

Let's talk about 'special deals', Minister

Senator Birmingham likes to talk about 'special deals' – but the only special deal is the one that he's done with elite independent schools, according to Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Executive Director Stephen Elder.

'It's no coincidence that wealthy independent schools are the only ones patting the Minister on the back over his Quality Schools package,' Mr Elder said.

'Senator Birmingham should have been upfront about his funding plans. The Minister has put forward highly selective changes to the school funding model that almost exclusively disadvantage Catholic schools.'

To better inform public debate – and to take Senator Birmingham to task on his false claim of special deals – the CECV has today released information about two hidden 'special deals' for wealthy schools in the Birmingham funding model.

- Under the first special deal, the amount of private income wealthy schools are expected to raise under the funding model is calculated in a way that ensures as few as possible will be assessed as 'over-funded'.
- In the second, the Minister is proposing to use a parameter in the school funding model that is biased in favour of wealthy independent schools. This flawed parameter underestimates the true wealth and income of the families who attend these schools.

'These special deals manipulate the funding model in favour of wealthy families and wealthy schools. They artificially inflate how much government funding wealthy schools are estimated to need,' Mr Elder said.

'Without these special deals, many more wealthy independent schools would be assessed to be 'over-funded' in the Government's model.'

The Catholic education sector has asked the Minister to review the key element involving these special deals in his funding model: 'capacity to contribute', the mechanism the Government uses to estimate how much funding each school can raise in fees and charges.

'Despite overwhelming evidence this calculation is deeply flawed, in his new funding model the Minister has instead demanded big fee increases in Catholic parish primary schools,' Mr Elder said.

Media Release



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION OF VICTORIA LTD

'There is no evidence that Catholic parish primary schools can charge the fees the Minister will be expecting.

'No special deals? A needs-based and sector-blind funding model? Who is Senator Birmingham trying to kid?'

The CECV research paper is available at:

http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/924d7779-f945-4374-a4cd-48ffd5587849/CECV_Special-deals-with-wealthy-schools_20170517.aspx?ext=.pdf

Further information: Christian Kerr, Media Adviser, 03 9267 4411 or 0402 977 352