



**AUSTRALIAN
CATHOLIC BISHOPS
CONFERENCE**



26 August 2025

Dear Colleagues

With sincere admiration and deep gratitude for her significant service to Catholic education, we write to inform you that Jacinta Collins has decided that this chapter of her contribution to public life and her leadership of the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) will come to an end in early 2026.

Jacinta commenced her leadership of the NCEC in February 2019, a mere 2 days after her remarkable quarter of a century in parliamentary service. During her political career Jacinta held many leadership roles including in education as assistant minister for school education and workplace relations, shadow minister for children and youth, shadow assistant minister for early childhood and nine times a member, sometimes chair, of education-related Senate committees.

This built upon Jacinta's earlier chapter in the Labor movement representing Australian workers at both a national and international level. Within her various political roles, Jacinta was a strong advocate for choice in education, fair funding for all schools, and played an important part in the Gonski reforms. At the time of leaving Parliament, she was one of the longest-ever serving Labor women politicians and was unquestionably a trailblazer for women in politics.

Jacinta's dedication as a Senator in the Australian parliament and the high regard in which she was held by colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, was a reflection of Jacinta's work ethic, integrity and unfailing commitment to service of others which continued seamlessly in her leadership of the NCEC.

After such a distinguished political career, the NCEC has been blessed to have Jacinta at the helm of our peak national body for the past 7 years, representing our now 1,751 primary and secondary schools and 700 early childhood centres.

Jacinta has been able to navigate a complex federated educational system with grace and poise and secure recognition for Catholic education through deliberate and informed representation.

Jacinta had the courage to step into the leadership of the NCEC after a very difficult period in the funding history of Catholic education and steered us to a place of stability and relative security. As a direct result of her advocacy, Catholic education secured the current funding agreement which ensures parents have the right to choose a quality Catholic education for their children. Not only has her campaign for accessible Catholic education formed the system we are all proud to serve but she has established herself as the leading expert on school funding and resource allocation.

Jacinta's relationships with state and territory educational authorities, including those governed by religious institute and ministerial public juridic person colleagues, government and shadow ministers and ministries, and tertiary organisations has ensured that Catholic education is a respected and valued voice at any policy working group or round table. Those who have sat

alongside her at any of these meetings will attest to her pragmatic, logical approach to public policy which draws on deep knowledge and experience and establishes her as a preeminent authority in discussions about the progress of education in Australia.

Jacinta has successfully advanced with the bishops, school leaders and administrators, three priorities for Catholic education today, to enliven formation and religious education so we better transmit the faith, to support continual improvement of educational outcomes so that our students can reach their full potential and to ensure equity of access through advocacy for the needs of all families.

Jacinta ably guided the NCEC and our national response to the COVID pandemic and the religious freedom debates. She provided expert advice to the Fifth Plenary Council and led the celebration of 200 years of Catholic education in Australia to name but a few achievements.

Jacinta is a deeply faith-filled person and her commitment to the Mission of the Church is evident in her decision making, her strategic planning and her representation of our sector. Unapologetically Catholic in both public and private engagements, Jacinta is a model of lay leadership for future leaders in Catholic education.

As the Bishops Commission for Catholic Education establishes an independent review of the mission, governance and operations of the NCEC, the next phase of its leadership will build on the legacy of Jacinta's contribution.

The recruitment of the next Executive Director of the National Catholic Education Commission will be overseen by the Bishops Commission for Catholic Education and will begin in the coming months.

Jacinta has been a valued colleague, and we wish her every blessing as she enjoys this next phase of her life with more time for leisure, relaxation and the time with family she so richly deserves after faithfully serving our system, our Church and our nation.

Regards



Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP
Chair
Bishops Council for Catholic Education



Nicholas Moore AO
Chair
National Catholic Education Commission