teacher workforce/ leadership pipeline. Wellbeing (staff and students).	1. High	Yes - likely
The AISSA has the potential to meet some additional needs effectively and at an appropriate price point (either directly or through partnership arrangements)	To be proven – would form part of assessment prior to approval	2. Medium	Yes - probable
Schools would be willing to take and pay for additional services from or through the AISSA.	PL prices have increased with no push back from members.	2. Medium	Yes - likely

* 1 = High, 2 = Medium, 3 = Low

** Yes - likely / Yes - Probable / No / Uncertain / Inconsistent / Not yet assessable

Strategy #2 – indicative activity

Indicative Activity

Activity
Design / develop organisation structure to best suit service delivery & member needs. Includes considering service model.
Rebuild the website to enhance delivery of services and supports, facilitate greater engagement and communication, enhance engagement data.
Undertake financial planning to support investment in developing our offering and set targets to increase income from alternate sources.
Explore opportunities for the AISSA to broker and/or develop deals/services which will benefit all member schools.*†
Develop tailored support / professional learning for Business Managers based on feedback.
Explore extension of 'Conference' offerings into additional topics.**†

* Brokering external partnerships. Developing key supports, e.g. policy reviews, for fee for service or a payment for referral to consultant (outsource risk)

** Opportunity to offer to wider audience beyond AISSA member schools at cost neutral or profit

† The plan includes several exploratory activities. Outcomes of these activities, including whether it is recommended to proceed with implementing identified opportunities, will be communicated to the Board as appropriate.



Strategy #3

Strengthen the Sector

Improving the strength and growth potential of the Independent school sector

Improving the strength and growth potential of the Independent school sector

Current Situation / Rationale

- This is about strengthening our member schools.
- Support, defend and be enthusiastic about the sector.
- Improve the wider community understanding of the sector.
- Enhance presence through advocacy - state and federal.
- Lean into, rather than avoid, talking about sector diversity - geographic, socio-economic, cultural, religious, education philosophy, disability.
- Involve and upskill members with advocacy processes.
- Drive and shape the educational agenda.
- Engage proactively, not just reactively.
- Cultivate partnerships with the Department so that these conversations can facilitate opportunities for sector growth (e.g. opportunities for land purchase, new schools).
- Develop media strategy for 'good news' stories.
- Help members understand that we are stronger together.
- Promoting our member schools is core to our role. Our schools are independent and that needs to drive our decision-making - we pride ourselves on understanding our members' contexts and decision-making.
- If we are not known / understood, we will miss out on income/funding and increased brand awareness (that itself can drive growth, build strength).
- A strong profile for the Independent sector, supports members' efforts to grow, which in turn lifts the sector.
- A strong reputation for the AISSA also fosters cooperation with other organisations (e.g. AISs, other sectors, AICD etc) and creates interest from future partners.
- We want good outcomes for all students, teachers and school leaders to be shared regardless of sector.
- Fostering collaboration between schools (and use of resource sharing).

Strategic Goal/s

- Stronger and more positive profile for Independent schools and the sector as a whole. Also, more accurate / nuanced representation of the sector - dispelling myths (media, decision makers and general public).
- We are an attractive partner for organisations from many different areas - known as a trusted source of truth.
- Schools are confident in our advocacy work and also understand the need for us to do nuanced work rather than one size fits all.
- Federal and state governments recognise the importance of the sector and the value of working with the AISSA.

Key Assumptions

Key Assumptions - Strategy #3

Assumption	Data	How critical is this?*	Is this true?**
It is important for the Independent sector to maintain its market share in order to maintain its influence.	Evidenced by growth in Catholic enrolments and investment in DfE schools. New schools opening in both sectors.	1. High	Yes – likely
Current services offered by the AISSA, support members in their own growth objectives (indirectly supporting sector growth).	Anecdotal – new schools have joined the AISSA and received assistance with their establishment.	2. Medium	Yes - likely
The Independent sector is at a structural disadvantage with regards to growth as it does not have a centralised planning and investing function.	The AISSA does not have a seat at the table with property developers and government departments re new schools/potential sites.	2. Medium	Yes – probable
The AISSA has a role to play in supporting sector growth.	The support the AISSA provides helps schools to grow. However, the AISSA does not have a role in establishing new schools.	1. High	Yes - likely
Diversity of the sector is generally misunderstood.	Media / general public perceptions / many politicians / lacking understanding. Use of stereotypes.	1. High	Yes - likely
Workforce shortage and leadership pipeline challenges may limit growth opportunities for member schools.	Federal and state government data and anecdotal.	1. High	Yes - likely

* 1 = High, 2 = Medium, 3 = Low

** Yes - likely / Yes - Probable / No / Uncertain / Inconsistent / Not yet assessable

Strategy #3 – indicative activity

Indicative Activity

Activity

Profile, showcase and celebrate Independent school successes.

Ensure the AISSA is represented in school celebrations / gatherings to create physical and mental presence in member schools.

