

Media Release

Historic capital funding pledge helps Catholic schools plan for growth

Catholic Schools NSW (CSNSW) said the NSW Government's capital funding boost gives the non-government schools sector the certainty it needs to plan and meet its share of enrolment growth.

The NSW Government today announced it would triple its capital grants to the 944-strong non-government schools sector - which educates one-third of NSW students - to \$500 million over four years, the largest single increase ever provided.

CSNSW Chief Executive Officer Dallas McInerney said the Catholic education sector, with almost 600 schools, expects its share to be at least \$75 million per annum.

"All school children should learn in safe, comfortable and modern surroundings," Mr McInerney said.

"CSNSW supports the NSW Government's \$6 billion, four-year capital funding program for the state's 2200+ government schools."

Mr McInerney said CSNSW prioritises its capital funding from government to the Catholic schools in need and with the least ability to raise project funds themselves.

"This brings a focus to needy schools serving low socio-economic communities, schools in fast growing areas and schools with an urgent need for new or improved learning facilities."

Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher OP, welcomed the government's commitment saying it recognises the role Catholic schools play in educating more than a quarter of a million NSW students.

"School education is a partnership between the state and federal governments and education providers such as the Catholic Church, which has educated Australian students for almost 200 years.

"This funding increase will help Catholic education build the new classrooms we need to meet our share of expected student growth.

"We are especially pleased that the NSW Government has locked in this support for the next four years," Archbishop Fisher said.

Mr McInerney said Catholic education has relied on parents and school communities to fund some 90% of capital works in NSW Catholic schools.

"That commitment from our hard-working and dedicated parents will continue; this additional government funding will support more projects and bring them online sooner.

"Last year, 41 NSW Catholic schools lodged funding applications for capital works worth \$158 million - but CSNSW could only partially support 24 projects because we only had \$58 million in State and Federal Government capital funding to distribute. To put that into context - \$58 million does not cover the cost of land and construction for a new K-12 school in outer suburban Sydney."

Mr McInerney said government funding has helped expand Catholic schools in growth areas such as Edmondson Park, Marsden Park, Austral and Medowie, just outside Newcastle as well as upgrade learning facilities in Nyngan, Oran Park and Port Macquarie.

"This is a great day for Catholic schooling in NSW; our parents and families considering a Catholic education for their children can have even more confidence in our sector."

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