

20

AHISA ANNUAL REPORT

23



## AHISA'S PRIMARY OBJECT

**TO OPTIMISE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE EDUCATION AND WELFARE OF AUSTRALIA'S YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH THE MAINTENANCE OF COLLEGIALITY AND HIGH STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND CONDUCT AMONGST ITS MEMBERS**

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## AHISA'S MISSION

**AHISA ACHIEVES ITS PURPOSE, CULTIVATING EXCELLENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL LEADERSHIP BY:**

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Amplifying leadership impact across the journey from aspirant to sage through tailored professional learning and support services

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Building relationships, networks and partnerships that enhance personal connection and leadership effectiveness

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Influencing and advocating in education policy, leadership, and practice

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### COLLEGIALITY

Building and sustaining strong personal connections so that every member is known, valued and supported.

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### EXCELLENCE

Striving for the best in every facet of leadership; creating and sustaining a culture of contribution to our profession that is aspirational, fostering quality and new ideas.

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### AUTONOMY

Proactively exercising freedom, expertise and personal accountability to lead and inspire learning, the profession and community building.

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### PARTNERSHIP

Working collaboratively to inform, influence and contribute.



# VALUE PROPOSITION

EDUCATIONAL LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## INFLUENTIAL

Contribution to all children nationally

National voice

Shaping policy

Advocacy and representation

## PROFESSIONAL

Professional standards and ethics

Learning and development conferences

Access to collective IP

Leadership capacity building and appraisal

## RELATIONAL

Collegiality

Trust

Confidentiality

Networks, access and connections

Issues management and support

## PERSONAL

Personal advisory service

Personal wellbeing

Remuneration

Protection - contractual advice

## FROM THE NATIONAL CHAIR

REV. CHRIS IVEY

AHISA NATIONAL CHAIR 2019-2023

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### THE NATIONAL BOARD WELCOMED THE APPOINTMENT OF DR CHRIS DUNCAN AS AHISA'S NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, EFFECTIVE FROM 1 JANUARY 2023.

In making this appointment the Board acknowledged the extensive contribution and commitment to AHISA made by our former CEO, Beth Blackwood AM, over the last seven years. Beth leaves a significant legacy for Chris to extend the reach and quality of services to members.

AHISA conducted a qualitative Members Services Survey in March 2023 to assess member satisfaction, service gaps, engagement barriers, opportunities to enhance professional learning and to explore new service provisions. Members expressed a strong appetite for more curated information, further structured professional development programs and more explicit pastoral care arrangements for Heads. The survey provided valuable insights and data to inform the renewal for the current strategic plan which expires in 2024.

The Senior Staff Remuneration Survey collected valuable benchmark data to guide decisions about how Heads determine remuneration levels and benefits for senior staff. This survey complements the Heads Remuneration Survey which is conducted in the alternate year.

In 2023, AHISA activated 81 members and 12 interim memberships. Of these, 30 were returning or transferring members, and 51 were new members, 11 of whom had been Aspirants. One third of AHISA members have joined in the past three years.

AHISA witnessed significant interest and growth in its Aspirant Programs. In 2023 the Aspirant membership grew to 269 members, many of whom took part in a range of programs offered by the State Branches. Equipping the next generation of Heads with the skills and knowledge for school leadership has become an important dimension of AHISA's work.

The 19th Biennial Conference held on the Gold Coast attracted 243 delegates and 79 Conference sponsors. The Biennial is AHISA's signature event and as National Chair it was pleasing to see the Conference so well supported by Heads, and to observe the professional engagement that emerges from collegial roots that connect the Association.

The national education landscape was marked by changes to NAPLAN, a significant number of national and state education policy reviews to which AHISA contributed, significant issues in relation to teacher recruitment and retention, continued enrolment growth in independent schools, elevated student wellbeing issues and ongoing media scrutiny.

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**I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR THEIR WISE JUDGEMENT AND COMMITMENT TO THE GOVERNANCE OF AHISA AND TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT TO MEMBERS THE 2023 AHISA ANNUAL REPORT.**

## **FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**DR CHRIS DUNCAN**

COMMENCED 1 JANUARY 2023

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**THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NATIONAL OFFICE IS CRUCIAL IN THE DELIVERY OF MEMBER SERVICES. THE PRUDENT GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP OF AHISA ALSO DEPENDS UPON THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL OFFICE TEAM.**

With the appointment of a new CEO, minor changes to the personnel and structure of the National office were made to enhance the support of member services. 2023 was also an opportunity to identify and scope the emerging strategic issues that will shape AHISA's short and longer-term future. The role of the State Advisor/Coordinators were re-defined to reflect the priority AHISA attaches to Heads in the early years of their tenure, developing an Aspirant cohort better prepared for Headship, especially in relation to school governance, and continuing to engage experienced and long-serving Heads in these priorities. Re-naming the State Adviser/Coordinator role to AHISA Professional Fellow confers the positions with greater strategic heft and intent.

