

Media Release

Catholic sector welcomes NSW Government funding increases

Catholic Education Commission NSW (CECNSW) has welcomed above-CPI increases in recurrent and capital funding for NSW non-government schools in today's 2017 State Budget, especially a 20 per cent boost to capital funding.

The NSW Government today announced it would provide \$1.24 billion in recurrent and capital funding - an increase of \$117.1 million or 10.4% on the previous year – to the state's 944 non-government schools, which educate almost 420,000 students or one in three NSW students.

This includes an increase of \$11 million over two years in the Building Grants Assistance Scheme (BGAS) to support enrolment growth in non-government schools with the greatest need.

It is believed the Catholic schools share of the BGAS will grow from some \$16 million to almost \$20 million.

"The capital funding increase will help take some of the pressure off our parents who currently fund some 85% of capital works in Catholic schools," CECNSW Executive Director Brian Croke said.

Dr Croke said the funding boost comes at a time when Catholic schools are enrolling increasing numbers of refugee students, Aboriginal students and students with a disability.

"Students with a disability and indigenous students have been the fastest growing segments of enrolments in NSW Catholic schools over the past three decades.

"In addition, we have seen an influx of hundreds of refugee students into metropolitan Catholic schools over the past 12 months, requiring the re-establishment of intensive English language services at an additional cost of some \$2 million, which has been met from existing funding."

Dr Croke also complimented the NSW Government for maintaining its full six-year commitment to National Education Reform Agreement (NERA) to 2019.

"We are encouraged by the NSW Government's intention to continue advocating that the Commonwealth Government also meet its obligations under NERA, which was signed in 2013."

Dr Croke said Catholic schools relied on the Commonwealth for more than half of their recurrent funding, while parents contributed around 22 per cent.

"The NSW Government provides the remainder and we are very grateful for the increase in 2017/18," he said.

Catholic Education Commission NSW represents the state's 591 Catholic schools, which educate some 258,000 students and employ 27,000 teaching and support staff.

Media Contact: Jim Hanna | 0414 828 629 | jim.hanna@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au