MELBOURNE’S outer northern and western suburbs will be the big winners from a school boom.

Thirteen new schools costing up to $250 million are planned in the biggest Catholic education expansion since the 1970s.

The schools are expected to spring up in a belt of suburbs packed with families, including Craigieburn, Doreen, Eynesbury, Point Cook, Tarneit Rise, Truganina South, Toolern and Wyndham Vale.

Sunbury, Beveridge, Wallan and Armstrong are also slated for new Catholic schools in the next decade.

A school in Epping North will be one of the first when it opens next year.

The 10 primary and three secondary schools would take between 5000 and 8000 students.

Executive director of Catholic Education Stephen Elder said 3000 babies a year were being born in the City Of Wyndham and demand in Melbourne’s outer west was huge.

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From Page 1 The population growth in Melbourne’s west shows that there are two prep classes born in the City of Wyndham every week.

For us, it’s a very exciting time in Catholic education.”

Since 2003, Catholic school enrolments have risen 10 per cent.

Almost 198,000 children attended Catholic schools in 2012.

This is a phenomenon that has happened in the last six years,” Mr Elder said. The enrolment growth is across all (Catholic) schools.”

Mr Elder said Catholic schools were picking up 40 per cent of new enrolment growth in Victoria.

He said families were going to Catholic schools because of the experiences they’d had in the system, and they liked the faith and morals and that it was an inclusive community that embraced discipline and academic performance.

Mr Elder said the Catholic sector borrowed money to build schools. In the past about 30-40 per
cent of the real costs were met by the Commonwealth, but the Federal Government had not made a commitment post-2014.

Catholic Education wanted some certainty from the Federal Government, Mr Elder said.

A spokesman for Federal School Education Minister Peter Garrett said the Government had been in constant discussions with the states, territories and nongovernment sector since the release of the National Plan for School Improvement.

We expect to see an agreement on the new model achieved in the new year,” the spokesman said.

New Catholic schools planned for Victoria ia Epping North, 2013 MELBOURNE Point Cook, 2014 Doreen, 2015 Armstrong Creek Sunbury Wallan Beveridge Eynesbury Toolern Wyndham Vale Craigieburn Tarneit, 2015 Truganina, 2015 Eileen O'Reilly is delighted a Catholic secondary school is planned for Doreen. Daughter Elyssa was facing the prospect of a long daily trip to Epping when she starts high school in 2014, a trip son Luke will have to make from next year after Acacia College closed.

Picture: ALEX COPPEL