

MY SCHOOL REFINEMENTS MUST PRIORITISE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

The National Catholic Education Commission has welcomed the Government's announcement of plans to refine and enhance the My School website, saying such improvements should be driven by a goal to support parents, teachers and policy-makers in their efforts to improve teaching and learning in Australia's schools.

Minister for Education and Training Christopher Pyne this morning released the review of the My School website and the Government's response to that review. A number of recommendations have been made and embraced by the Government that can support educators and parents.

"My School is one reference point for parents and the community when seeking information on schools across Australia," said NCEC executive director Ross Fox.

"The Government's plan to give schools greater freedom to share additional information in the context of My School should help to give a broader perspective of each school.

"Principals will welcome the opportunity to provide a more complete picture of the great things that are going on in their schools. It is important that any initiative in this area does not add to the reporting burdens already faced by schools. Piling additional reporting requirements on schools is not the way to pursue school improvement.

"We must remember, also, that no matter how many improvements are made to My School, it remains a limited tool when it comes to understanding school environments. Parents know that there is no substitute for establishing a personal connection and relationship between them, their child and teachers and school leaders.

"The education journey in schools and beyond is about much more than just what can be measured."

Mr Fox said the Government's ambition of making My School information more widely available, including to support quality research, has the potential to inform educational policy directions at all levels – Commonwealth, state and territory.

"We must all be wary of selective reporting of My School data that pits school against school or sector against sector," he explained.

"The clear priority for school education in Australia is to create the best possible teaching and learning environments for every student in every school. The continuing professional dedication of teachers and school leaders will continue to deliver results to this end.

"I know that Catholic educators across Australia regularly partner and collaborate with colleagues in all school sectors to pursue improvement in teaching and learning in schools across Australia," Mr Fox concluded.