
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS SINGLED OUT FOR CUTS IN NEW FUNDING SYSTEM

The Federal Government today has unfairly singled out the Catholic schools sector for funding cuts that will lead to increased fees and less choice for parents.

“It appears that a majority of the 24 schools targeted by the Minister for a cut in funding are independent Catholic schools,” acting Executive Director Danielle Cronin said.

“Worse, the Federal Government is forcing Catholic schools to abandon a mechanism that ensures resources are distributed fairly and according to need among schools that belong to a single Catholic schools authority.”

Known as the System Weighted Average, the mechanism allows Catholic schools authorities to spread resources across diverse school communities, Ms Cronin said.

“The System Weighted Average, which the Government wants to phase out over 10 years, is integral to the efficient and equitable functioning of the Catholic education system.

“It provides the mechanism through which the Catholic sector supports centrally its 1731 schools and meets locally identified need.

“Fundamentally, Catholic education believes a similar system approach to funding exists for all government school systems and is equally justifiable for Catholic school systems. “

Ms Cronin said Catholic education is deeply concerned by the Government’s lack of consultation and the lack of detail in today’s announcement.

“It is unprecedented for a federal government to announce a 10 year school funding plan without consulting the second largest provider of school education in the country.

“We are concerned that Catholic schools in some states and territories may be forced to raise fees as a result of this Government’s funding changes.

“Today’s announcement has only create immediate uncertainty for principals, teachers and parents, who need to make decisions now about schooling next year.

“We urge the Prime Minister to enter into meaningful negotiations with the Catholic sector.”