In preparation for the development of AHISA's next strategic plan, the Board and the CEO revisited AHISA's statements of the purpose, mission, values and value proposition. This re-articulation project did not change AHISA's core propositions, however it did re-articulate them with clear and compelling language, foregrounding our charitable mission of advancing education, via a specialised collegial network of independent school Heads.

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**I WOULD LIKE TO RECORD THE CEO'S APPRECIATION OF THE WORK PERFORMED BY THE NATIONAL OFFICE TEAM IN 2023 AND TO THANK THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR ITS WISE GUARDIANSHIP OF AHISA.**

## OUR NATIONAL BOARD - AHISA BOARD MEMBERS 2023



### NATIONAL CHAIR

Rev Chris Ivey  
*St Andrew's Anglican College, QLD*

### BRANCH REPRESENTATIVE DIRECTORS

Dr Alec O'Connell  
*Scotch College, WA*

Ms Ros Curtis  
*St Margaret's Anglican Girls' School, QLD*

Mr Steve Byrne  
*Cardijn College, SA*

Dr Rob McEwan (Treasurer)  
*Christian College Geelong, VIC*

Dr Gareth Leechman  
*Arndell Anglican College, NSW*

Mr Glen McKeeman  
*Resigned 27/11/2023*

Mr Adam Heath  
*Ballarat Grammar, VIC*  
*Commenced 27/11/2023*

### ELECTED MEMBERS

Ms Anne Ford  
*John Wollaston Anglican Community School, WA*

Mr Craig Bassingthwaighte  
*Somerset College, QLD*

Dr Helen Riekie  
*Cabra Dominican College, SA*

Mrs Natasha Mackinnon  
*Leighland Christian School, TAS*  
*Commenced 10/7/23*

Mr Andrew Müller  
*Scotch Oakburn College, TAS*  
*Resigned 10/7/23*

Mrs Megan Krimmer  
*Abbotsleigh, NSW*

Dr Paul Hicks  
*Camberwell Grammar School, VIC*

### FINANCE, AUDIT AND INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Dr Rob McEwan  
*Treasurer*

Dr Paul Hicks  
Rev Chris Ivey

### GOVERNANCE AND RISK COMMITTEE

Mr Craig Bassingthwaighte  
*Committee Chair*

Ms Anne Ford  
Dr Gareth Leechman  
Rev Chris Ivey

## AHISA BRANCH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

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### NEW SOUTH WALES/ACT

Dr Gareth Leechman (Chair)  
*Arndell Anglican College*

Dr Susan Middlebrook (Deputy Chair)  
*Tara Anglican School for Girls*

Dr David Nockles (Secretary/Treasurer)  
*Macarthur Anglican School*

Ms Roxanne Arnold (Executive  
Assistant)

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### QUEENSLAND

Ms Ros Curtis (Chair)  
*St Margaret's Anglican Girls' School*

Mr Colin Minke (Treasurer)  
*Immanuel Lutheran College*

Ms Lisa Beeney (Executive Assistant)

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### SOUTH AUSTRALIA/ NORTHERN TERRITORY

Mr Steve Byrne (Chair)  
*Cardijn College*

Dr Helen Riekie (Secretary/Treasurer)  
*Cabra Dominican College*

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### TASMANIA

Dr Rob McEwan (Chair)  
*The Hutchins School*

Mrs Natasha Mackinnon (Secretary)  
*Leighland Christian School*

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### VICTORIA

Mr Glen McKeeman (Chair)  
*Christian College Geelong*

Leonie Kirk (Professional Officer)

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### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Dr Alec O'Connell (Chair)  
*Scotch College*

Ms Melissa Powell (Secretary)  
*Swan Valley Anglican Community  
School*

Ms Pat Rodrigues (Treasurer)  
*Court Grammar School*

## AHISA REFERENCE GROUPS

### INDEPENDENCE

AHISA's journal, Independence, is issued twice a year. It is distributed in hard copy format to members; a digital version of each issue is published online and a digital archive maintained in the public domain for the benefit of the wider education sector.

Dr Annette Rome (Chair)  
*St Margaret's Berwick Grammar, VIC*

Dean Dell'Oro  
*Hale School, WA*

Michael Parker  
*Newington, NSW*

Marise McConaghy  
*Strathcona, VIC*

Tim Argall  
*Donvale, VIC*

Elizabeth McDougall  
*Sacred Heart College, TAS*

### SOCIAL ISSUES REFERENCE GROUP

The Reference Group examines student health and wellbeing issues, with the aim of identifying information and resources for AHISA members.

