

## Save Our Schools – the stopped clock of education policy

The Save our Schools analysis of non-government school funding reported today is correct on one key point – the Turnbull Government’s Gonski 2.0 package massively overfunds wealthy independent schools, Catholic Education Commission of Victorian Executive Director Mr Stephen Elder says.

‘Save Our Schools is like the proverbial stopped clock,’ Mr Elder said. ‘They are right on one crucial detail.

‘Most of the time they are wrong. Save our Schools starts with the flawed premise that non-government schools shouldn’t exist, so of course they claim that they’re massively overfunded, regardless of the facts. It’s no coincidence that every bit of analysis they have ever done has found that non-government schools receive too much funding.

‘Their blinkered ideology has unfortunately blinded Save Our Schools to the facts – and the key fact when it comes to funding under Gonski 2.0 is that the Schooling Resource Standard is a biased measure of need for non-government schools.

‘This is because its most important parameter, school SES scores, is biased against low fee schools, and especially Catholic schools.

‘SES scores artificially lower the funding need of Catholic schools, and they artificially increase the funding need of wealthy independent schools.

‘Because of this bias in SES scores, many Catholic schools that are assessed to be overfunded are actually underfunded.

‘While inconvenient for Save Our Schools, this means that its claims about Catholic schools being overfunded lack substance.

‘But Save Our Schools is correct about one claim – their stopped clock moment. They are right to say the Gonski 2.0 model massively over-funds wealthy independent schools.

‘We know that the SES scores for almost all of these schools are too low.

‘We also know that many of these schools are claiming an unbelievably high number of their students have disabilities, under the dodgy new method through which this data is collected.

‘We have called upon the Government repeatedly to fix these policy blunders and presented it with two detailed research papers backing our stand.

‘Whether the Government actually fixes them will be a test of its commitment to true needs-based funding.

‘But whatever the outcome we can all be pretty certain that Save Our Schools will continue to argue that every non-government school in Australia is over-funded – stopped clock moments notwithstanding.’

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