

PROJECT AGREEMENT TO BUILD STRONGER SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE IN INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FUNDED UNDER THE INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

An agreement between:

- the Commonwealth of Australia; and
- Western Australia.

This project will increase the autonomy of government schools in Western Australia.

Project Agreement

PRELIMINARIES

1. This Project Agreement (the Agreement) is created subject to the provisions of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (IGA FFR) and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement and its Schedules, which provide information in relation to performance reporting and payment arrangements under the IGA FFR.
2. This Agreement will support the increased autonomy in some government schools across Australia including through greater engagement of parents and local communities in school decision making and the provision of professional development for principals, school leaders and school communities through:
 - (a) focus on local governance;
 - (b) increased accountability to the local community;
 - (c) the use of streamlined or one-line budgets;
 - (d) local management of school facilities; and
 - (e) increased delegation over staffing for school principals.
3. This Agreement, including its Schedule, constitutes the entire agreement for this project.

PART 1 – FORMALITIES

Parties to this Agreement

4. This Agreement is between the Commonwealth of Australia (the Commonwealth) and Western Australia.

Term of the Agreement

5. This Agreement will commence as soon as the Commonwealth and Western Australia sign the Agreement and will expire on 30 June 2017 or on completion of the project, including final performance reporting and processing of final payments, unless terminated earlier or extended as agreed in writing by the Parties.

PART 2 – PROJECT OUTPUTS

6. The outputs of this Agreement are activities to assist government schools in transitioning to greater independence.
7. The specific outputs to be achieved by Western Australia are described in the Independent Public Schools Implementation Proposal at Schedule 1 of this Agreement.

PART 3 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH PARTY

Role of the Commonwealth

8. The Commonwealth will be responsible for:
 - (a) monitoring and assessing the achievements of Western Australia against its Implementation Proposal in the delivery of the Independent Public Schools Initiative under this Agreement to ensure that outputs are delivered within the agreed timeframe; and
 - (b) providing a financial contribution to Western Australia to support the implementation of this Agreement.

Role of Western Australia

9. Western Australia will be responsible for:
- (a) all aspects of delivering on the project outputs set out in this Agreement; and
 - (b) reporting on the delivery of outputs as set out in Part 4 – Performance Requirements, Reporting and Payments.

Shared roles

10. Both Parties will meet the requirements of Schedule E, Clause 26 of the IGA FFR, by ensuring that prior agreement is reached on the nature and content of any events, announcements, promotional material or publicity relating to activities under this Agreement, and that the roles of both Parties will be acknowledged and recognised appropriately.

PART 4 – PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS, REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

Table 1 summarises the performance requirements for the project, relevant reporting dates and expected payments to be made, subject to the annual performance report demonstrating that the milestones have been met.

Table 1: Milestones, reporting and payment summary

Outputs	Milestones	Report due	Payment
Increased autonomy in government schools in accordance with clause 7 of this Agreement	Agreement to Implementation Proposal	N/A	\$1.15 million
	Achievement of scheduled progress against the agreed Project Implementation Proposal	19 June 2015 covering the 1 May 2015 to 30 June 2015 period	\$2.30 million
	Achievement of scheduled progress against the agreed Project Implementation Proposal	30 April 2016 covering the 1 July 2015 to 31 March 2016 period	\$2.30 million
	Achievement of scheduled progress against the agreed Project Implementation Proposal	30 April 2017 covering the 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 period	\$2.30 million

Reporting arrangements

11. Western Australia will provide the Commonwealth with performance reports in accordance with Table 1 of this Agreement, consistent with the agreed Independent Public Schools Implementation Proposal included at Schedule 1.
12. If all scheduled progress has not been completed by 31 March 2017, then Western Australia will also provide the Commonwealth a final performance report within 90 days of the completion of the project, covering achievement of scheduled progress against the Implementation Proposal for the 1 April 2017 to 31 December 2017 period.

