
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WELCOME SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

The National Catholic Education Commission has welcomed the Australian Government's announcement that financial support for Indigenous students in boarding schools will continue over the next two years.

Minister for Education and Training Christopher Pyne this week outlined how \$5.4 million will assist non-government schools with large numbers of Indigenous boarding students who come from remote and very remote areas.

The funding will be available to schools with more than 50 Indigenous boarding students or with an Indigenous student population of 50 per cent or more.

"With the number of Indigenous students attending Catholic schools having more than doubled over the past decade, Catholic education welcomes this additional funding to support their education and development," said NCEC executive director Ross Fox.

Mr Fox said Catholic schools – including many students – will benefit from the funding.

"Catholic schools are present throughout Australia, including some of the most remote communities," he explained. "By extending the Indigenous Boarding Initiative throughout 2015 and 2016, our schools with large numbers and large proportions of Indigenous boarding students will be able to continue to provide quality learning environments."

Mr Fox, who visited Catholic schools in remote parts of the Northern Territory in recent months, said Catholic educators share the Government's commitment and passion in improving Indigenous educational outcomes.

"Catholic schools are already achieving so much in places like Wadeye in the Northern Territory and Catholic educators know that success can be built upon to create even more opportunities for students, teachers and school staff," Mr Fox said.

Mr Fox said the reported improvements in services for students, in school attendance and in engagement as a result of the Indigenous Boarding Initiative underline the importance of the ongoing support from the Australian Government.

"It is well understood that education is one of the key determinants of the life chances and opportunities of individual students," Mr Fox said. "Catholic education will continue to be a significant partner in providing quality education in schools across Australia.

"Catholic education will also have constructive ongoing dialogue to define a permanent funding arrangement that recognises the often complex combination of services provided by schools in this context and the funding that is needed," he concluded.