

Birmingham entrenches two-speed system that favours wealthy independent schools

Education Minister Simon Birmingham is entrenching discrimination against Catholic and other religious school systems by refusing to revisit funding anomalies in his Gonski 2.0 system that benefit wealthy independent schools, according to Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) Executive Director Stephen Elder.

'In July the CECV revealed that under the rushed Gonski 2.0 laws, independent schools that are assessed as "over funded" will transition down to their new funding level over 10 years,' Mr Elder said.

'In contrast, Catholic and other religious systemic schools deemed to be overfunded – with the exception of those in the ACT – will transition down over a much shorter period, just six years.

'The loss in funding to Catholic systems alone from this discriminatory treatment will amount to \$1.1 billion from 2018 to 2027.

'It comes after the leak of secret Education Department modelling during debate on Gonski 2.0 showing the package would leave Catholic schools \$4.6 billion worse off.

'Senator Birmingham has declined to revisit the transition funding anomaly in his response to a letter of concern from the National Catholic Education Commission, Lutheran Education Australia and the Victorian Ecumenical System of Schools.

'In other words, he has decided to entrench a two-speed system of funding that favours wealthy independent schools.

'This comes on top of highly dubious new data on students with disability that also favours wealthy independent schools.

'When they unveiled their Gonski 2.0 package both Senator Birmingham and the Prime Minister promised "no special deals".

'We can consider that commitment well and truly broken.

'And when they introduced their school funding legislation, the Government told the parliament they would be treating all schools on a consistent basis.

'We now know that this is untrue. The Government was either misleading parliament or it didn't understand its own funding model.'

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