WHAT THE PARTIES SAY ON FUNDING FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The major political parties have made a number of announcements on education in the lead-up to and during the election. Catholic education has been communicating directly with major political parties on their education policy positions, particularly in relation to fair and certain funding. We expect further policy announcements and a response to our funding position prior to the election on 21 August. Statements received from each party and comments on relevant policies will be posted at <http://web.cecv.catholic.edu.au/2010_election.htm> in the coming weeks. These statements will also be distributed to schools for your information. You may also wish to visit the websites of the major parties in the meantime.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Will candidates support funding certainty for Catholic schools?

Will they also support funding for Catholic schools at 2012 levels and any increases to keep pace with government school costs?

HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can help Catholic education by writing to your local federal MP, Senators and candidates asking for their position on federal funding for Catholic schools. Contact details for your local federal candidate and other relevant material is available at <http://web.cecv.catholic.edu.au/2010_election.htm>.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact the Director of Catholic Education in your diocese:
Archdiocese of Melbourne
director@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au
(03) 9267 0228

Diocese of Ballarat
director@ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au
(03) 5337 7135

Diocese of Sale
director@ceosale.catholic.edu.au
(03) 5622 6600

Diocese of Sandhurst
director@ceosand.catholic.edu.au
(03) 5443 2377

Enrolment share, Victoria

Government funding gap, 2008 ($ per student)

With 488 schools and almost 191,000 students across Victoria, Catholic education is an integral part of the Victorian community. Catholic education shares the mission of the Church to serve the poor and marginalised inspired by the gospel. We are a growing system with new schools in outer metropolitan and regional communities. Catholic schools strive for excellence and equity for every child and in partnership with our parents, we provide more than just an education. We focus on educating the whole person with personalised learning for every student’s needs.

Only fair and equitable funding will ensure Catholic schools remain affordable for parents. We need your help.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Federal funding is vital to Victorian Catholic schools and makes up more than 70% of the government funding for Catholic education. Every child deserves government support to ensure they receive a quality education. Despite this shared belief, in 2008 Catholic schools in Victoria received 37% less in government funding per student than government schools. This figure was calculated in an independent report prepared by one of the big four accounting firms and is based on the most recently available data.

You can help bridge the funding gap

You can help your school secure fair and equitable federal funding that keeps pace with government school costs. Contact your local MP and candidates. See <http://web.cecv.catholic.edu.au/2010_election.htm> for details.
Catholic Education in Victoria

The CECV distributes funding for more students than are enrolled in government schools in South Australia. This makes the CECV the sixth largest education system in Australia. In 2010, the CECV received funding for 488 schools catering for approximately 191,000 students, supported by more than 20,000 staff.

Catholic schools stretch every dollar they have. They must do this because they run schools with fewer resources per student than government schools. The recent school building program is an example of how Catholic school leaders and communities can do this effectively. The reality is that when it comes to recurrent expenditure, Catholic schools in Victoria operate on 93% of government school costs. Catholic education delivers real value for money.

Fair Federal Funding

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) is seeking commitments at this federal election that will ensure sustainable and fair funding for Catholic schools beyond 2012:

1. A guarantee that federal funding to Catholic schools will not be frozen after 2012.

Simple promises that Catholic schools will not lose a dollar from their school budgets after 2012 could hide a funding freeze for Catholic schools and put more financial pressure on parents.

2. Certainty that federal funding for Catholic schools will continue to keep pace with government school costs.

If government funding for Catholic schools does not keep pace with government school costs, Catholic schools will be forced to raise fees, close schools or cut programs such as supporting students with special needs.

3. An increase in funding for students with disabilities and special needs so that every student has an equal opportunity to learn.

Catholic schools cannot afford to have their funding frozen or taken away. Many students in Catholic schools need greater support to realise their learning potential.

Together these commitments would ensure justice and fairness in government funding for Catholic schools and provide funding to students who are most in need.

We all agree that a good education requires adequate funding. The government funding gap for Catholic schools means that parents who choose a Catholic education for their children are forced to pay fees just to provide the basics. When it comes to bearing the costs of Catholic education, school fees paid by parents make up around 28% of the spending per student.

Catholic schools are vibrant communities of learning, faith and life. Increasing enrolments are an endorsement by parents of the dedication and commitment of principals and teachers in Catholic schools throughout Victoria.

In 2009, Victorian Catholic schools again scored well above state averages on national tests. We achieved higher than the average of all Victorian schools in all year levels across reading, writing, spelling, numeracy and other domains with the exception of Year 3 numeracy.

4. Capital funding that ensures Catholic education can continue to provide school choice in new and growing communities in outer-metropolitan and regional areas.

Catholic schools in new and growing areas will continue to need assistance with capital funding. Schools in disadvantaged areas will also have ongoing capital needs.

5. Funding arrangements that respect the Catholic school system and its expertise.

The successful delivery of school buildings and facilities under the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program in Catholic primary schools across Victoria is a clear demonstration of how Catholic education makes the most of every dollar. The Catholic school system needs funding arrangements that allow schools to work together to allocate funding to where it is most needed.

Catholic schools strive to meet the needs of every student. The unfortunate reality is that students with disabilities in Catholic schools receive less than half the government funding of students with disabilities in government schools.

Resource Gap in Recurrent Spending, 2008 ($ per student)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total per Student</th>
<th>Victorian Catholic Schools, 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees from parents</td>
<td>$2,948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Independent consultant analysis to obtain like for like comparison

1. Catholic schools share the community’s aspiration for excellence and equity.

2. Catholic education is committed to distributing funding to best meet the needs of students, schools and communities.