Cate Begbie  
*Presbyterian Ladies' College, WA*

Kalea Haran  
*Penrhos College, WA*

Lourdes Mejia  
*Montgrove College, NSW*

Peter Foster  
*Mancel College, QLD*

Maria Woods  
*Hillbrook Anglican School, QLD*

Anita Zocchi  
*University Senior College, SA*

Shannon Warren  
*Woodcroft College, SA*

Adrian Farrer  
*Trinity Grammar School, VIC*

Jenny Williams  
*Firbank Grammar School, VIC*

### HONORARY MEMBERS

Dr Amanda Bell AM  
Mrs Robyn Bell  
Ms Beth Blackwood AM  
Mr Sholto Bowen OAM  
Mrs Bobby Court  
Mr Warwick Dean  
Dr Gordon Donaldson AM  
Mr Simon Gipson OAM  
Fr Chris Gleeson SJ  
Mr Robert Grant AM  
Mrs Carolyn Grantskalns  
Dr Judith Hancock AM  
Ms Megan Hansen  
Dr Tim Hawkes OAM  
Ms Noelene Horton AM  
Dr Rod Kefford AM  
Mr Malcolm Lamb AM  
Ms Dawn Lang  
Ms Elisabeth Lenders OAM  
Dr Peter Lennox  
Mr David Loader OAM  
Mr Neville Lyngcoln  
Ms Kathleen McCredie AM  
Mrs Kathryn McGuigan  
Miss Joan Montgomery AM OBE  
Dr David Mulford  
Mr Simon Murray OAM  
Bishop Greg O'Kelly SJAM  
Dr Ian Paterson AM  
Mr Mark Porter  
Mrs Jann Robinson OAM  
Mr Geoff Ryan AM  
Dr Heather Schnagl AM  
Dr Ruth Shatford AM  
Mr Tony Sheumack  
Mrs Karen Spiller OAM  
Mrs Barbara Stone AM  
Mr Bill Toppin  
Mr Rick Tudor OAM  
Mr Michael Urwin  
Rev Chris Welsh  
Mrs Margaret White

*AHISA members were saddened by the death of honorary member Mrs Denise Thomas AM, former Principal of Meriden School, NSW, on 5 June 2023.*



## AHISA MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

GENERAL MEMBERS	473
INTERIM MEMBERS	11
OVERSEAS MEMBERS	12
TOTAL	496

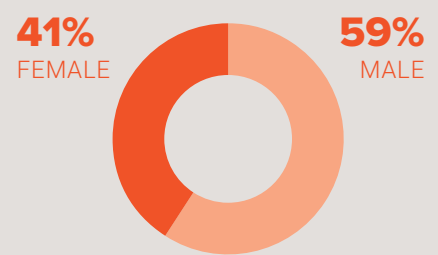
## AHISA MEMBERS' SCHOOLS

132	BOARDING SCHOOLS	27
310	SCHOOLS WITH AN ELC	64%
322	CO-EDUCATIONAL	67%
56	SINGLE-SEX BOYS SCHOOL	12%
99	SINGLE-SEX GIRLS SCHOOL	20%
6	PARALLEL SINGLE-SEX CAMPUS	1%

## AHISA BRANCH NUMBERS

NSW/ACT	144
QLD	103
SA/NT	48
TAS	23
VIC	118
WA	48

## AHISA MEMBER GENDER BREAKDOWN

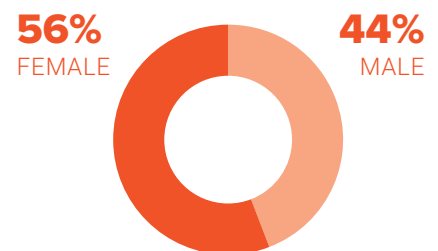


FEMALES	204
MALES	292

## ASPIRANT MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

TOTAL ASPIRANT MEMBERS	269	
35	NSW / ACT	13%
75	QLD	28%
49	SA / NT	18%
4	TAS	1%
57	VIC	21%
49	WA	18%

## ASPIRANT MEMBER GENDER BREAKDOWN



FEMALES	150
MALES	119

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### AMPLIFY LEADERSHIP

AMPLIFYING LEADERSHIP IMPACT ACROSS THE JOURNEY FROM ASPIRANT TO SAGE THROUGH TAILORED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

**EXTEND** the AHISA Advisor Program for new principals

**BUILD** peer relationships established at the new member conference

**CREATE** and deliver a 'Class of Reconnect' conference for heads at the end of Year 2/start of Year 3 of tenure

**DEVELOP** programs that support heads in building professional resilience, wellbeing and personal sustainability

**BRANCH** seminar program for aspirants – increasing connectivity and engagement

### BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS THAT ENHANCE PERSONAL CONNECTION AND LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

**STRENGTHEN** the Board/ Chair and Head connection; providing context and insight to ensure a strong and sustainable working relationship

**REVITALISE** the member experience through connecting, engaging and contributing at Branch level

**STRENGTHEN** and expand external relationships and partnerships

**ENGAGE** past members in contributing to the life of AHISA and supporting members to increase their leadership effectiveness and impact

### INFLUENCE & ADVOCACY

INFLUENCING AND ADVOCATING IN EDUCATION POLICY, LEADERSHIP AND PRACTICE.

**POSITION** AHISA as the voice of independent school leadership

**ADVOCATE** and provide a strong and coherent voice for members

**INVEST** in cobranding and collaborative opportunities

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE

# 1

### AMPLIFY LEADERSHIP

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, AHISA'S PRIMARY FORM OF SUPPORT FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ITS MEMBERS IS THE PROVISION OF A BROAD PLATFORM FOR PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGE. AT BRANCH MEETINGS AND OUR NATIONAL BIENNIAL CONFERENCE, MEMBERS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THEIR WISDOM AND EXPERTISE AND FORM SUPPORTIVE PROFESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS.

