



Media release

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NEXT NSW GOVERNMENT MUST LIFT CAPITAL FUNDING TO ALL SCHOOLS

Enrolments in NSW schools will grow by 267,000 students by 2031, putting more pressure on both the government and non-government school sectors to expand.

Catholic Education Commission NSW Executive Director Brian Croke said the NSW Government must increase capital funding to all school sectors to accommodate this growth in enrolments.

“The NSW birth-rate is now 10,000 per year higher than it was in 2010,” Dr Croke said.

“That means 500 extra kindergarten classes are needed each year - which must then become 500 additional Year 1 classes the following year, then 500 Year 2 classes the year after that, and so on.

“This growth rate will be sustained, if not increased, in coming years and it will affect all sectors – government, Catholic and independent.

“The NSW Government and Opposition have already announced several new government schools during this election campaign - which we support - but the government sector alone will not be able to meet this growth in enrolments.

“Catholic and independent schools currently educate 400,000 students or a third of those enrolled in NSW.

“The NSW Government needs non-government schools to grow so that they can continue to enrol their current proportion of this increase - otherwise, taxpayers will be forced to foot the bill for far more classrooms and teachers than is currently envisaged.”

Dr Croke said the NSW Government must first reverse its 2012 decision to cap capital funding to non-government schools at \$11 million per year and put in place a sustainable, long-term funding framework that grows as enrolments increase.

“Catholic schools, which enrol more than 251,000 students, need to build more than 2,300 new classrooms to accommodate a further 58,000 students by 2031.

“For decades, these building projects have largely been funded by parents - and they will continue to be - but the NSW Government must now ease the pressure on parents by lifting its funding support.

“Catholic schools educate 21% of the state’s students, but receive just 2% of the capital funding allocated by the NSW Government to all schools.

“Last year, Catholic schools received just \$7.6 million in capital funding from the NSW Government. That’s less than what was received in 2011 – and since then, Catholic school enrolments in NSW have grown by

more than 10,000, or the equivalent of 12 new secondary schools.

“By comparison, government schools will receive \$399.1 million for capital works in 2014-15.

“To put it another way – that’s \$524 per government school student and \$30 per Catholic school student.”

Dr Croke said Catholic schools save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars each year because Catholic school parents met most of the capital costs.

“Without Catholic schools, taxpayers would have to fund hundreds more government schools because those students have to be educated somewhere.”

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