

Catholic education welcomes Christian schools' support on funding

Catholic education welcomes the intervention of the Australian Association of Christian Schools in the school funding debate and fully supports their views, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) Executive Director Stephen Elder says.

'In their submission to the independent review of SES scores, the AACS made a number of observations and recommendations on funding that we fully endorse,' Mr Elder said.

'AACS agreed that the Turnbull Government policies outlined in Gonski 2.0 placed schools with low to moderate fees located in high SES areas in "an unfair funding position" and said these schools face "considerable" funding challenges.

'AACS said that current arrangements are unfair for these schools because they "are treated the same as high-fee charging schools".

'AACS made a number of suggestions to counter this inequality, such as a specific loading for low-fee schools or the incorporation of school private income into capacity to contribute calculations.

'It seems that AACS also believes that the funding policies of the Turnbull Government are a direct attack on low-fee religious schools.

'We know there are many low-fee religious schools outside the Catholic sector that support our stance on school funding – but aren't being represented by independent school associations.

'Catholic education is not the only group that wants to unwind special deals in school funding – such as using a fictional amount of school private income, rather than actual school private income, to fabricate a need for public funding that doesn't actually exist in wealthy schools.

'CECV research indicates that in 2016, the Turnbull Government provided \$875 million to wealthy schools that didn't actually need any government funding, up \$125 million from 2015 or well over 15 per cent.

'We applaud the courage of AACS to make these suggestions on school funding even though they are strongly opposed by the lobbyists for wealthy independent schools.

'Catholic education has much in common with AACS. We both want to preserve the ability of all families to choose a low-fee religious school – a choice the Turnbull Government robbed from families with their changes to school funding in 2017.

'Catholic education would welcome the opportunity to work with AACS to make sure that there are major changes to a funding policy that is catastrophic for low-fee religious schools.'

The ACCS submission to the review of SES scores is available at:

<https://submissions.education.gov.au/Forms/ses-review-submissions/Documents/AACS-Review-of-SES-Score-Submission.pdf>

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