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**MEDIA RELEASE:
CATHOLIC PARENTS EXPRESS CONCERNS ABOUT SCHOOL FUNDING**

Broken Bay Catholic School Parents recently convened a meeting of parents from around the Diocese of Broken Bay at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Catholic School, West Pymble to discuss possible outcomes from the National Schools Resourcing Board Review of Socio-Economic Status (SES) school scores. The review findings are expected to be released at the end of June.

The Federal Government uses SES scoring to allocate funds to schools. It is widely expected that the Board will recommend changes that will address Catholic parents' and educators' concerns. Until that time the future viability of many local schools remains in the balance.

Addressing the group, Council of Catholic School Parents NSW/ACT Executive Director, Linda McNeil said, "It's great to see such enthusiastic support from parents at the grassroots who love and support their low-fee local parish schools."

"We will assess the NSRB recommendations on merit, but our position is that any changes to the SES methodology must result in measures that are fair to all schools."

Broken Bay Catholic School Parents Chairperson, Necola Chisholm said, "Catholic Education has made a fundamental contribution to Australian society for over 150 years. A critical principle underpinning this has been parent choice."

"Australian parents have been able to choose an affordable faith-based education for their children for many years. Our local schools have been built on the sacrifices and hard work of parents and grandparents for generations. And now some of these schools are at risk."

"If current funding arrangements are not rolled back, it may not be possible to operate low-fee primary schools in some areas," Central Coast Parent Cluster Coordinator, Celeste Boonaerts said.

"The King's School at North Parramatta has an SES of 116, while just down the road St Gerard's Catholic Primary School at Carlingford has a score of 118. The way the current system works just doesn't make sense. Something just doesn't add up," North Shore Parent Cluster Coordinator, Louise Johnston said.

"New funding arrangements should support parental choice to inclusive, affordable non-government schools alongside free-of-charge government schools. We'll keep working together until we get this fixed," Ms McNeil concluded.

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