

---

## NEW REPORT HELPS DEBUNK MYTHS ON SCHOOL SECTORS

A new Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) report that underlines the similarities between Australia's three school sectors – Catholic, government and independent – is helpful to inform discussion on school funding policy, the National Catholic Education Commission has said.

The *One School Does Not Fit All* report examines how educational choice in Australia has developed over two centuries and points out that attempts to stereotype the three sectors are misguided.

NCEC executive director Ross Fox said the CIS report can – and should – help remove some of the ideological biases that have clouded school funding debates in Australia.

“As the authors point out, all school sectors educate advantaged and disadvantaged students,” Mr Fox said.

“Catholic schools cater to students from all socioeconomic backgrounds, from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds, in every corner of Australia.”

Mr Fox said the report shows that while most schools have similar levels of recurrent funding, Catholic schools operate with the lowest total recurrent funding on average, with parents making a significant contribution to support their children's education.

“Many parents – from all backgrounds and for a whole host of reasons – are choosing a Catholic school as the best option to meet the needs of their child,” he said.

“It is important that parental choice continues to be supported by Commonwealth, state and territory governments in the form of genuine needs-based funding for students in all sectors.”

Mr Fox said the NCEC has consistently supported needs-based funding for students in all schools and in all school sectors and will continue to do so.

“A student with educational needs should be supported regardless of the school they are attending,” he said.

“The aspiration for a sector-blind funding model must remain a priority.

“Currently, many Catholic schools are not receiving the same funding a student with disability would attract in a government school.”

Mr Fox said Catholic education has seen significant increases in the number of students with disability and Indigenous students in recent years. The number of students with disability has doubled since 2004; the number of Indigenous students has doubled since 2002.

“Catholic schools are key contributors to Australia's educational landscape in partnership with government and independent schools,” Mr Fox said.

“As the new CIS report explains, the three sectors share much more in common than is widely understood. This report's findings have the potential to strengthen the collaboration of educators across Australian schools.”