State Election Alert 3  
13 October 2010

In the week leading up to the canonisation of Australia’s first Saint, the Church and Catholic education’s rich history in Australia is attracting widespread attention in the community. While it is a tremendous event for the Church, it also reinforces the important role Catholic education has played for more than 150 years helping the poor and marginalised.

The work of Blessed Mary MacKillop continues every day in Catholic schools throughout Victoria. Events in the coming weeks may again present opportunities to speak with parents, MPs, candidates and others on the great work of Catholic education and particularly the issue of State funding for Catholic schools. I encourage you to do this when possible.

Response from Minister Pike
A number of schools who recently wrote to Minister Pike on the issue of State funding linked to 25% of the cost of education in a government school have received a response from the Minister. A copy of the Minister’s letter received by one school, together with a possible response for your consideration, is available on CEVN under the State Funding Campaign section.

State Election Candidate Information
After the success of the federal election website which was available through the Catholic Network Australia (CNA) portal a new website for use by schools will be launched in the lead up to the Victorian election. The website will enable schools to easily access details of local candidates, along with information on current enrolments at Catholic schools in their area. This may be helpful in meeting with MPs and candidates or providing the information to parents so they can speak about Catholic education in your local area.

Funding Progress
Discussions with the government are continuing at a number of levels to advance our request for 25% funding. I will keep you informed of details from these discussions as they emerge.

Feedback
I have received feedback from a number of colleagues in relation to our communications. This feedback has been very helpful and will greatly assist in refining and focussing our efforts. Please do not hesitate to drop me an email with any feedback from activities in your local area.

Thank you for your continuing efforts to help secure our funding goal at the coming State election.

Yours sincerely

Peter Ryan
DIRECTOR OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION
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State Funding for Catholic Schools  
Catholic schools in Victoria operate on just 63% of the government funding that Victorian government schools receive. The best available analysis of school funding data from the Productivity Commission has found that including parent fees and other private income, Catholic schools operate on just 93% of the recurrent resources of government schools. One reason for the lower level of resources in Catholic schools is the low level of funding from the state government. The latest available information shows that Catholic schools in Victoria receive less State funding per student than every state and territory in Australia except South Australia.

Catholic education has received a commitment from the Liberal-National Coalition for State funding transparently linked to 25% of the cost of education in a Victorian government school. The Labor Government is considering the issue but is yet to make any commitment. Please ask your local MPs and candidates if they will support state funding to Catholic schools linked to 25% of the cost of education in government schools. This commitment would deliver around $60 million to Victorian Catholic schools each year and would ensure that government funding keeps pace with costs.