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## TARGETED FUNDING AND RED TAPE REDUCTION WELCOMED

Indigenous students and students with disabilities stand to benefit from the passage of the Australian Education Amendment Bill.

The National Catholic Education Commission has welcomed the Bill passing the House of Representatives yesterday and hopes it will also successfully pass through the Senate in the coming weeks.

“There are a number of positive aspects of the legislation, particularly the allocation of an additional \$6.8 million to support the education of students attending Indigenous boarding schools,” said NCEC executive director Ross Fox.

“A number of Catholic schools – and the hundreds of students who attend those schools – stand to benefit from that funding.”

Mr Fox said the bill prevents funding cuts from January 1, 2015 for students with disability in some special schools as a result of the transition arrangements.

“Catholic schools have seen a significant increase in the number of students with disabilities in the past three years,” Mr Fox said.

Allegations of a lack of transparency in education spending are unfounded, Mr Fox explained.

“Schools are highly accountable through the MySchools website, annual reports and engagement with their local communities,” Mr Fox said.

“This legislation will reduce red tape for teachers and school leaders. Teachers and principals do not need prescribed templates and plans to improve the teaching and learning in their schools.”

Mr Fox said while the Australian Education Amendment Bill addresses a number of key issues affecting teaching and learning, there will be other important matters to be considered in 2015.

“The planned removal of command-and-control features to return decision-making power to the appropriate level – school systems and principals – will be important,” Mr Fox said.

Enrolment projections suggest student numbers will increase by 25 per cent in the next decade. This issue needs further discussion to ensure that there are enough school places to maintain Australia’s high educational standards.

“Catholic education looks forward to working with all political leaders to address these concerns,” Mr Fox said. “Funding certainty beyond 2017 remains a priority for Catholic education.”