
FUNDING UNCERTAINTY MUST BE ADDRESSED EARLY IN 2017

The National Catholic Education Commission has expressed its disappointment that 2016 will end with no resolution to the future of school funding, but looks forward to working with the Commonwealth Government early in the new year to provide funding certainty for schools, school systems and parents.

“While the Education Council meeting did not provide any further clarity on a new funding model, education ministers acknowledged the urgency of consultation on school funding and the proposed new national schools reform agreement for 2018 and beyond,” NCEC acting executive director Danielle Cronin said.

Ms Cronin said Catholic education welcomed the Turnbull Government’s commitment to school funding indexation of 3.56 per cent annually between 2018 and 2020, but more than seven months after that announcement there is no clear understanding of how that funding will be allocated.

“As it stands today, school leaders, system leaders and families are none the wiser as to how funding will be distributed in just over 12 months’ time,” she said.

“Principals will return to school in 2017 knowing that the future of funding for their schools hangs in the balance. That uncertainty must be removed as quickly as possible.

“As the educators of one in five students, Catholic education must have a voice around the negotiation table to make the case for funding levels that will allow all students in all schools to continue to receive the support they need to access a quality education.”

Ms Cronin said the lack of detailed consultation between the Commonwealth Government and Catholic education sector so far is concerning. She said Catholic education is looking forward to working with the Commonwealth in the coming weeks to resolve a funding model that meets the needs of all Australian students and provides certainty for schools and families.

“The future of Australian schooling will go a long way to shaping the future of Australian society,” she said.

“It is therefore critical that the funding of schools and the policy priorities of the government are considered by all those who will help to deliver a quality education.”

Ms Cronin said Catholic education is pleased that the aspiration to resolve funding for students with disability remains a key priority for education ministers. A commitment to sustainable funding for early childhood education is another welcome outcome of the Education Council meeting, she concluded.