
THE DEVIL IS STILL IN THE DETAIL FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FUNDING

The Federal Government must reveal the basis for its funding calculations or its new plan will have no credibility, the National Catholic Education Commission said today.

“The Government has claimed Catholic schools will be better off under its new proposal,” acting Executive Director Danielle Cronin said.

“However, we have been unable to replicate the Government’s model to test its calculations.

“The Government has refused to provide sufficient detail to our sector to enable us to understand and test the actual impact of the Government’s proposal on school funding allocations for next year.”

Ms Cronin said the limited information the Government has provided to date gives little comfort to Catholic education.

“There are many questions left unanswered including what happens to students with disability funding and indexation after 2020.

“At face value, it appears Catholic schools could be worse off on both counts over the next 10 years.

“In the case of the ACT, the impact of the Government’s changes hits hard from the first year of the new model, leaving the sector vulnerable to immediate fee increases and staffing cuts.

“The Gonski Review established the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) as the benchmark of assessed need,” Ms Cronin said.

“The Government has effectively redefined the assessed need for the Catholic sector without consultation - which is unprecedented, given the Catholic sector is the second largest provider of schools in Australia.”

The only meeting between the Minister and the Catholic sector that provided any detail on the Government’s new school funding policy occurred on 2 May 2017, the same day as the Government’s announcement.

“Informing the sector of proposed changes on the day they are announced is not consultation. Consultation was promised months ago, and never delivered. For such a major policy change, this lack of engagement is unprecedented,” said Ms Cronin.

Ms Cronin said the NCEC is seeking urgent discussions with the Government to find out exactly how the new funding model will affect individual schools and to seek assurances that the new funding arrangements will not adversely affect Catholic school students and their families as well as Catholic school teachers and staff.