

Monday 18 September 2017

## Quality – and quantity

Education Minister Simon Birmingham’s proposals for a new national test to assess the literacy and numeracy standards of Year 1s expose the contradictions of the Turnbull Government’s approach to schools, Catholic Education Melbourne Executive Director Stephen Elder says.

‘Literacy and numeracy are the building blocks of education,’ Mr Elder said. ‘They are already at the heart of everything we do.

‘That’s why it’s important to look beyond the headlines.

‘Senator Birmingham has said the tests would be paid for out of existing funding.

‘That is funding that – despite his protestations – is going to be reduced under his own policies.

‘The government’s own figures have shown Catholic schools across Australia will lose \$4.6 billion over the next decade due to changes in the funding model.

‘It’s richly ironic for the Minister to be rhetorically asking “how do we make sure that we get best bang for our buck” when he’s not just introducing an extra test without extra resources to conduct it – let alone extra resources to tackle any issue it reveals – but reducing funding.’

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