

Reshuffle regrettable missed opportunity

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has missed a major opportunity to win back the trust and confidence of Catholic school communities, according to Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) Executive Director Stephen Elder.

‘The Prime Minister has missed a chance to show he has been listening to the concerns of Catholic education just as parents are learning the price they will pay for his misguided policies through higher fees next year,’ Mr Elder said.

‘Instead, he’s chosen to dig in, in support of these policies and an arrogant Education Minister in Simon Birmingham.

‘Senator Birmingham failed to hold meaningful consultations with anyone other than the independent school sector before unveiling the Gonski 2.0 package back in May.

‘It shows. The Turnbull Government’s new funding model has cut the amount of funding attracted by some 180 Catholic schools in Victoria and over 600 nationally in 2018.

‘At the same time, the government has undertaken a number of unprecedented actions that have undermined the ability of the Catholic system to reallocate government grants between Catholic schools to mitigate losses.

‘As a result, many Catholic schools are increasing their fees next year.

‘Principals have been making school communities aware that any large increases in fees, beyond cost increases, are due to the government.

‘Turnbull Government policies have handed wealthy independent schools the deal of a lifetime, at the expense of the Catholic and government school sectors.

‘Senator Birmingham has failed to listen to our concerns.

‘If the Prime Minister is unwilling to change this approach, then it will be up to voters at the next election.’

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