Collegial exchange is also fostered virtually via AHISA's main digital network, **HeadNet**, which enables members to seek in-time support from Heads nationally or within their own state or territory. In 2023, over 170 requests for information or assistance were sent, covering a broad ranges of issues, including staffing policies and practices, role descriptions, general school policies and procedures, consultant or provider recommendations, organisational structures and governance.

AHISA's journal, **Independence**, is also an important vehicle through which members record and share leading practice in their schools.

A highly valued aspect of AHISA's work is the targeted support available to members who are new to the principalship or new to the independent sector. The AHISA

**New Members' Conference**, held in Canberra in May of each year, provides an intimate and powerful forum for new Heads to meet and discuss the challenges they face, and learn from the experienced Heads who serve on AHISA's Board and from experts in employment law, governance and communications. For many new members, the Conference is where valuable, long-term professional friendships are formed.

“ The overwhelming message from this conference was that I am not alone as a new principal. I now have a list of contacts, including experienced principals, of whom I can ask for advice. As well as a group of new principals with whom I can share the highs and lows of the journey. **PRINCIPAL QLD** ”

New Heads also have the option to participate in AHISA's **Advisor Program**, which pairs new heads to a current or former AHISA member. In this way, new heads can benefit from the wisdom, experience and insight of seasoned school leaders. Across Australia, 20 new heads were part of the Advisor program in 2023.

“ My advisor has been a lifeline. Term 3 has had its twists and turns and I have utilised the “lifeline” on a number of occasions to provide advice on a couple of issues/concerns. I am extremely grateful to AHISA and the advisor program. **PRINCIPAL VIC** ”

The **Reconnect Conference** is open to Heads in their third or fourth year of headship, as school leaders encounter new challenges and opportunities that require ongoing support and development. This conference

provides a forum for Heads to reflect on their leadership journey, share insights and lessons learned, and reconnect with their peers, as well as offering practical strategies and tools for advancing leadership effectiveness, managing change, and sustaining personal resilience in the face of evolving demands.

“ I would thoroughly recommend the Reconnect Conference as a means of galvanising the excellent connections and support mechanisms available to us and to enrich, enliven and prepare for the next couple of years. This conference is pitched at just the right time with just the right level of information/sharing/discussion at such an important juncture for early career principals. **PRINCIPAL QLD** ”

Members are also encouraged to use AHISA's purpose-developed 360-degree appraisal tool. The School Leadership Survey (SLS360) has been developed for senior leadership, middle management and non-teaching roles. Importantly, the SLS360 offers benchmarking against peers within the independent sector. In 2023, 75 people were profiled using the SLS360.

The Aspirant Membership program continues to grow, with 269 Aspirant members across Australia in 2023. A monthly **Aspirant newsletter** is distributed to Aspirants, focusing on a leadership topic to equip and inspire thinking.

The **branch support program for Aspirant Members** operated in QLD, VIC, SA and WA in 2023, providing aspiring school leaders with access

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 AMPLIFY LEADERSHIP (CONT)

to expert insights, practical tools, and peer networking opportunities aimed at enhancing their leadership capabilities and preparing them for future roles. By increasing connectivity and engagement among aspirants within their branch communities, AHISA seeks to foster a culture of continuous learning, collaboration, and support that empowers emerging leaders to thrive in their careers.

In order to support Heads in their leadership roles, AHISA ran the **Senior Staff Remuneration Survey** which provides benchmarking data for senior leadership roles in schools, as well as updating the service providers **'Best of' list**, available on the members log-in section of the website.

By implementing these initiatives and programs, AHISA aims to empower school leaders at every stage of their professional journey, from aspiring principals to seasoned veterans, by providing tailored professional learning and support services that amplify their leadership impact and contribute to their long-term success and fulfillment in their roles.

## ASPIRANT PROGRAM INFORMATION

Each branch offers a different approach to Aspirant support and leadership development, including meetings, forums, training opportunities and shadowing programs.

**QUEENSLAND** offered one event per term with an average of 35 Aspirants attending each event.

“ Thanks to AHISA for providing an Aspirant Leaders Program. It is great to see our investment in the future leaders of education and building their capacity to provide exceptional opportunities for our students and staff. **ASPIRANT MEMBER QLD** ”

**VICTORIA**, together with ISV, launched its Aspiring Principals Program, where over 40 people attended full-day training opportunities and online masterclasses.

