

## So much for the end of the ‘special deals’

The Turnbull government has finally admitted its Gonski 2.0 funding model permanently disadvantages systemic schools – and locked in their second-rate status with a retrospective measure, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) Executive Director Stephen Elder says.

Their concession confirms fears most non-government schools across Australia – including the members of the Catholic, Lutheran and ecumenical systems – would receive more funding in total under the new arrangements if they were independents.

‘When he launched the Gonski 2.0 package at the start of May the Prime Minister assured us he was “making sure that the funding is fair, that it’s allocated in a consistent, equitable way across Australia”,’ Mr Elder said.

‘Both Mr Turnbull and his Education Minister, Simon Birmingham, repeatedly said they were ending the “special deals”.

‘The Explanatory Memoranda to their legislation talked of calculating recurrent funding “on a consistent and transparent basis” time and time again.

‘Yet this week the government has admitted Gonski 2.0 treats systemic schools differently.

‘The announcement hasn’t come from the Prime Minister or Senator Birmingham.

‘Instead, it’s contained in a bureaucratic memo warning schools not to leave systems.

‘The memo states “While Government policy should not restrict schools from joining or leaving systems, decisions about system arrangements should be made based on the benefits of such arrangements and not to maximise Commonwealth funding entitlements”.

‘It goes on to lock the disadvantage into place with a retrospective measure by declaring “The Government has decided that the starting share [of funding] will be determined based on the system arrangements in place ... on 27 June 2017”.

‘Senator Birmingham might have a comfy berth in the upper house, but he can expect to find his lower house colleagues in marginal seats knocking at his door at these latest revelations about the impact of his “reforms”.

‘It is clearer than ever all he has succeeded in doing is reducing parental choice and the affordability and accessibility of non-government schools.’

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