

Rob Stokes cries poor while keeping cash from students

The Claims by New South Wales Education Minister Rob Stokes that state schools are being short-changed by the Morrison Government are a smokescreen for his own government's failure to properly fund its school system, according to Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) Executive Director Stephen Elder.

'Mr Stokes' grandstanding highlights everything that's wrong with our federation,' Mr Elder said.

'We have a state government that's sagging in the polls threatening to derail a national agreement for schools by demanding more funding for its own school system from Canberra – while at the same time rationing what it gives to public school students.

'This hypocrisy is made crystal clear from the data on funding for public schools in NSW since the new school funding arrangements began in 2014.

'From 2013 to 2016:

- Commonwealth funding of students in NSW public schools grew by 16.4 per cent
- Base funding amounts in the Schooling Resource Standard grew by 11.2 per cent
- NSW state government funding of students in its public schools grew by only 6.8 percent.

Table 1: Recurrent funding of public schools in New South Wales, 2013 to 2016

Year	Commonwealth Government		NSW Government		Schooling Resource Standard
	\$/student	Growth	\$/student	Growth	Growth
2013	\$2,068		\$9,733		
2014	\$2,108	2.0%	\$9,951	2.2%	3.6%
2015	\$2,255	7.0%	\$10,100	1.5%	3.6%
2016	\$2,408	6.8%	\$10,394	2.9%	3.6%
Total growth		16.4%		6.8%	11.2%

Source: ACARA MySchool dataset, various years

'It defies political logic that any member of the Berejiklian Government would invite closer scrutiny of its record at the moment,' Mr Elder said, 'but that's precisely what Mr Stokes has done.

'When it comes to funding its own schools, the NSW government has refused to match either the growth in the Schooling Resource Standard or the funding growth provided by the Commonwealth.

'This period coincides with the time that Adrian Piccoli was NSW Education Minister, which goes to show that Mr Piccoli seems more inclined to grandstand about school funding than take action.

'This has left NSW public school students seriously short-changed.

'If the NSW Government had matched the growth rates of the SRS, it would have provided around \$330 million extra to public schools in 2016.

'If it had matched the funding growth rates of the Commonwealth, it would have provided some \$730 million extra that same year.

Media Release



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION OF VICTORIA LTD

‘Mr Stokes appears to be engaging in a shameless attempt to shift the funding of his own school system to the Commonwealth.’

‘This is outrageous when you look at the financial performance of the NSW Government. There are simply no excuses for its funding of public schools.’

‘Operating revenues and cash receipts have grown much more strongly for the NSW Government than the Commonwealth in recent years, so the NSW Government can’t complain that it doesn’t have the money. The NSW Government does indeed have the money but has decided it won’t properly fund public schools’.

Table 2: Growth in operating revenues and cash receipts from operations, 2013-14 to 2016-17

Financial year	Growth in operating revenue		Growth in cash receipts from operations	
	Commonwealth Government	NSW Government	Commonwealth Government	NSW Government
2013-14	3.4%	8.0%	3.0%	11.5%
2014-15	2.0%	7.1%	4.5%	6.2%
2015-16	3.5%	4.4%	2.8%	5.8%
2016-17	5.7%	6.2%	5.4%	5.6%
Total	15.4%	28.2%	16.7%	32.3%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Government Finance Statistics, Australia, 2016-17

‘And the NSW Government can’t claim that it has a budget problem. In recent years the NSW Government has accumulated operating surpluses of over \$15 billion and cash surpluses from operations of over \$42 billion. At the same time, the Commonwealth has been running deficits.’

Table 3: Operating surpluses and net cash flow from operations, 2013-14 to 2016-17

Financial year	Net operating balance (\$m)		Net cash flow from operations (\$m)	
	Commonwealth Government	NSW Government	Commonwealth Government	NSW Government
2013-14	-\$31,114	\$1,137	-\$26,963	\$9,421
2014-15	-\$36,834	\$3,619	-\$24,509	\$11,289
2015-16	-\$35,253	\$4,597	-\$26,389	\$11,190
2016-17	-\$32,436	\$5,735	-\$20,759	\$10,510
Total	-\$135,637	\$15,088	-\$98,620	\$42,410

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Government Finance Statistics, Australia, 2016-17

‘The message from all this is very clear.’

‘While the Australian Government has shown a genuine commitment to school funding, the NSW Government has been opportunistic and cynical.’

‘The cash is there, the revenue growth is there, the budget surpluses are there and the ‘need’ is there – but the NSW Government has decided not to invest in public schools. Instead it has decided to demand even more school funding from the Australian Government. It’s as simple as that.’

‘This is the grossest political cynicism – and Mr Stokes deserves to be exposed.’

Further information: Christian Kerr, 0402 977 352