“ It's great to hear from really dedicated, passionate and experienced people who have been in education for a long time and have seen it all and are still just as passionate about making an impact on young people's lives. **PARTICIPANT VIC** ”

The Aspirant program in **WESTERN AUSTRALIA** held two events in 2023, with over 25 attending each event. WA also offers the opportunity to 'shadow' a Principal. In 2023, five Aspirants were part of this program:

“ The opportunity to shadow a School Principal is a humbling and inspiring opportunity. Witnessing the intricate tapestry of leadership woven with dedication, zest and good humour, allowed me to be self-reflective about where I am at and where I want to go. Also to have some insight into how to get there. It was the most wonderful chance to learn. Hands down the best PD I have ever done! **ASPIRANT MEMBER WA** ”

“ The opportunity to shadow a Principal is a rewarding experience for both the Principal and the Aspirant. Gaining an insight into a day in the life of a Principal and, in a safe space, being able to ask, question and enquire as to the challenges and rewards of the role, opens new learnings. It also made me reflect on what I do and why. There is so much to be gained by engaging in the experience. It is a win-win journey. **PRINCIPAL WA** ”

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO 2

### BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

**COLLEGIALITY IS A CORE BUILDING BLOCK IN AHISA'S STRATEGY, RECOGNISING THAT RELATIONSHIP BUILDING, NETWORKING AND PERSONAL CONNECTION ARE VITAL TO OUR MEMBERS.**

Regular **Branch meetings** include opportunities to network, hear from guest speakers, the AHISA National Chair and CEO. Members can exchange ideas, share best practices, and collaborate on common challenges. By actively involving members in Branch activities and decision-making processes, AHISA aims to create a vibrant and inclusive community that supports professional growth and development.

The national events run by AHISA are an important opportunity for members to be inspired, to learn, and to build peer relationships. To be able to associate with and learn with others who are growing in the role is perhaps the greatest benefit of membership to AHISA. The **Biennial Conference**, **New Members' Conference** and **Reconnect Conference** were highlights of the 2023 calendar.

Acknowledging the importance of the Board, Board Chair and Head relationships, the **Board Business newsletter** is sent to Heads and Board Chairs three times a year, providing

articles and resources aimed at equipping boards for their governance role and providing context and insight to ensure a strong and sustainable working relationship.

Collaboration with Independent Schools Australia (ISA) and the state ISAs included partnership with ISV to develop an Aspiring Principals Program in Victoria, with other state projects in the beginning stages.

AHISA appreciates its connections with other Principal associations through the Coalition of Australian Principals (CAP). In 2023, the CEO met with other members of CAP to discuss the Australian Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey, School TV, and the National School Reform Agreement.

AHISA also maintains a strong relationship with Independent Schools New Zealand (ISNZ), in recognition of our joint members. The National Chair and CEO also attended the ISNZ conference, and hosted ISNZ members at the **Biennial** and **New Members' Conference**.

In 2023, the CEO presented at the Australian Steiner Schools Conference in Hobart.

The CEO was invited to join Global Association for Values in Education (GAVE), a group of 25 international scholars, institutions and policy makers interested in values-based education, led by Emeritus Professor Terry Lovat, and was appointed as joint-chair of the Education Committee.

AHISA also strengthened its relationships with the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference

(HMC) of the UK by hosting a HMC networking event at the **Biennial**. The CEO also attended the HMC conference in October, where he presented a session on Australian schooling.

AHISA has continued its commitment as a Research Partner for the Australian Principals Health and Wellbeing survey, which provides annual data and reporting on wellbeing measures for principals and school leaders, highlighting areas of challenge and strength in the profession.

Overall, AHISA remains committed to building strong relationships, networks, and partnerships that enhance personal connection and leadership effectiveness, both within the organisation and across the broader education community. Through collaborative efforts and shared commitment to excellence, AHISA aims to empower its members to lead with confidence and make a positive impact on the lives of students, educators, and communities nationwide.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY THREE

# 3

### INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY

**AHISA MAINTAINS A STRONG ADVOCACY EFFORT ON BEHALF OF MEMBERS AND THEIR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES IN BOTH THE POLITICAL AND PUBLIC DOMAINS, THROUGH SUBMISSIONS TO GOVERNMENT, CONSULTATIONS WITH POLITICIANS AND THEIR ADVISERS, AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MEDIA.**

The CEO attended the Parliamentary hearing for the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs in regard to the Online Gambling Enquiry, presenting an opening statement and answering questions from the committee. This was followed up later in the year with correspondence welcoming the Committee's report.

The CEO was involved in an Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) consultation on a national Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher (HALT) certification framework, raising the issues of national portability, and the development of certification within the context of an ongoing leadership development journey. Throughout the year, there were several meetings with AITSL Chair Professor John Hattie and CEO Mark Grant to discuss AITSL's current project on standards for middle leaders and how AITSL might support the leadership work of AHISA. The CEO also worked with Mark Grant to recruit AHISA heads for a program

to raise the esteem of teaching and headship.

The CEO was involved in consultations with the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan and National School Reform Agreement Review Expert Panel.

Consultation with Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is maintained through participation in teleconferences for parents' and principals' peak national bodies and in stakeholder briefings.

### SUBMISSIONS

Through consultation, collaboration and connection, AHISA seeks not only to amplify the voice of its members but add a further dimension to their contribution to Australian school education.

AHISA's submission to the **Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) consultation on potential reforms to the regulation of nicotine vaping products (NVPs)** supported tighter regulatory controls of NVPs, including their importation and sale, and the application of strict restrictions on the contents and packaging of NVPs and other vaping products. AHISA was supportive of the government's announcement to ban the sale of vaping products and invest in a public health campaign to encourage quitting and discourage people from taking up smoking and vaping.

