
CATHOLIC EDUCATION WELCOMES NEW MINISTERS

The National Catholic Education Commission has congratulated new Minister for Education and Training Senator Simon Birmingham, saying Catholic schools look forward to working together to support education in all school sectors.

Senator Birmingham, who has served as Assistant Minister for Education and Training since last year, was promoted to his new role by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull yesterday.

“Senator Birmingham has handled his responsibilities with distinction and he has already established a strong connection with the many Catholic schools that have vocational and educational training programs,” NCEC executive director Ross Fox said.

“He has demonstrated in his time as Assistant Minister a strong grasp of complex policy and we look forward to him bringing his significant strengths to his broader role in education and training.”

Mr Fox said Senator Birmingham spoke of the benefits of school choice in his maiden speech in the Senate. His support for giving parents the freedom to choose the school that best meets their child’s needs is fundamental to a strong education system.

One comment from the speech demonstrates the Minister’s aspirations for school education, Mr Fox said.

“If we aspire to an education system that serves us as well for the next hundred years as it has done so over the last, then we must be willing to embrace change.”

“Catholic education has been serving the people of Australia for almost 200 years, adapting to significant changes over that period,” Mr Fox said.

“We look forward to working with Minister Birmingham to embrace the changes necessary to support school education for the next two centuries.

“We also congratulate Minister for Vocational Education and Skills Luke Hartsuyker and Senator Richard Colbeck, Minister for International Education, on their appointment to key educational posts in the new ministry.”

Mr Fox offered his thanks to Christopher Pyne for his leadership as Minister for Education and Training for the past two years, and congratulated him on his new role leading the Government’s agenda in industry, innovation and science.

“Minister Pyne has been a strong advocate for schools over the past two years – indeed, during his career in the Parliament,” Mr Fox said.

“While his ministerial responsibilities now lie elsewhere, the results from Mr Pyne’s work in education with a particular focus on quality teaching and support for students with disability will be seen for some time to come in schools and school systems.”

Mr Fox also thanked Senator Scott Ryan, whose work in the ministerial education team has been highly valued.

“Like Minister Pyne, Senator Ryan’s focus now moves to a new role. Catholic education thanks Senator Ryan for his support of schools and wishes him well in his new duties,” Mr Fox concluded.