

---

## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS STAND UP FOR REAL NEEDS-BASED FUNDING

Catholic education leaders have today told a Senate Committee that they cannot support the Turnbull Government's school funding policy because it fails to deliver real needs-based funding.

Addressing a Senate Inquiry into amendments to the Australian Education Act, the National Catholic Education Commission said the Turnbull Government is seeking to entrench a model that fails to deliver funding that meets the needs of all Australian school students.

"The Government's claim that it is delivering needs-based funding under its policy rings hollow when there is near-unanimous agreement that the Socio-Economic Status (SES) methodology on which non-government schools are funded is flawed," NCEC acting executive director Danielle Cronin said.

"For many years, Catholic education has explained that the SES methodology fails to allocate funding to students in Catholic and independent schools according to the real needs of the 1.3 million students in those schools.

"The Gonski Review said the SES methodology should be replaced because it is subject to 'a potentially large degree of inaccuracy'. The Grattan Institute has said a review of the SES is necessary to 'maintain public confidence in the fairness of the funding formula'.

"Even the architect of the SES methodology says it is outdated and needs to be replaced."

Ms Cronin said that diversity of voices, sending a united message, should compel the Government to follow the requirement for a review that will allow school funding to better represent the needs of schools and students.

"Instead, the Minister and his colleagues are looking to lock in this flawed methodology for another 10 years," she said.

"It is evident that such an approach, combined with the removal of measures to support low-fee Catholic primary schools across the country, will place significant pressure on low- and middle-income families who choose a Catholic education for their children."

Ms Cronin told the Senate Committee that the hasty process to introduce a new 10-year school funding model has delivered an unacceptable policy that is being criticised from many quarters.

"A holistic review of the model is needed – not a piecemeal, rushed, cut-and-paste process," she said.

"This legislation has been introduced with no meaningful consultation with schools and school systems. It risks enshrining significant policy problems that others have said should be removed.

"A 10-year funding model should not be locked into legislation until there is a high degree of confidence among the Parliament, the community and all school authorities in the measures that underpin the model and its intended outcomes. That confidence does not currently exist.

"The Senate must defeat this legislation on behalf of Australian students and families to allow for a genuinely consultative process that will actually deliver the funding and reforms that schools and students need."