AHISA's submission to the **Australian Parliament Joint Standing Committee inquiry into Australia's migration system**, Migration: Pathway to Nation Building, continued AHISA's advocacy effort in support of overseas

recruitment of staff by independent schools and offers suggestions on how the Australian Government's Temporary Skills Shortages visa arrangements could better support overseas recruitment of staff for Australian schools.

AHISA's engagement with consultations and inquiries touching on schools with a religious affiliation and anti-discrimination has been intense since the launch of the Religious Freedom Review (the "Ruddock Review") in 2017, with numerous submissions in relation to that Review and parliamentary inquiries on bills to amend anti-discrimination laws or introduce a new law on religious discrimination since 2018.

In 2023, AHISA responded to the **Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) Review of Religious Educational Institutions and Anti-Discrimination Laws** with a call for further clarification of several aspects of the Commission's proposals and their potential impact not only on schools with a religious affiliation but on single-sex schools and ethno-spiritual or cultural-spiritual schools, including Indigenous schools. It also recommended that the Australian Government establish as soon as possible the office and role of a Religious Discrimination Commissioner within the Australian Human Rights Commission via amendment of the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986.

The CEO was invited to sit on an ALRC advisory panel as part of the next stage of its review, and later in the year AHISA responded to an ALRC draft report, highlighting the

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY (CONT)

importance to schools of establishing and maintaining their ethos and values.

With a focus on protecting children online, AHISA responded to the **Senate Economics References Committee's Inquiry into the influence of international digital platforms**, raising issues about the lack of transparency in the algorithms of international digital platforms and concerns about the collection and processing of children's data, particularly for the purposes of profiling, behavioural advertising, or other uses.

Drawing on a survey of AHISA members undertaken in late 2018, AHISA's submission to the **House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training Inquiry into the perceptions and status of vocational education and training** highlighted the important role of schools in the delivery of vocational education and training (VET). In particular, it featured examples of the enterprising approaches schools take to ensure the best possible outcomes for their students.

AHISA's submission to the **Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee on current and proposed sexual consent laws in Australia**, responded to questions in the inquiry discussion paper referring to sexual consent culture and consent education in schools. Referring to Australian and British evidence, AHISA noted the role of pornography in influencing the nature of peer-to-peer sexual assaults and the role of alcohol

and drugs in creating the opportunity for these crimes. School-based education programs – while important and essential – are therefore not a 'silver bullet' to protect children, and AHISA argued that a multi-faceted, whole-of-community response is required to protect young people.

In responding to the **Attorney-General's Department on the Privacy Act Review Report**, AHISA advocated that the safety and privacy of children be adopted as a guiding principle for codes related to the Act, in line with Australia's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the related General Comment on children's rights in relation to the digital environment. AHISA proposed that all young people under the age of 18 have a right to the full protection of the law, irrespective of whether they have signalled consent to the terms and conditions of a digital product.

AHISA's response to the **Australian Universities Accord Panel Discussion Paper** included comments on the impact of the Job-ready Graduates (JRG) package and argued that to generate bold ideas in response to rapid changes in education demand and delivery, "a 360-degree or multi-dimensional view of education provision, allied to a well-articulated understanding of the purposes of education at each point on the education continuum" is required.

AHISA's submission to the **Australian Department of Education Response to Teacher Education Expert Panel Discussion Paper** argued for a national mentoring program for pre-service and graduate teachers, presenting evidence to support the

view that school-based teacher-mentors are the most appropriate model to maximise the effectiveness of school-based practical experience for a range of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs.

AHISA presented evidence from its 2019 Social Capital Survey in responding to the **Productivity Commission's Philanthropy Inquiry**. The survey report offers valuable insights into the role schools play in developing the capacity of children and young people to engage in volunteering, community service and philanthropic giving.

AHISA's submission to the **Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework** notes the role schools play in helping to fulfil Australia's commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the rights of a child to education and development delivered by child safe organisations.

The submission then draws the Committee's attention to two issues involving human rights which have arisen recently due to technological and social change, but which are not yet fully resolved in Australian legislation: the digital rights of children; and the extent to which schools with a religious affiliation are able to give full expression to their life as a faith community.

AHISA is grateful to its members for their response to an online survey to gather information on the use of Generative AI in their schools, which informed the submission to the **House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training Inquiry**



**into the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in Australia's education system.** The survey aimed to collect information about what had been learned from schools' experimentation with generative AI tools and to canvass school leaders' attitudes to and opinions on generative AI in education.

In the submission, AHISA also suggested steps the Australian Government might take to support Australia's school system adapt to what is predicted to be a highly disruptive technology, proposing that Australia's National Education Architecture stands as a key means to enable Australia's education system to harvest potential teacher productivity and student learning gains from generative AI while meeting equity goals.

AHISA's response to the **Expert Panel's Consultation Paper on the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System** focused on three key policy areas: Australia's teacher workforce; school leadership; and student wellbeing.

