
FACTS NEEDED ON FUNDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY

The National Catholic Education Commission says figures reported in *The Australian* do not represent the real situation of funding for students with disability and have created confusion over how schools are funded.

NCEC executive director Ross Fox said there have been some significant implementation issues stemming from new funding arrangements under the Australian Education Act, beginning in 2014. Those issues have created challenges for Catholic education systems.

“No student in a Catholic school is funded above the schooling resource standard in relation to loading for students with disability. Suggestions to the contrary are not accurate and highly misleading,” Mr Fox said.

There is bipartisan support for funding for students with disability until 2017 under the Australian Education Act, Mr Fox explained.

“Catholic education acknowledges the commitment of the current Government to addressing the needs of students with disability in all schools and sectors,” he said.

Catholic schools have seen a 50 per cent increase in the number of students with disability since 2007. They are faced with a financial shortfall to provide opportunities for student with disability.

The figures released by the Australian Government Department of Education bear no relationship to the funding available to a student with disability seeking enrolment at any of the schools mentioned.

“Parents are aware of the quality education and learning experiences that students with disability receive in Catholic schools and are seeking enrolment for their children accordingly,” Mr Fox said.

Catholic schools strive to be inclusive for all students. This creates funding challenges, he said.

“Funding to support the needs of students with disability in all schools will require ongoing attention to avoid unintended outcomes.

“Misleading representations of funding do not assist schools and systems to meet the needs of students with disability,” Mr Fox concluded.