
Catholic sector says Disability Standards recommendations place students and families at the centre of education

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) said the recommendations from the Review of Disability Standards for Education 2005 are a positive step forward and place the needs of students and their families at the centre of education.

“The report’s focus on empowering families, strengthening standards and service quality, and increasing accountability will help support an ever-increasing number of students with disability in school communities,” said National Catholic education executive director Jacinta Collins.

“Over the past three years the number of students with disability in Catholic schools has risen significantly from 35,803 in 2017 to 137,270 in 2019,” she said.

“Students with disability now represent approximately 18 per cent of all students in Catholic schools.

“The review identified the need for greater education, training and support for parents and carers, as well as educators and service providers, to ensure that the needs of students are at the heart of learning and teaching programs and specialist services.”

“A welcomed area of focus in the review is building the capability in the Early Childhood Education and Care sector,” said Ms Collins.

“Quality early education and intervention is critical for the success of student’s learning outcomes when they commence school.

“Ensuring early learning centres and care providers have access to resources and understand the standards, will be key to supporting the best start for students in their early years.

“The recommendations to ensure the cultural needs and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are considered in the development and implementation of the standards, will also help to address the challenges of closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with disability,” she said.

In Australia, there are 1,751 Catholic schools educating one in five (768,000) students.