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## CATHOLIC SECTOR LEFT OUT OF YEAR 1 ASSESSMENT DISCUSSION

National Catholic Education Commission acting executive director Danielle Cronin says the lack of a Catholic representative on the panel developing year 1 literacy and numeracy assessments is an oversight that could limit the group's ability to create a useful tool for all Australian schools.

Minister for Education and Training Senator Simon Birmingham yesterday announced the six-member panel that will offer advice to the Education Council on the new literacy and numeracy check, which had been foreshadowed in the Turnbull Government's "Quality Schools, Quality Outcomes" policy.

"Catholic schools educate one in five young Australians, yet the collective wisdom of the tens of thousands of educators in Catholic schools has been ignored in the selection of this panel," Ms Cronin said.

"The success of any numeracy and literacy screening will depend on the broad uptake of the assessment that is developed. By appointing such a small group of advisers, and with just one classroom teacher, the Government has failed to draw upon the best possible advice for this process."

Ms Cronin said it is worrying that the Turnbull Government is pushing ahead with such a significant part of its reform agenda without engaging in early and meaningful discussion with the Catholic school sector.

She said Catholic education's 1,738 schools are committed to assessment practices that are directed towards lifting the educational outcomes of students.

"Minister Birmingham and his colleagues have clearly stated that the phonics and numeracy testing will be used to help teachers better understand which students are in need of additional support earlier in that child's learning journey," she said.

"Parents, teachers and students can create the best possible learning opportunities when they are all able to understand how a student is progressing and work together to support ongoing improvement in all areas.

"Catholic schools are already committed to assessing students' needs early in their schooling, and are concerned that any new assessment might be mandated without sufficient consultation with key educational groups," Ms Cronin concluded.