PART 5 – FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

13. The Commonwealth will provide a total financial contribution to Western Australia of \$8.05 million in respect of this Agreement. All payments are GST exclusive.
14. The Commonwealth's funding contribution will not be reduced were Western Australia to secure funding from other activity partners through innovative and collaborative partnerships.
15. The Commonwealth's financial contribution to the operation of this Agreement, including through National Partnership payments to Western Australia paid in accordance with *Schedule D – Payment Arrangements* of the IGA FFR, are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Estimated financial contributions

(\$ million)	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total
Estimated total budget	3.45	2.30	2.30	8.05
Less estimated National Partnership payments	3.45	2.30	2.30	8.05
Balance of non-Commonwealth contributions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

16. Having regard to the agreed estimated costs of the project specified in this Agreement, Western Australia will not be required to pay a refund to the Commonwealth if the actual cost of the project is less than the agreed estimated cost of the project. Similarly, Western Australia bears all risk should the costs of the project exceed the agreed estimated costs. The Parties acknowledge that this arrangement provides the maximum incentive for Western Australia to deliver projects cost effectively and efficiently.

PART 6 – GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Enforceability of the Agreement

17. The Parties do not intend any of the provisions of this Agreement to be legally enforceable. However, that does not lessen the Parties' commitment to this Agreement.

Variation of the Agreement

18. The Agreement may be amended at any time by agreement in writing by both the Parties.
19. Either Party to the Agreement may terminate their participation in the Agreement at any time by notifying the other Party in writing.

Delegations

20. The Commonwealth Minister for Education may delegate the assessment of performance against the Project Implementation Proposal and the authorisation of related project payments to senior Commonwealth officials, having regard to the financial and policy risks associated with those payments.

Dispute resolution

21. Either Party may give notice to the other Party of a dispute under this Agreement.
22. Officials of both Parties will attempt to resolve any dispute in the first instance.
23. If a dispute cannot be resolved by officials, it may be escalated to the relevant Ministers.

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

Signed for and on behalf of the
Commonwealth of Australia by



The Honourable Christopher Pyne MP
Minister for Education and Training

Date: 14 April 2015

Signed for and on behalf of
Western Australia by



The Honourable Peter Collier MLC
Minister for Education

Date: 28/4/15

SCHEDULE 1 – WESTERN AUSTRALIA

IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSAL

1. Current level of autonomy

The Independent Public Schools (IPS) initiative was announced in August 2009 in Western Australia. The development of this initiative signified a new era in education in Western Australia, being one of the most important changes to the State's education system in decades.

This initiative has transformed public education in this State, by increasing the capacity of public schools to exercise more independence at the local level. It is creating strong foundations for empowered school communities, for innovation in schools, and for future improvement in student achievement. It is a version of autonomy which is characterised by choice, energy, motivation, innovation and engagement.

Under the leadership of their principals, and with the support of their communities, 441 IPS (57% of public schools) are now operating with a degree of autonomy that is unprecedented in this State. In 2015, about 70% of students and teachers in Western Australia are learning and teaching in IPS. A full cross-section of primary and secondary schools are now operating as IPS in the Wheatbelt, Southwest, Pilbara, Midwest, Goldfields, Kimberley and metropolitan regions of Western Australia.

Schools *choose*, with the support of their school communities, to participate in a rigorous development and selection program that will prepare them for operating with greater autonomy and independence.

The success of the IPS initiative within Western Australia is based largely on three key elements:

1. adherence to the principles of choice, readiness and rigorous selection;
2. use of experienced IPS principals as powerful advocates and supporters of the initiative; and
3. community confidence in, and enthusiasm for, autonomy that is largely enacted through greater engagement with governance (i.e. school boards).

2. Element/s of autonomy to be targeted in this initiative and the implementation proposal

In 2013 the University of Melbourne delivered an *Evaluation of the Independent Public Schools Initiative*. The Report stated:

....the story of the early implementation of the IPS initiative is a positive one, while not without challenge. The IPS initiative appears to be on the cusp of change that is demonstrable at a classroom level. Many of the IPS are approaching their "peak of implementation phase" and now their task is to use the benefits of this implementation to realise the impact on teachers and students. This is most likely to happen by way of changes within the classrooms; as the IPS have engendered positive attitudes in becoming an IPS, they can now look to within-class enhancements. IPS have the opportunity to focus on the student needs, teaching and learning, and fostering a school climate that invites students to attend and learn. To do this, schools need principals who are ready to champion the next change, they need support of the whole school community, and most importantly the support of an education system that provides the direction and resources to promote this change in the classroom.

