
Victorian government's unprecedented payroll tax on non-government schools puts pressure on families and teacher workforce

Plans by the Victorian Government to remove the payroll tax exemption on some non-government schools are irrational and unprecedented, national Catholic education executive director Jacinta Collins said today.

"The move by the Victorian government has serious cost of living implications and puts greater pressure on school fees and a teaching workforce that is already under considerable strain" Ms Collins said.

"National Catholic school leaders have expressed concern today at the Victorian government's decision that has been made without consultation and is outside of the National School Reform Agreement."

Ms Collins said the tax, that may impact on non-government secondary schools charging \$7,500 or more in school fees, is inconsistent with the minimum fee expectations of the national school funding model.

"School funding is means tested according to the socio-economic status of families who send their children to a non-government school.

"A reported \$7,500 arbitrary threshold would wrongfully categorise many Catholic schools as high-fee schools. It would set the payroll tax threshold at the mid-point of the minimum fee expectations of families," Ms Collins said.

"Catholic schools are not-for-profit services and Catholic school families are already contributing significantly towards their children's education through school fees and building levies, alleviating the burden on governments.

"In fact, our parents contribute 25 per cent of the Student Resource Standard (SRS), and they also contribute more than 90 per cent of the costs required to support school buildings and other capital work.

"Catholic schools aim to be as affordable and accessible as possible to meet the needs of our families.

"It makes no sense when governments are trying to reduce cost of living pressures on families and attract teachers to the profession," she said.

Announced in the Victorian Budget on Tuesday, the measure may apply to more than 25 of Catholic secondary colleges in Victoria and could cost these schools upwards of \$1 million.

NCEC is the peak body for Catholic Education in Australia and is responsible for the national coordination and representation of Catholic schools and school authorities. There are 1,759 Catholic schools educating nearly 794,000 or one in five Australian students and employing over 104,500 staff.