

Catholic education: we're for no special deals, too

The independent schools lobby has either forgotten its own rhetoric with talk of 'special deals' in school funding or is contradicting itself, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) Executive Director Stephen Elder says.

'Independent school lobby heads have written to the Prime Minister demanding a "level playing field" for funding, and warning against "special deals" for Catholic schools.

'This appears to have come about because the Government has committed to fixing a flawed metric in its school funding model that overfunds wealthy independent schools by at least \$200 million per annum, while short-changing low-fee Catholic and independent schools.

'The independent school associations have to face the facts.

'Just as the CECV and the National School Resourcing Board have found, if there is to be a level playing field in school funding, then that means less funding for wealthy schools and more funding for low fee Catholic and independent schools.

'It's time for the independent school associations to stop defending special deals for the wealthiest schools and start advocating for better funding outcomes for their low-fee members – their Lutheran schools, Christian schools, Islamic schools and Jewish schools.

'We urge the independent school associations to follow-through on their rhetoric of 15 months ago, when they demanded "consistent and equitable" funding, even if it meant some of their schools would have funding reductions.

'As ISCA said in their statement on 26 May 2017 "ISCA acknowledges that achieving this objective ... is impossible without some schools across the non-government sector being adversely impacted".

'ISCA said it wanted a level playing field. Now they've changed their minds. But surely they should welcome arrangements that deliver funding gains to the schools that need the most support – the low-fee Lutheran schools, Christian schools, Islamic schools and Jewish schools.

'The CECV looks forward to working with the Government to replace school SES scores with a better measure of school need by 2020, as recommended by the National School Resourcing Board.

'All schools should then transition to their funding entitlement by 2027. If the Government delays any of these milestones it would be a special deal – for wealthy independent schools.'

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What they used to say...	What they say now that SES scores have been shown to overfund wealthy independent schools...
<p>“ISCA believes that the provision of a level playing field for funding for non-government schools will enable consistent funding to address educational disadvantage. Therefore, despite adverse impacts of the proposed changes on individual independent schools, ISCA supports the proposed funding arrangements, which will ultimately see all non-government schools funded on a consistent basis.”</p> <p>Ms Colette Colman Senate enquiry into the Australian Education Bill 2017, public hearings, Monday 5 June 2017</p>	<p>“The Independent sector would oppose any changes to funding arrangements which threatened the level of choice available to Australian families either through sudden changes in the level of government funding for schools or through additional burdens on schools or parents in terms of administration or privacy intrusion.”</p> <p>Ms Colette Colman ISCA Media Release, ‘Independent schools respond to SES review speculation’ 21 June 2018</p>
<p>“...we have been asking for a level playing field from many years now. Not just across the non-government sector but within the independent sector itself there are historical legacies of funding which mean that even independent schools serving the same communities are getting differential funding rates. I guess it is not realistic for the independent sector to call for a level playing field and then not accept the impact on individual independent schools of the changes necessary to create that outcome.”</p> <p>Ms Colette Colman Senate enquiry into the Australian Education Bill 2017, public hearings, Monday 5 June 2017</p>	<p>“The Independent sector would oppose any changes to funding arrangements which threatened the level of choice available to Australian families either through sudden changes in the level of government funding for schools or through additional burdens on schools or parents in terms of administration or privacy intrusion.”</p> <p>Ms Colette Colman ISCA Media Release, ‘Independent schools respond to SES review speculation’ 21 June 2018</p>
<p>“I think the heads [of independent schools] have shown a great example by coming out and saying: ‘We need to get to a level playing field. If we need to take a haircut then probably now is the appropriate time.’”</p> <p>Dr Geoff Newcombe Senate enquiry into the Australian Education Bill 2017, public hearings, Monday 5 June 2017</p>	<p>“We are not going to accept transfers of money from one system to another”</p> <p>Dr Geoff Newcombe Letter to NSW independent school principals As reported in The Age, ‘Private schools in last push over funding moves’, 6 June 2018</p>
<p>“our focus is on a fair and equitable funding model for non-government schools”</p> <p>Dr Geoff Newcombe Senate enquiry into the Australian Education Bill 2017, public hearings, Monday 5 June 2017</p>	<p>“We are not going to accept transfers of money from one system to another”</p> <p>Dr Geoff Newcombe Letter to NSW independent school principals As reported in The Age, ‘Private schools in last push over funding moves’, 6 June 2018</p>

What they used to say...	What they say now that SES scores have been shown to overfund wealthy independent schools...
<p data-bbox="73 197 603 264">“It’s time for all special funding deals...to be consigned to history”</p> <p data-bbox="73 304 703 439">Dr Geoff Newcombe AIS NSW Media Release, ‘Independent schools support consistent, needs-based funding’, 21 March 2018</p>	<p data-bbox="746 197 1437 264">“We are not going to accept transfers of money from one system to another”</p> <p data-bbox="746 304 1430 439">Dr Geoff Newcombe Letter to NSW independent school principals As reported in The Age, ‘Private schools in last push over funding moves’, 6 June 2018</p>
<p data-bbox="73 521 719 869">“There has been a two-speed funding system in place for many years which has heavily favoured non-government school systems over individual schools. Removing these inconsistencies, which have delivered huge amounts of additional funding to Catholic school systems for decades, does not mean that independent schools are being favoured. It simply means that all non-government schools will be funded on a consistent basis for the very first time.”</p> <p data-bbox="73 909 715 1043">Dr Geoff Newcombe AIS NSW Media Release, ‘An inconvenient truth doesn’t give licence to mislead on school funding’, 24 October 2017</p>	<p data-bbox="746 521 1437 589">“We are not going to accept transfers of money from one system to another”</p> <p data-bbox="746 629 1430 763">Dr Geoff Newcombe Letter to NSW independent school principals As reported in The Age, ‘Private schools in last push over funding moves’, 6 June 2018</p>
<p data-bbox="73 1128 708 1301">“We look forward to working with the Government on implementing the new funding arrangements...knowing that we now have a funding model that is fair, equitable and treats non-government schools in a consistent way.”</p> <p data-bbox="73 1341 699 1442">Dr Geoff Newcombe AIS NSW Media Release, ‘NSW Independent schools welcome fairer schools funding’, 23 June 2017</p>	<p data-bbox="746 1128 1437 1196">“We are not going to accept transfers of money from one system to another”</p> <p data-bbox="746 1236 1430 1370">Dr Geoff Newcombe Letter to NSW independent school principals As reported in The Age, ‘Private schools in last push over funding moves’, 6 June 2018</p>