To enable Western Australia to achieve this aim the initiative will be closely aligned with four of the Commonwealth Government's IPS principles:

- focus on local governance;
- increased accountability to the local community;
- local management of school facilities; and
- increased delegation over staffing for school principals.

Under this Agreement Western Australia will:

- develop and implement a Leadership Program that will build the capacity of existing IPS principals in an autonomous environment; and
- develop and implement training to provide IPS School Boards with the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles more effectively, particularly in relation to school accountability.

Scheduled Activity 1: IPS Leadership Program

Develop and implement a Leadership Program that will build the capacity of up to 441 IPS principals in an autonomous environment.

In Western Australia IPS Principals are expected to take more initiative for building school conditions that support the work of teachers in classrooms, work constructively with their communities and to demonstrate greater responsibility for the performance of their schools.

Funding from this Project Agreement will be used to support up to 441 IPS principals manage and consolidate these changes through the creation and implementation of a prestigious IPS Leadership Program. The six-month Program will be based on action-learning and peer collaboration; and will include four integrated modules.

Module 1: Leading for improvement in a culture of autonomy

This module explores the nature of empowered leadership, and the knowledge and skills required to be an effective, innovative and successful principal in an IPS setting.

Module 2: Using autonomy to build the conditions for student success

This module will provide principals with an insight into the theory, strategies, resourcing and organisational models of autonomous schools which best support improved student performance.

Module 3: Accounting for success in an autonomous school

This module will provide principals with opportunities to investigate and implement a range of strategies and practice to build their skills and abilities in self-assessment, planning and reporting, human and resource management and community partnerships.

Module 4: Engaging community through effective governance

This module will support high-functioning IPS School Boards through a focus on evidence-based approaches to leading effective community engagement and influence.

Scheduled Activity 2: Empowered Governance Program

Develop and implement training to provide up to 441 IPS School Boards with the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles more effectively, particularly in relation to school accountability.

The University of Melbourne's *Evaluation of the Independent Public Schools Initiative* found that Boards are:

...an important mechanism of involvement, especially as the experience of Board members in their fields of expertise has been found to have an impact on school improvement (Gamage 2006)...principals from all public school categories agreed that the School Board increases the principal's accountability to the community, although there was no formal change in authority under governing legislation

Moreover, the evaluation listed the capacity of the School Board as a key factor in a school's successful transition to greater autonomy.

To maximise the impact of IPS School Boards on delivering more effective schooling funding from the Project Agreement will be used to provide the necessary tools, understandings and training to undertake the already significant roles with which they are empowered.

This scheduled activity will centre on:

- developing online training and resources that build sustainable access to information and materials, supporting the role of IPS School Boards; and
- providing training for IPS School Boards aimed at empowering them with knowledge, skills and processes to exercise their accountability functions more effectively, specifically in the areas of school planning, budgeting, self-assessment and reporting.

Provision of training to build the capacity of IPS School Boards in accountability, will consist of the following four modules:

Module 1: Planning for success: how effective IPS School Boards analyse, develop and contribute to school planning.

Module 2: Budgeting for impact: how effective IPS School Boards understand school budgets and endorse them with confidence.

Module 3: Understanding school performance data: how effective IPS School Boards decipher meaning from the array of information demonstrating school achievement.

Module 4: Reporting: How effective IPS School Boards support annual reporting processes that maximise the community's understanding of their school's performance.

The training will be offered to 441 IPS school communities across Western Australia over the period 2015-2017 and reach between 1000 and 2000 IPS School Board members.

3. Changes to existing practices to increase autonomy

Activity 1: IPS Leadership Program

The IPS Leadership Program will deliver professional learning, support, resources and research, led by experts in the field and principals themselves, that builds school capacity in the application of autonomy to enhance learning environments, accountability and governance.

The information that is gathered throughout the period of this project will provide best practice in new ways of thinking and operating to ensure:

- students have access to optimal learning opportunities within an autonomous public school landscape;
- accountability processes are highly developed to inform sound and targeted local decision making; and
- School Boards are high functioning partners in the governance of IPS.

During and after the Leadership Program, some high performing principals will be required to lead specific change initiatives in their schools, specific to the local school context. This will involve applying their learning to practical innovations that convert autonomy into innovations in teaching and learning, accountability and governance.