With regard to the teacher workforce, the submission offers recommendations that promise both immediate gains and longer-term impact both on the profession and equitable outcomes for students:

- Promoting school-based teacher-mentors
- Equipping teachers with the skills and tools for transformation
- Streamlining teacher registration

To further support the development of Australia's teacher workforce while establishing a strong foundation for the "school leadership pipeline" and

ensuring the capacity and capability of future school leadership, AHISA recommended a national focus on professional learning for the middle tier of school leadership, and in relation to student wellbeing, AHISA's submission addressed the issue of data collection and examined potential avenues to be explored by Education Ministers prior to setting wellbeing targets.



## AHISA EVENTS 2023

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS ARE AN IMPORTANT WAY IN WHICH AHISA DELIVERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND COLLEGIAL EXCHANGE FOR MEMBERS, FOR THEIR SENIOR STAFF AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS.

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### NEW MEMBERS' CONFERENCE

THURSDAY 18 TO SATURDAY  
20 MAY 2023, CANBERRA

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The AHISA New Members' Conference is held in Canberra each year. The purpose of the conference is to establish an immediate network for our newer members while providing an introduction to our association and an overview of areas crucial to the Headship role. The conference also builds the relationship and information exchange between AHISA's board members and new members. Board members present their reflections and experience on a range of topics, and selected experts are also invited to present on key areas of leadership and school business including media management, legal matters and contractual arrangements.

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*41 Delegates, 4 Corporate Sponsors,  
18 Board Members/National office  
Staff & Consultants, 3 Invited Guests &  
Speakers*

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### RECONNECT CONFERENCE

FRIDAY 20 TO SATURDAY 21  
OCTOBER 2023, CANBERRA

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Reconnect Conferences are designed to assist newer members in the next part of their principalship journey by spending a day envisioning the next few years with each other and AHISA Board members. Along with the information and insights gained from peers, members have the opportunity to reflect on the personal and professional challenges of the first few years of school leadership, and source the inspiration and energy to lead their school moving forward.

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*9 Delegates, 1 Corporate Sponsor, 11  
Board Members/National office Staff  
& Consultants, 2 Invited Guests &  
Speakers*

## BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 'WHAT NOW? WHAT NEXT?'

SUNDAY 24 TO WEDNESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2023,  
SHERATON MIRAGE, GOLD COAST QUEENSLAND

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Pre-conference Marketing Masterclasses run by corporate sponsor imageseven
- School Visit Programs to 9 local schools
- Four concurrent sessions were held during the conference, with 23 presenters offering a total of 19 workshops
- Table Talk sessions provided delegates with the chance to attend three short 15-minute presentations within the hour
- Recording of a live Podcast hosted by EdLeaders, featuring Rebecca Cody (Principal of Geelong Grammar School) and Phillip Heath (Head of Barker College)
- The Conference Dinner at Sea World provided an entertaining and fun atmosphere

322 total registrations

Delegate breakdown: 208 AHISA Members, 8 Honorary Members, 1 HMC & ISNZ Member, 5 Invited guests, 8 Staff, 13 Speakers, 79 Corporate/Conference Sponsors

AHISA Members by branch:  
62 NSW/ACT, 45 QLD, 19 SA/NT, 5 TAS, 53 VIC, 20 WA, 4 Overseas

### KEYNOTE PRESENTERS

**The New now. Preparing for the trends that will dominate a post-COVID world.**

Michael McQueen

**Are naïve good intentions and profit motives misleading us in the pursuit of student wellbeing?**

Dr Judith Locke

**Strive: How to create a school culture that supports change and evolution**

Dr Adam Fraser

**Beauty and the Beast: How emerging technology and Industry 5.0 will allow us to be more human**

Dr Catherine Ball

**Plenary Panel: The Tough Stuff**

**Facilitated by:** Ben Tallboys, Russell Kennedy Lawyers

**Featuring:** Chris Bradbury, Principal, Northholm Grammar, NSW, Steve Byrne, Principal, Cardijn College, SA, Cheryl Penberthy, Principal, Presbyterian Ladies College, VIC

### CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

**Rev. Chris Ivey** Principal,  
St Andrew's Anglican College, Qld

**Mr Craig Bassingthwaight** Headmaster,  
Somerset College, Qld

**Ms Ros Curtis** Principal,  
St Margaret's Anglican Girls' School, Qld

**Mr Anthony Micallef** Headmaster,  
Brisbane Grammar School, Qld

**Ms Kym Wickham** Principal,  
Loreto College, Qld

**Ms Maria Woods** Principal,  
Hillbrook Anglican College, Qld

**Mr Geoff van der Vliet** Principal,  
Nambour Christian College, Qld



## AHISA PUBLICATIONS 2023

AHISA'S PUBLISHING EFFORT SUPPORTS COLLEGIAL CONTRIBUTION AND EXCHANGE AMONG MEMBERS AND IS AN IMPORTANT WAY MEMBERS CONTRIBUTE COLLECTIVELY TO THE WIDER EDUCATION SECTOR.

AHISA's flagship publication, **INDEPENDENCE**, published twice a year, is distributed in hard copy format to members and subscribers and is also published digitally in the public domain. The journal is a platform for Heads and their staff members to share practice and discuss topical issues in independent school education. It is also a major vehicle for AHISA members' contribution to supporting excellence in school leadership in Australasia and beyond. The digital edition of the journal now has an international following.

