

Birmingham forgets disability details

Education Minister Simon Birmingham's comment 'special interest groups' should not 'attempt to undermine' students with disability policy 'just because the results don't suit one particular agenda or another' fails to recognise crucial details, Catholic Education Melbourne Executive Director Stephen Elder says.

'Yet again it appears that Senator Birmingham either lacks understanding or has been forgetful when it comes to policy,' Mr Elder said.

'The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) was never intended to be used for funding purposes. It simply wasn't designed for this.

'Not only does it expect thousands of teachers across Australia to make consistent "judgements" on any additional needs of students.

'It creates the situation where schools, to a large extent, can determine their own funding. It's open to abuse.

'It assumes that all schools have the same financial and personnel capacities to accurately determine the number of students who require support and does not measure unmet need.

'In short, it is neither fair, consistent nor rigorous.

'Senator Birmingham recognised this himself when he said less than 12 months ago that the data he has based his policy on "fails a basic credibility test".

'That 2016 NCCD showed inexplicable anomalies between states and school sectors. The 2017 NCCD looks no different. There continue to be many anomalies. It fails the Minister's own test.

'This would be immediately obvious to all stakeholders if he publically released all NCCD data collected since 2012.

'Senator Birmingham insists the quality of data will improve, yet for the past three years this has not been the case.

'For example, in the 2017 NCCD, for the third year in a row, some sectors have submitted data that strains credulity.'

Mr Elder said using the NCCD for funding compounds Senator Birmingham's policy blunder over school Socio-Economic Status scores.

Media Release



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION OF VICTORIA LTD

‘Senator Birmingham ignored the advice of the original Gonski Review panel’s final report and made SES scores the key determinant of funding for non-government schools in his education package back in May.

‘Now, he has been forced to review SES scores because of their unfair treatment of Catholic – and he has been forced to review using the NCCD to fund schools.

‘Back in May, the government said that their policies would “end the school funding wars”. Perhaps Senator Birmingham should just focus on bringing an end to his policy blunders.’

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