Expand culturally informed teaching and learning offerings and support for Reconciliation activities, focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

Publish thought leadership and evidence-based, research material online e.g, Wellbeing Toolkit, CRRE, School Avoidance.*

Develop consistent / coordinated approach to advocacy, drawing on schools, their communities and ISA.
Provide clear messages and equip schools to assist the AISSA and the sector. Set up a section on website specifically for advocacy.

Facilitate connections between both the AISSA and schools with politicians, policy makers and property developers.

Consider initiatives/strategies to support addressing teacher shortage and improve narrative around teaching as a profession (including via media strategy).†

* Opportunity to leverage publications to create further fee for service offerings in and beyond member schools

† The plan includes several exploratory activities. Outcomes of these activities, including whether it is recommended to proceed with implementing identified opportunities, will be communicated to the Board as appropriate.

Strategy #4

Enhance our Capabilities

Developing our people and systems to meet the needs of our members



Developing our people and systems to meet the needs of our members

Current Situation / Rationale

- Enhancing staff wellbeing and resilience by ensuring work practices are sustainable.
- Succession planning.
- Setting expectations around standards to model high performance behaviours.
- Develop a greater understanding of member schools.
- Becoming an 'Employer of Choice', involving developing a culture of trust and openness, embedding respect and accommodating staff needs where possible.
- Development of Board capabilities.
- The AISSA currently has excellent capabilities, however there is a risk of loss of corporate knowledge if mitigation strategies are not in place.
- The changing nature of our schools/sector means we should adapt our models to be fit for purpose – agility!
- Attracting and retaining the right talent pool is key to our success.
- Demonstrating and making capabilities more visible to members increases the AISSA's value proposition.

Strategic Goal/s

- Board members receive training after first 'term', potentially via AICD.
- Improving sustainable work practices might involve developing different partnership models in which, for example, some legal services are delegated to a law firm.
- Strong employer brand with target audiences.
- Upskilling staff - including maintaining currency of skills and experiences.
- Tapping into skillsets in our member schools to upskill AISSA staff.
- Supporting staff wellbeing.
- Celebrating our successes (internally, and externally if warranted [with permission] e.g. LinkedIn).
- Potentially utilising corporate networks to source new talent.

Key Assumptions

Key Assumptions - Strategy #4

Assumption	Data	How critical is this?*	Is this true?**
The AISSA is a desirable place to work but funding uncertainty has led to leaner staffing structure, higher risk of burnout, risk to sustainability.	Low staff turnover. Excellent working conditions and culture. Cessation of RSF. Reduction of staff by four.	1. High	Yes - likely
While there have been improvements to systems and processes, the AISSA needs to continuously evolve.	Member feedback.	1. High	Yes – likely
Generational change in expectations of a workplace (e.g. greater flexibility).	Legislative changes and union demands.	2. Medium	Yes – probable
Significant risk of loss of corporate knowledge. (Succession planning).	Ageing workforce. Low staff turnover.	1. High	Yes - likely
Turnover in Board membership may hamper continuity of strategic focus and effective governance.	Historical data.	2. Medium	Yes - probable
The AISSA's technology does not meet some needs (e.g. expectations for hybrid) and staff need ongoing upskilling.	Anecdotal. Member satisfaction survey (especially for regional).	1. High	Yes - likely
The existing org structure may no longer serve our strategic intentions.	Current experience.	1. High	Yes - likely
Percentage of staff with recent school experience. Potential risk of being out of touch with current challenges schools are facing.		2. Medium	Inconsistent

* 1 = High, 2 = Medium, 3 = Low

** Yes - likely / Yes - Probable / No / Uncertain / Inconsistent / Not yet assessable

Strategy #4 – indicative activity

Indicative Activity

Activity

Build a culture and processes for continuous improvement and to promote most efficient work practices.

Support staff to maintain currency or develop greater knowledge of schools through appropriate school placement, shadowing, or undertaking special projects / intensive engagement on-site in or with schools.

Cultivate contacts at member schools and other AISs to potentially fill roles, share workload.

Consider employment models (e.g. secondment) - designed to meet identified strategies and members' needs[†].

Utilise expertise from member school staff to support the AISSA's internal and outward facing professional learning.

Invest in ICT infrastructure and professional learning, including to facilitate high-quality hybrid engagement.

Develop schedule/program for ongoing training for Board members, e.g. AICD.

Consider strategies to mitigate as far as possible loss of corporate knowledge (succession planning)[†]

Formalise the AISSA's approach to flexible working arrangements (beyond WFH).

Financial & Risk Considerations

High Level Risk Assessment

A high level risk assessment of the Strategic Plan was conducted* and the following risks were identified as low, medium or high. The strategic plan has initiatives that are directed partly or fully at each of these risks.

