

## State Budget 2018: let's share the load delivering the Education State

Additional support for capital works in Catholic schools in tomorrow's state budget will help spread the burden of meeting Victoria's future education needs, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) Executive Director Stephen Elder says.

'We all know the greater Melbourne area is booming,' Mr Elder said. 'Bureau of Statistics figures from earlier this week show our city has the fastest growing population in the country.'

'A string of suburbs on the city's fringes grew by over 10 per cent last financial year alone.'

'This creates an extraordinary challenge when it comes to providing essential services such as education – a challenge Catholic education is happy to help with.'

'We run the second biggest school system in the state by far. We know the government can't do it alone and want to work with all sides of politics.'

'We're already helping lessen the burden on taxpayers and the state school system by building schools of our own in key growth areas. This year we opened new schools in Wallan East, Craigieburn West, Torquay North and Bannockburn, as well as at Cowes on Philip Island.'

'Catholic education aims to provide a quality, affordable and accessible, faith and values based schooling to all those who want it.'

'It's clear that parents appreciate the choice. This year over 210,000 students – almost one in four Victorian school children – are enjoying a Catholic education in one of nearly 500 schools across the state.'

'We prioritise Catholic families but our research suggests enrolments could increase by as much as a third if greater capital support from government that would allow us to build facilities to meet demand was available. That would take a real burden off the public purse.'

'Catholic school communities already raise 80 per cent of every dollar they spend on capital works, the essential bricks and mortar parts of school facilities. That means a little more from the state government would go a long way as we all deal with growth rates unseen since gold rush days and the challenges of Melbourne, once again, becoming Australia's largest city.'

'We want to help government with this task – and trust all sides of politics will want to help us help them too.'

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