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## **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS MUST REMAIN AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL FAMILIES**

The National Catholic Education Commission said today that Catholic schools must remain affordable and accessible to all Australian families.

Acting Executive Director Danielle Cronin said it is seeking urgent talks with the Federal Government over the detail of yesterday's funding announcement.

"The Catholic schools sector had to wait until after the Federal Government announced its new funding program before we were given any meaningful detail about what was in it," Ms Cronin said.

"That's simply not good enough for a sector that educates one in five Australian children – the second biggest school sector in the country.

"Today, I am calling on the Federal Government to give Catholic school parents some reassurance by sitting down with me and other Catholic education leaders to provide more detail about its funding approach.

"All yesterday's announcement has done is provide more uncertainty for the 1731 Catholic schools in Australia," she said.

"It's a very poor process when a Government announces a new 10 year school funding proposal without consulting the second largest provider of school education in the country."

Ms Cronin said the NCEC was seeking urgent discussions with the Government to find out exactly how the new funding model will affect individual schools.

"We cannot issue a blanket endorsement of the Government's proposed funding model at this stage because of the lack of detailed information provided to the Catholic sector.

"We're also concerned about funding for 2018 because the current funding agreement runs out this year, and the Government's plan needs to pass through both Houses of Parliament.

"At the heart of our concerns is keeping Catholic schools affordable and accessible to all families who want a Catholic education for their children.

"We will fight any changes that will force parents to move their children from a Catholic school because they can no longer afford the fees."