Risk	Description	Contributing Factors	Mitigants	Rating
Insufficient resources	Strategy implementation effort exceeds resourcing capacity. Funding future uncertain	- Reduced staff capacity - risk of burnout - Attempting to parallel run all aspects of strategy – lack of prioritisation - Lack of awareness of staff capacity - Uncertainty re Commonwealth Government funding	- Prioritise / stage implementation - Maintain awareness of staff capacity and adjust organisation structure and implementation program accordingly - Maintain awareness of funding direction and lobby accordingly	High
Strategy Ineffective	Increase costs without either reducing risk of member defection or otherwise generating value	- Not understanding member needs - Lack of awareness of comparative cost of different services from a range of other providers	- Member research - Test and learn approach to interventions	Medium
New service not successful	New service is offered that is not fit for purpose and/or does not generate sufficient demand	- Not understanding member needs - Not understanding the AISSA's capabilities - Ineffective business model	- Member research – including gauging market appetite before launching new service - Multi-stage approval process for new services	Medium
Member dissatisfaction	Actions related to the strategy cause dissatisfaction within AISSA membership	- Moving into areas where the AISSA does not have a remit - Wasteful / ineffective use of AISSA funds to implement strategy	- Member research - Board well engaged with membership and providing guidance - Prudent approach to implementation to ensure members' funds used effectively	Low
Lack of ownership from Board	Board does not commit fully to strategy and/or does not fully engage in implementation	- Lack of engagement generally - Unresolved disagreement on strategic issues - Board membership churn	- Strong Board leadership – draw out and address contentious areas - Embed implementation into Board process / papers	Low

*

A simplified risk assessment approach was used

Financial Considerations

- The AISSA has a robust budgeting and longer term financial management framework.
- This Strategic Plan contemplates both capital investments and changes in revenue / expense profile.
- Rather than duplicate the existing financial modelling, those items will be captured within the ongoing management framework.
- Large items will be subject to appropriate business cases and other items will be managed through the annual budgeting process.

Implementation Staging



Indicative Implementation Roadmap

Strategy	Initiative	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Strategy #1 Increase Engagement	Find a simple and effective way to collect data and track contact, engagement and understand impact (CRM and EDM).	1	2	3
	Develop a continuous feedback approach including: - pulse-checks (between large surveys) - link session-level assessments to overall satisfaction - share aggregated attendee feedback with decision-makers in schools	1		3
	Implement strategies to enhance partnerships including identifying where the strengths are in individual schools that could be utilised for the benefit of all.	1	2	
	Identify areas where the AISSA can add value, for example, templates for administrative tasks such as forms/applications.		2	3
	Develop and implement regional engagement strategy.	1		3
	Develop and implement an organisation-wide communications strategy and new website, informed by proactive engagement with school decision-makers.	1	2	
	Develop/strengthen relationships and opportunities to collaborate with external stakeholders, e.g. other AISs, ISA, multi-school systems.		2	
Strategy #2 Deliver Exceptional Services	Design / develop organisation structure to best suit service delivery & member needs. Includes considering service model.	1	2	3
	Rebuild the website to enhance delivery of services and supports, facilitate greater engagement and communication, enhance engagement data	1	2	
	Undertake financial planning to support investment in developing our offering and set targets to increase income from alternate sources.	1	2	3
	Explore opportunities for the AISSA to broker and/or develop deals/services which will benefit all member schools.		2	
	Develop tailored support / professional learning for Business Managers based on feedback.	1		
	Explore extension of 'Conference' offerings into additional topics.		2	
Strategy #3 Strengthen the Sector	Profile, showcase and celebrate Independent school successes.	1	2	3
	Ensure the AISSA is represented in school celebrations / gatherings to create physical and mental presence in member schools.	1	2	3
	Expand culturally informed teaching and learning offerings and support for Reconciliation activities, focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures		2	
	Publish thought leadership and evidence-based, research material online e.g., Wellbeing Toolkit, CRRE, School Avoidance.		2	3
	Develop consistent / coordinated approach to advocacy, drawing on schools, their communities and ISA.	1	2	
	Provide clear messages and equip schools to assist the AISSA and the sector. Set up a section on website specifically for advocacy.	1	2	
	Facilitate connections between both the AISSA and schools with politicians, policy makers and property developers	1	2	
Strategy #4 Enhance our Capabilities	Consider initiatives/strategies to support addressing teacher shortage and improve narrative around teaching as a profession (including via media strategy).	1		
	Build a culture and processes for continuous improvement and to promote most efficient work practices.	1	2	3
	Support staff to maintain currency or develop greater knowledge of schools through appropriate school placement, shadowing, or undertaking special projects / intensive engagement on-site in or with schools.			3
	Cultivate contacts at member schools and other AISs to potentially fill roles, share workload.			3
	Consider employment models (e.g. secondment) - designed to meet other strategic pillars and members' needs.		2	
	Utilise expertise from member school staff to support the AISSA's internal and outward facing professional learning.	1	2	3
	Invest in ICT infrastructure and professional learning, including to facilitate high-quality hybrid engagement.		2	3
	Develop schedule/program for ongoing training for Board members, e.g. AICD.		2	
	Consider strategies to mitigate as far as possible loss of corporate knowledge (succession planning).	1		3
	Formalise the AISSA's approach to flexible working arrangements (beyond WFH).		2	