



Media Release

NSW Catholic schools want to set the record straight on funding

NSW Catholic schools will lose millions of dollars in Federal funding in 2018 and beyond due to a change in how school need is calculated, Catholic Education Commission NSW (CECNSW) Acting Executive Director Ian Baker said today.

The Federal Government is dismantling a method used to calculate funding need across all Catholic schools in each state and territory known as the System Weighted Average (SWA).

The SWA uses each school's socio-economic status (SES) to calculate an average SES across all diocesan Catholic schools. Funding is then provided to the Catholic schools sector according to parents' 'capacity to pay', based on the average SES.

However, the Federal Government wants to instead provide funding based on each school's SES – without 'averaging' - because it says the SWA is a 'special deal' for the Catholic sector.

"Had the Government applied this new methodology this year, we estimate NSW Catholic schools would have lost \$19 million in Commonwealth funding – and that's before we take into account loadings for disadvantage and other elements," Mr Baker said.

"It's difficult to know how much will be lost in the future because the Minister still has not provided our sector with enough detail about the new model or the basis for his calculations."

Mr Baker denied the SWA was a special deal for the Catholic sector, saying it is an approach used by the government schools sector and was supported by the Gonski Review (p177).

"Its removal will undermine the integrity of the way Catholic schools are currently funded and how we deliver support, advice and other services to our schools and principals."

Mr Baker said Senator Birmingham must front up and explain his school funding changes to the Catholic schools sector in each state and territory.

He also dismissed as 'fake news' a report that said funding was being diverted from needy rural and regional Catholic schools to city schools.

"CECNSW regularly reviews its needs-based funding distribution model. Presently, the Wilcannia-Forbes diocese, for example, receives around 60% more annual recurrent funding per student than the Sydney and Broken Bay dioceses."

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