



Birmingham's Catholic School funding cuts a hit to parent choice

The funding cuts announced last week for Catholic schools in the ACT have caused concern amongst principals that parents are choosing government schools instead of Catholic schools for their children next year on the basis of increasing fees and affordability issues under the new funding policy.

Catholic schools across the ACT are already reporting significant parent concern and lower enrolment enquiries in recent weeks encompassing ACT Catholic Schools Week and the traditional enrolment period.

I call on the Minister to urgently address the funding cuts to Catholic schools to ensure parents aren't forced out of non-government schools this year by increasing fees and reduced funding.

This week Minister Birmingham sent a letter to every Catholic school in the ACT confirming lower funding in 2027 than 2017. The letters contained no detail on the expected higher fees resulting from the government policy.

With family budgets under pressure from many quarters parents have said they are already struggling to pay schools fees. Parents will not welcome the fee rises necessary to cover the funding cuts.

These funding cuts ignore the fact that if the same parents enrol in a government school government funding will be significantly higher and fees lower.

The Minister's new funding model says the parents at St Thomas More's in Campbell have the same 'capacity to pay' school fees as the parents at schools like Sydney's elite independent school - SHORE.

The Minister's new funding model will cut funding to St Thomas More's in Campbell while delivering a 75% increase in commonwealth funding for an identical student in Campbell Primary School next door.

Catholic school parents are quite rightly asking why their child deserves less support and resources than the same student just across the road in a government school.

Today all Catholic schools in the ACT will receive a fact sheet and information to assist parents understand the changes. Everyone who supports Catholic education needs to understand the very real impact this will have on the education of students in Catholic schools.

I urge all parents in Catholic schools to consider the impact on their school and contact their political leaders and demand to know why their children deserve to have government support cut over the next ten years.

Ross Fox, Director of Catholic Education, Canberra and Goulburn

For media enquires please contact Tim Smith on 0407 825 185 or email tim.smith@cg.catholic.edu.au



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn

Facts on ACT funding cuts.

- There are 29 Catholic systemic schools and 3 independent Catholic schools affected by the cuts.
- For Catholic systemic schools funding will be cut from \$109m in 2017 to \$107m in 2027 with no increase for salaries and other school costs which are expected to rise more than \$50 million over the period.
- Australian Government funding to ACT government schools to rise by 145% over the same period
- Schools will need to consider all possible options to cover funding shortfall by raising fees or reducing costs.

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