$42.5 MLN BOOST TO LITERACY & NUMERACY IN 99 CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The NSW Government has provided an additional $42.5 million over four years to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for some 9,000 students in 99 NSW Catholic primary schools.

Catholic Education Commission NSW (CECNSW) welcomed the funding extension - part of the NSW Government’s $340 million strategy to strengthen literacy and numeracy skills among at-risk children from Kindergarten to Year 2 in 667 NSW schools.

CECNSW Executive Director, Brian Croke, said the Catholic sector is keen to continue working with the Government to focus resources on boosting literacy and numeracy skills for K-2 students in all sectors.

“This will fund the equivalent of 70 full-time teachers to maintain and extend the focus on early intervention in 99 NSW Catholic schools,” Dr Croke said.

“The evidence tells us that gaps related to student disadvantage become apparent very early on, so early intervention in the first few years of schooling can address these gaps and enable students to progressively take on more challenging learning tasks.

“It’s vital that children’s reading and numeracy skills are brought up to standard by the end of Year 1, so that they won’t require substantial remedial support all the way through primary school.”

Rosalie Nott, CECNSW Assistant Director - Education Policies, said many students in rural and regional areas will benefit from this increased funding.

“NAPLAN results help to identify schools where additional resources are best targeted,” Ms Nott said.

“More than two-thirds of these schools are outside the major metropolitan areas.

“The good news is that we have evidence that the combined elements of this initiative are working; 43 of the 109 Catholic schools that currently receive funding to improve literacy and numeracy under the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan no longer require the assistance from next year.

“That’s a great testament to the Government’s initiative and the teachers and school leaders involved.”

Dr Croke said the new literacy and numeracy strategy includes initiatives for secondary schools as well, such as innovative approaches to Year 7 assessment that will help students meet the new minimum standard required from Year 9 to qualify for the Higher School Certificate from 2020.

NSW’s 588 Catholic schools teach more than 255,000 students, or one in five NSW students.