

MEDIA RELEASE

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NCEC BACKS DISABILITY FUNDING, PRINCIPALS ACADEMY & NAPLAN REVIEW

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) today welcomed announcements by Labor's shadow education minister Tanya Plibersek to boost funding for students with a disability, create a National Principals' Academy, review NAPLAN and ensure funding support for all school sectors.

In her National Press Club address, Ms Plibersek said a Labor government would increase funding for students with a disability by \$300 million over three years. She also reiterated Labor's proposals to establish an Evidence Institute for Schools and provide bursaries for students who wanted to become teachers.

"The NCEC acknowledges and welcomes Labor's commitment to encourage high levels of achievement by all students in all school sectors," NCEC Chairman Greg Crafter said.

"To this end, we look forward to working with the Opposition as it develops its policies for the Federal election.

"The NCEC is particularly interested in discussing Labor's support to enable Catholic schools to continue operating in all areas of the nation.

"On NAPLAN, the NCEC supports its continued use as a diagnostic tool to help identify students needing support with their basic skills and agrees it is prudent to review its effectiveness.

"We share Ms Plibersek's concerns that publicly available school NAPLAN results, however, are being turned into league tables to make simplistic comparisons and judgments about schools. We believe this needs to be reviewed."

Mr Crafter said the NCEC also welcomed Labor's proposal to increase funding for students with a disability in all school sectors.

"It is particularly pleasing that Ms Plibersek recognises the growing numbers of students with a disability being educated by the Catholic schools sector.

"Catholic schools educate almost 138,000 students with a disability, which represents 18% of all students in Catholic schools according to 2018 Nationally Consistent Collection of Data - in line with the proportions in the government and independent school sectors.

"Supplementary funding will give Catholic schools the additional resources that all schools need to meet the special educational needs of students with a disability."

Mr Crafter said the NCEC also supported Labor's proposal to establish an Evidence Institute for Schools.

"It is our view that high quality research is the best basis for improved teaching and learning."

Nationally, Catholic schools educate almost 765,000 students in more than 1750 schools, the vast majority of which are low-fee schools.