

STATEMENT

1 May 2014

National Commission of Audit Report

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) acknowledges the continuing commitment of the Australian Government to the modest funding increases available within the school funding envelope from 2014 to 2017.

The Commission of Audit proposals to move responsibility for school funding entirely to state and territory governments will require careful scrutiny. The test will be whether the proposed arrangements will better support quality schooling in Australia.

NCEC Executive Director Ross Fox said the Commission of Audit school funding proposals cast doubt on the continuation of longstanding needs-based funding arrangements that have supported Catholic schools across Australia.

“It is unclear whether the funding disparity facing students with particular needs, such as students with disability, will be addressed by these proposals,” said Mr Fox.

The Australian Government budget is facing significant challenges and Catholic education understands that all government spending will be under scrutiny.

“The prospect of government funding for Catholic schools beyond 2017 not keeping pace with school costs, including teacher salaries, is a significant concern. If funding does not keep pace with school costs, parents are likely to face significant fee increases – creating a potential barrier for some families to catholic education.”

For more than forty years Commonwealth Governments have been committed to funding non-government schools, including Catholic schools.

This direct funding relationship has provided security and certainty and allowed Catholic schools to focus on education outcomes.

We look forward to working with the Government on school funding arrangements beyond 2017 to ensure all schools are adequately supported.

ENDS

Contact:
Ian Zakon
Tel: (02) 9212 3888 | Mob: 0438 131 813

About the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC)

There are currently 1,706 Catholic schools across Australia, educating almost 750,000 children every year. In effect, one out of every five school children attends a Catholic school.

Most Catholic schools (96 per cent) are systemic, with the Catholic education system being a significant education provider – for example, the Catholic Education Commission of New South Wales is the fourth largest education provider in Australia and the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria is the sixth largest.

In cooperation with Catholic education commissions and diocesan education offices NCEC seeks to make a significant contribution to national education policy development. This is achieved by:

- Working towards a national policy consensus between Catholic Education Commissions in all states and territories on issues of national significance, that best reflects contemporary Catholic teaching on the nature and purpose of education;
- Providing members of the Commonwealth Parliament and the Commonwealth bureaucracy with accurate and up-to-date information;
- Acting as an effective contributor to the national education policy debate; and
- Contributing to the public good in Australia by enhancing the quality of Australian education guided by the mission of the Catholic Church.