

**INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS — NEW INTAKE — EXPRESSIONS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

*Statement by Minister for Education and Training*

**HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Minister for Education and Training)** [1.07 pm]: I am pleased to advise the house that school communities will have an opportunity to become independent public schools in 2019. The Department of Education this morning called for expressions of interest from schools to be part of a development and selection process in 2018. Schools that successfully complete this process will go on to a transition program later in 2018 and will begin operating as independent public schools in 2019. This signals the government's intention to maintain the initiative. We want more schools to benefit from local-level authority, and this development opportunity will do just that.

I encourage all school communities that are not independent public schools to put their hands up and be part of the activities that will happen in 2018. The development program is an opportunity for school leadership teams, their staff and their communities to gain a better understanding of what autonomy means and how it can benefit students. The selection process will be rigorous, just as it has been in previous years, and schools will need to clearly articulate what they will do with the autonomy they will gain as independent public schools.

Just as we want more schools to have local autonomy, we also want more schools to benefit from those things that have to date been only for independent public schools. For example, we have already expanded the principals' fellowship program to allow all public school principals to apply, we have introduced a requirement for all principals to consider staff requiring placement, and we are making training available for both school boards and school councils. But there are still some key distinctions between independent public schools and other public schools. For example, independent public schools have greater flexibility to apply directly for capital works, award contracts and appoint their own school psychologists. They also have a one-off opportunity to reconfigure their staffing profiles. The Western Australian public school system will be stronger and more equitable as a result of us ensuring that all communities benefit from a development program that enables them to use their increased autonomy to make a real difference where it matters—in the thousands of classrooms across the state.