

## COALITION RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

The Turnbull Coalition team believes a well-educated nation will increase productivity, drive innovation and support our transition to a stronger and more diversified economy. That is why the Coalition has long supported the Catholic school sector and appreciates its contribution to improving the quality of Australian school education, especially for the disadvantaged. The Coalition is continuing to provide record levels of needs-based financial assistance to State and Territory Government schools and the non-Government schools sector to support all Australian students.

### **1. How will your policy support parents to choose the education they want for their children and ensure religious freedom for Catholic schools is preserved?**

The Coalition appreciates the vital contribution that Catholic schools make to Australian society by educating some 750,000 children.

We believe that parents should be guaranteed the freedom to choose an education that best suits the needs of their children and their personal beliefs.

We strongly support the rights of Catholic schools to conduct and govern themselves in every respect in accordance with their religious beliefs and values and within legislative and funding requirements. This includes curriculum, school practice and enrolment.

### **2. How will your education policy advance the educational outcomes of students in all schools?**

Our proposed initiatives will focus on boosting student literacy, numeracy and STEM performance, improving the quality of teaching and school leadership, preparing our students for a globalised world, focusing on what matters most and those who need it most and accountability through transparency. More information on our approach to the future of schooling reform can be found by reading our Quality Schools, Quality Outcomes policy.

### **3. How will your policy affect the ability of Catholic education systems and schools to distribute funding according to locally-identified needs?**

The Coalition strongly supports the ability of Catholic education systems to flexibly and responsively re-distribute funding according to local need. Our commitment is to grow schools funding in line with costs, and to support evidence-based initiatives proven to make a difference to student outcomes.

### **4. How will you ensure your policy minimises red tape and regulation on schools, teachers and school systems that distracts from quality teaching and learning?**

Under the Coalition, future funding will not only be needs-based but, as outlined in our Quality Schools, Quality Outcomes plan, it will be linked to ensuring that evidence-based reforms that have

the most impact on student performance are implemented. We must make sure that teachers can implement what they need, rather than taking them out of the classroom with red tape.

The Turnbull Government has committed to reducing the cost of unnecessary or inefficient regulation imposed on individuals, business and community organisations by at least \$1 billion a year. An important part of this commitment is the Regulator Performance Framework to review the performance of Commonwealth regulators.

**5. How will your policy deliver funding certainty for schools and ensure funding keeps pace with the real cost of educating a child?**

The Coalition has kept its 2013 election promises, we have restored funding certainty and provided record funding. Recurrent funding for the Catholic education sector across Australia will total \$23.3 billion over 2014 to 2017 – a 19.7 per cent increase.

In the 2016-17 Budget, the Turnbull Government fully-funded its School Achievement Plan, which includes schools funding for 2018-2020 at an education specific indexation rate of 3.56 per cent plus enrolments. This reflects more accurately the real growth in education costs and aligns with the National Catholic Education Commission's pre-budget submission. Total Commonwealth funding to all schools across Australia will be a record \$73.6 billion over the forward estimates (2016–17 to 2019–20). Recurrent school funding increases from \$16.0 billion in 2016 to \$20.1 billion in 2020.

As outlined in our Quality Schools, Quality Outcomes plan, the Coalition has committed to the most significant package of education quality reforms in a generation to drive excellence in Australia's school students. The reforms are focused on improving student outcomes in literacy, numeracy and STEM subjects; teaching quality reforms; and delivering more support for disadvantaged students.

The Coalition's needs-based distribution of funding and reforms should provide parents with confidence that their child is receiving the education they need.

**6. How will your funding policy ensure that students with additional needs – across all sectors and in all schools – receive the support they need and that funding grows with needs?**

Over the 2014-17 period the Catholic education sector will receive \$1.9 billion for students with disability, including \$430 million in 2014 (an increase of \$278 million, or 183 per cent since 2013) and \$529 million in 2017 (an increase of 23 per cent since 2013).

This funding includes the recent Budget allocation of an extra \$118.2 million in 2016 and 2017 for students with disability. Funding will be targeted to those schools and students with the highest needs and, for the first time ever, is informed by the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability.

From 2018, details of how the future new school funding model will address student need will be negotiated with States and Territories and the Catholic and Independent school sectors.

**7. Parents currently pay most of the capital costs in Catholic Schools. How will your policy support the capital needs of new and existing Catholic Schools?**

In 2015, the Coalition Government, under the Capital Grants Programme (CGP), helped 183 non-Government schools construct new classrooms, build specialist learning spaces and improve student and staff amenities.

The CGP will continue under the Turnbull Coalition Government.

In 2016, the Coalition Government is delivering more than \$140 million for non-Government school infrastructure projects. If re-elected we will provide \$578 million over four years in capital funding for schools, including Catholic schools.