

MEDIA RELEASE

8 March 2022



Broad approach to respectful relationships will help keep young people safer

Labor's announcement today of \$77 million to teach students about respectful relationships recognises a broad approach is needed to prevent violence and keep young people safe.

National Catholic education executive director Jacinta Collins said Labor's plan to ensure quality, age-appropriate respect education programs will support a consistent approach across all sectors and states.

"We've seen too many examples where young people do not feel safe and have not been appropriately supported to seek help or identify harmful behaviours.

"Age-appropriate education to help model healthy relationships, prevent harmful behaviours, and to teach young people about domestic violence, consent, sexual harassment and assault needs to be supported through evidenced-based approaches, professional learning for staff, education for families, and a network of specialist services to support school communities.

"For example, in New South Wales, through collaboration across the Catholic, government and independent school sectors, we are seeing a solid commitment and response to preventing violence and supporting young people to learn the skills needed to establish respectful relationships and seek help if they are unsafe," Ms Collins said.

"This response includes recognising the important role parents and families play, and critically, the voice of children and young people to inform effective policies and programs.

"The safety of our children and young people is everyone's responsibility and we welcome Labor's commitment to support school communities and systems across Australia in this important work."

NCEC is the peak body for Catholic Education in Australia and is responsible for the national coordination and representation of Catholic schools and school authorities.

There are 1,755 Catholic schools educating over 777,000 or one in five Australian students and employing over 100,000 staff.