

MEDIA RELEASE

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'SANTA CLAUS' SPARKS HOPE FOR SCHOOLS ON BUDGET NIGHT

Hints of a "Santa Claus" budget from Federal Treasurer Scott Morrison will have education authorities from across all sectors hopeful that fresh funds will be allocated to the nation's schools to tackle the shortcomings in the current arrangements announced by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Education Minister Simon Birmingham less than 12 months ago.

Acting executive director of the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), Ray Collins, said members of Australia's more than 1700 Catholic school communities will be "closely watching next month's budget to see whether the Turnbull government is serious about tackling their concerns over allocation of funds, and fair and accurate measures of parental 'capacity to contribute' in the Gonski 2.0 funding model".

"The Government's so-called new era of fair funding model has meant that over 500 Catholic schools lose funding in 2018, compared to their actual 2017 Commonwealth allocation, and Catholic systems will lose \$250 million over the two years 2018 and 2019 compared to the funding they would have been allocated under Labor's Gonski 1.0 funding arrangements," Mr Collins said.

"At the same time, the NCEC has learned that over-funded Independent schools will transition down to their new levels over 10 years, while equivalent schools in Catholic systems have had their funding reduced immediately in 2018, leaving them short-changed by over \$1 billion over the next decade.

"Across Australia, hundreds of thousands of families have students in a Catholic school. We are the biggest school system after the government sector by far, and we certainly expect the Commonwealth government to address these inequities," he said.

Mr Collins said Catholic school communities expect action in the Budget on four key priorities.

"We expect the forward estimates to show the government is serious when it talks about needs-based funding and is prepared to act on recommendations of the final report of the National School Resourcing Board and replace the fatally-flawed school socio-economic status, or SES, score system.

"We expect to find clear indications that the government is looking at fair and accurate measures of parental capacity to contribute that give us a genuine measure of non-government school needs.

"We expect to see signs in the forward estimates that a disparity in transition arrangements, which leaves Catholic systemic schools over \$1 billion behind, will be addressed so that all non-government schools considered overfunded in 2017 will have 10 years to adapt to the new changes.

"And finally, we hope the forward estimates will address the recommendations from the Halsey Report of the *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education* which argues for urgent funding support from federal and state governments if the significant needs of students in these areas are to be seriously addressed."