More work needed on school funding

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) believes the Senate Select Committee report on school funding released yesterday confirms there is more work to be done on school funding beyond 2017.

The Executive Director of the National Catholic Education Commission, Ross Fox said the current challenge in school funding is to achieve a funding model that addresses needs in all schools, sectors and states and territories. Catholic schools and systems have funding certainty through to 2017.

“We welcome the Government’s commitment to providing funding certainty for schools to 2017, in the face of ongoing budgetary constraints.”

“The Government’s plan to index per capita school funding by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for 2018 will not ensure school funding keeps pace with real costs. When school costs run ahead of CPI parents will be forced to pay more or cuts will be forced on schools to make ends meet,” said Mr Fox.

“Important work remains to be done to deliver funding matched to the needs of all students with disability. Quality data is needed that gives confidence to schools, parents and system authorities. This work is progressing and should continue to be prioritised.”

“With the school population projected to increase by more than 25% in the next decade capital funding for schools will also require attention from all governments,” said Mr Fox.

The Australian Education Act and regulations impose excessive control and are overly prescriptive on schools and education systems.

“We encourage the Government to remove the ‘command and control features’ of the legislation. This can be done without compromising appropriate accountability for the significant public investment in schooling, including Catholic schools.

“The Government has committed to addressing the duplicative and excessive compliance requirements that exist in the education funding legislation and regulation. There are immediate steps the Government can take to address these important issues.”
“Catholic education will continue to pursue equitable government funding, consistent with our commitment to the needs of the whole child, educational equity and excellence for all.

“Catholic education looks forward to working with the government through the upcoming reviews of elements in the funding model to achieve equitable and sustainable funding that delivers certainty for all schools in the long term,” said Mr Fox.

Contact:
Jenny Muir
Tel: (02) 9212 3888 | Mob: 0415 401 200

About the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC)

There are currently 1,711 Catholic schools across Australia, educating almost 750,000 children. One out of every five school children attends a Catholic school.

Most Catholic schools (96 per cent) are systemic, with the Catholic education system being a significant education provider – for example, there are more students in Catholic schools in New South Wales than are in government schools in Western Australia. Victoria has more children in Catholic schools than are in government schools in South Australia.

In cooperation with Catholic education commissions and diocesan education offices NCEC seeks to make a significant contribution to national education policy development. This is achieved by:

- Working towards a national policy consensus between Catholic Education Commissions in all states and territories on issues of national significance, that best reflects contemporary Catholic teaching on the nature and purpose of education;
- Acting as an effective contributor to the national education policy debate; and
- Contributing to the public good in Australia by enhancing the quality of Australian education guided by the mission of the Catholic Church.