Dear Parent

Directors of Catholic Education, as you would expect, do not tell people how to vote. However, elections are always important times to determine future policy – particularly in education. Our 488 Catholic schools educate almost 191,000 students in Victoria so it falls to us to inform parents and schools about the implications of each political party’s education policy for Catholic schools.

**Labor and Liberal consensus on funding to 2013**

We are pleased to announce that Catholic education has achieved a consensus from both the Labor and Liberal parties. The recurrent funding arrangements for Catholic schools are to continue – until at least the end of 2013. As a result of this consensus, Federal government funding will increase in real terms to keep pace with education costs in the government school system. This is a most welcome outcome and is an acknowledgement of the significant role Catholic education continues to play in the community. We believe that justice will be served when government funding for Catholic schools is continued on a similar basis beyond 2013.

**The Greens education policy**

The Greens education policy is to reduce funding to Catholic schools to 2003 levels. It is estimated that this will mean a loss of $427 million in Government funding for Catholic schools in Australia. In such a situation Catholic education in Victoria would be forced to absorb more than $110 million of this proposed cut. Furthermore, Catholic schools in Victoria would have no choice but to significantly raise fees, cut staff or reduce support to disadvantaged, needy and disabled students. The Greens have other policies which do not support the continuation of Catholic schools in their current form. Given their public statements, we can only assume The Greens will pursue these policies in the Federal Parliament. Further details of The Greens policies are available at <www.cecv.catholic.edu.au>.

**Other education policies**

Other significant announcements have been made on education over the last week. The proposals appear to deliver additional resources to Catholic schools and support parents, particularly with students that have special needs. Catholic education will cautiously consider these proposals and their implications for our Catholic schools.

In the interests of every Catholic school, student and family we will continue to engage and work productively with all political parties to the benefit of Catholic education.

We encourage you to consider all the issues for Catholic schools carefully. Please contact your political candidates and prompt them to consider the future direction of education policy in Australia.

Yours sincerely

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Diocese of Ballarat

Stephen Elder
Director of Catholic Education
Archdiocese of Melbourne

Peter Ryan
Director of Catholic Education
Diocese of Sale

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