Activity 2: Empowered Governance Program

The development and delivery of a sophisticated suite of learning, training and resources in the area of school governance, combined with the Department of Education's commissioning of independent research in the area, will develop new standards for best practice that enhances the effectiveness, role and engagement of IPS School Boards, particularly in the area of school accountability.

The outcomes delivered will also inform decisions about expanding the role of IPS School Boards and enhancing their effectiveness through ongoing access to quality information and training.

New materials and training will be developed and delivered in multiple forums across the State.

4. Number of schools targeted for participation in the initiative

<i>Cohort</i>	<i>Year of Operation</i>	<i>Number of schools</i>
1	2015	To be advised by 31 August 2015
2	2016	To be advised by 30 April 2016
3	2017	To be advised by 30 April 2017
Total		441 schools

5. School selection criteria

Activity 1: IPS Leadership Program

Western Australia's leadership development program will be available to all 441 Independent Public Schools over a two year period. In addition, elements of the program with particular application to unique school and community contexts will be accessible to specific groups of principals based on participant interest. Information about the number of principals taking up these places will be available to the Commonwealth once the expressions of interest process is complete.

Activity 2: Empowered Governance Program

The proposed program of school board development will be available to all 441 Independent Public School boards over a two year period. Access will be enhanced via the provision of regional opportunities across the State. It is anticipated that up to three members of each board will access the development program. Information about the number of principals taking up these places will be available to the Commonwealth once the expressions of interest process is complete.

All schools will also have access to the new governance standards and online resources by the end of the program.

6. Implementation activities

<i>Reporting period</i>	<i>Implementation Activities</i>
1 May 2015 to 30 June 2015	<p><u>Activity 1: IPS Leadership Program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a partnership arrangement with the Institute for Professional Learning (IPL) to develop the IPS Leadership Program Commence development of Modules 1 - 4 Commence development and management of tenders for training modules and support materials <p><u>Activity 2: Empowered Governance Program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a partnership arrangement with the IPL to develop the Empowered Governance Program Commence development of Modules 1 – 4 Commence development and management of tenders for training modules and support materials

1 July 2015 to 31 March 2016	<u>Activity 1: IPS Leadership Program</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for applications from IPS principals for the first IPS Leadership Program • Delivery of first IPS Principal Leadership Development Program • Commence development of support materials • Preparation for second IPS Leadership Development Program • Call for applications from IPS principals for the second IPS Leadership Program <u>Activity 2: Empowered Governance Program</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for registrations from IPS Principals and IPS School Board members in the first Empowered Governance Program • Delivery of first Empowered Governance Program • Commence development of online support materials • Preparation for second Empowered Governance Program • Call for applications from IPS principals for the second Empowered Governance Program
1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017	<u>Activity 1: IPS Leadership Program</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of second, third and fourth IPS Leadership Programs <u>Activity 2: Empowered Governance Program</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of second, third and fourth Empowered Governance Programs • Complete development of online support materials • Develop standards of best practice for IPS School Boards

The Australian Government's IPS Initiative will directly fund the development of training resources and materials in relation to this Project Agreement. Attribution to the Australian Government's IPS Initiative will be clearly displayed on all training material and all marketing and communications material associated with this Project Agreement.

7. Budget

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Total
Scheduled Activity 1	\$2,450,000	\$1,480,000	\$1,480,000	\$5,410,000
Schedule Activity 2	\$899,535	\$753,000	\$753,000	\$2,405,535
Administrative costs (3%)	\$100,485	\$66,990	\$66,990	\$234,465
TOTAL	\$3,450,020	\$2,299,990	\$2,299,990	\$8 050 000

8. Evidence of impact

Western Australia will provide progress reports as per Part 4 of this Project Agreement.

At the completion of the project, independent research will be commissioned into the impact of the IPS Leadership Program in building school cultures that are able to translate greater autonomy into conditions for enhanced student learning, more refined accountability and effective governance.

Independent evaluation of the IPS Leadership Program is anticipated to comprise evidence of:

- how enhancements to the development and transition program have assisted schools to become IPS and utilise the flexibilities and greater autonomy available to them;
- how the IPS Leadership Program has assisted newly appointed IPS principals to take on a greater

level of autonomy and independence; and

- the extent to which IPS professional learning and support materials enhance the effectiveness of school board community engagement.