36,000 NEW APARTMENTS COMING – HOW MANY NEW SCHOOL PLACES?

The NSW Government must plan for some 60,000 new school places for the children who will live in the 36,000 apartments announced today for suburbs along the Bankstown rail line.

Catholic Education Commission NSW (CECNSW) said today that families expected governments who pave the way for increased housing will also facilitate more government and non-government school places for their children.

“Assuming 100,000 additional people will live in those 36,000 new apartments, CECNSW estimates there will eventually be 60,000 school aged children who will need to go to nearby schools,” CECNSW Executive Director Brian Croke said.

“At an average of 27 students per class, this means more than 2,200 additional classrooms need to be built.

“Most of this increase will be accommodated in existing nearby government and non-government schools - so the Government and local councils need to ensure these schools are able to grow.”

Dr Croke said that based on current enrolment patterns, parents will choose a non-government school for up to one-third of those students.

“‘The NSW Government and local councils must therefore ensure all school sectors are able to expand.’”

Dr Croke said it was critical that school education is not overlooked by planners.

“The NSW Planning website says the Government is working closely with Bankstown, Canterbury and Marrickville Councils to look at opportunities for more homes, jobs, better public spaces, shops and cafes.

“That’s fine, but there is no mention yet of schools.

“In the past, new housing areas have been planned and schools were left to catch up later.

“We trust the NSW Government will ensure the mistakes of the past are not repeated and will explain how many additional school places are being planned and how it will facilitate their growth in the area’s government and non-government schools.

“Every school in NSW is a valuable piece of the state’s educational and social infrastructure; they should all be treated similarly by the NSW planning system,” Dr Croke said.

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