AHISA also maintained an extensive internal publishing program for members, with the aim of providing professional resources and information to stakeholders.

The **AHISA BOARD BULLETIN** is published three times a year in digital format. It serves to report to members on decisions taken by AHISA's Board and on member and Branch activities.

The digital **CEO'S E-BULLETIN** is a fortnightly compendium of issues of interest to members and is also used to circulate research, leadership and educational articles, and other advisory material.



### INDEPENDENCE VOL 48 NO 1 MAY 2024

- Technology assisted dreams for the future
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education
- Brother-sister school connections
- Signature programs: The Penguin Squad
- Insights from the modern university student

**BOARD BUSINESS** is a newsletter produced three times per year, focusing on areas of school governance and leadership. It is distributed to school heads and board chairs via email.



### INDEPENDENCE VOL 48 NO 2 OCTOBER 2024

- The future of intelligence is here
- The role of technology in the classroom
- Student led philosophy in the classroom
- Reflections on classroom innovation
- Master planning for the future

A monthly **ASPIRANT NEWSLETTER** addresses leadership and education issues relevant to senior school leaders and includes an article and reflection questions. The newsletter is also sent to heads who have opted in to receive Aspirant communication.

## AHISA COMMUNICATIONS 2023

AHISA'S PUBLIC  
COMMUNICATIONS AIM TO  
INFORM POLICY MAKERS AND  
CONTRIBUTE TO PUBLIC DEBATE  
ON EDUCATION ISSUES.

### AHISA SUBMISSIONS 2023

- Potential reforms to the regulation of nicotine vaping products in Australia - 16 January 2023
- Migration: Pathway to Nation Building - 20 January 2023
- Review of Religious Educational Institutions and Anti-Discrimination Laws - 24 February 2023
- Inquiry into the influence of international digital platforms - 28 February 2023
- Inquiry into the perceptions and status of vocational education and training - 1 March 2023
- Inquiry into current and proposed sexual consent laws in Australia - 2 March 2023
- Response to the Privacy Act Review Report - 29 March 2023
- Response to Australian Universities Accord Discussion Paper - 4 April 2023
- Response to Teacher Education Expert Panel Discussion Paper - 20 April 2023
- Philanthropy Inquiry - 2 May 2023
- Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework - 30 June 2023
- Inquiry into the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in Australia's education system - 21 July 2023
- Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System - Expert Panel Consultation Paper - 31 July 2023

### AHISA MEDIA RELEASES 2023

- AHISA welcomes appointment of Tony Cook PSM as Secretary of the Australian Department of Education - 6 February 2023
- My School 2023: School choice is more than a numbers game - 22 February 2023
- AHISA welcomes appointment of Mr Graham Catt as CEO of Independent Schools Australia - 28 February 2023
- Boarding scholarships open up new opportunities for regional and remote families - 16 March 2023
- Clamp down on illegal vaping products supports young Australians, their families and schools - 2 May 2023
- AHISA welcomes the appointment of Dr Michele Bruniges AM as AITSL Chair - 6 June 2023
- AHISA welcomes the appointment of new leaders to APPA and ASPA - 7 June 2023
- How schools are helping to generate future philanthropists - 19 June 2023
- Gambling's high profile puts young Australians at risk of harm - 4 July 2023
- Generative AI in schools: benefits and concerns - 2 August 2023

## AHISA FINANCES 2023

DUE TO GROWING MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS AND ENTHUSIASM FOR ATTENDING AHISA EVENTS, AHISA FINANCES CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE NATIONAL OFFICE AS WELL AS PROVIDING FUNDING FOR STRATEGIC PROJECTS SUCH AS THE ASPIRANT COORDINATORS, NEW MEMBERS AND RECONNECT CONFERENCES. SURPLUS FUNDS HAVE BEEN INVESTED WITH THE VIEW TO USING THESE FUNDS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS TO STRENGTHEN MEMBER SUPPORT SERVICES.



## AHISA STAFF

### NATIONAL OFFICE TEAM

**Dr Chris Duncan**  
CEO

**Ms Kira Grantham**  
Operations Manager

**Ms Vani Mittal**  
Communications Officer

**Ms Nicola Hart**  
Event Manager

**Ms Lorraine Rae**  
Accounts Manager

**Mrs Tanya Cunningham**  
Acting Operations Manager / Communications Coordinator



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**Robyn Collins**  
Editor, *Independence*; Writer

**Malcolm Lamb**  
SLS360 Review Coordinator



### ADVISOR/ASPIRANT COORDINATORS

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SA/NT **Simon Murray OAM**  
WA **Meg Melville**  
VIC **Jon Charlton**  
TAS **Bobby Court**



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### PHOTO CREDITS

AHISA thanks the following schools for contributing photographs featured in the 2023 Annual Report: Genesis Christian College, QLD; Aitken College, VIC; Geraldton Grammar School, WA; Gippsland Grammar, VIC; Newcastle Grammar School, NSW; Star of the Sea College, VIC; Saint Stephen's School WA.jpg