

Setting the record straight on government funding for school facilities

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) Executive Director Jim Miles says it is timely to set the record straight on government funding for capital works in schools. A report in *The Age* today (10 June 2021) suggests that non-government schools are over-funded and government schools are under-funded in relation to school facilities.

‘The first thing to point out is that the report commissioned by the Australian Education Union used data which is flawed because it does not include the billions of dollars spent by the Victorian government to establish new government schools’, Mr Miles said.

‘The exclusion of this funding greatly distorts the report’s analysis. Since it came to power in 2014, for example, the Andrews Government has invested over \$2 billion in new government schools in Victoria.’

Mr Miles said that like government schools, Catholic education authorities are struggling to keep pace with demand to deliver new and upgraded school facilities in Victoria.

‘Despite educating more than 20% of Victorian children, our school communities contribute 72 cents in every dollar of the funds used to build, upgrade and maintain Catholic schools’, he said.

‘In other words, our families pick up the tab for nearly three-quarters of building works carried out at their schools.

‘This is additional money that governments, and taxpayers, would have to find if these students were being educated in a government school.

‘To put the amount of saving for taxpayers further into perspective, Catholic school communities will invest around \$2.2 billion into capital works over the period 2018–22 out of their own pockets.’

Mr Miles said that as the second largest provider of schooling in Victoria, expanding and upgrading school facilities are essential to delivering a high-quality education, and meeting increasing demand for school enrolments.

‘The Andrews Government has committed \$402 million over the four years 2019–20 to 2022–23 to help build and upgrade Catholic and independent schools across the state. This commitment has received bipartisan support.

‘We welcome this support. All students deserve high-quality facilities to help them achieve their best, regardless of which school they attend.

‘We call on the state government to commit to invest in school facilities beyond 2023 based on need’, Mr Miles said.

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