

Who is ‘conflating two different data sets to produce a result that suited a particular narrative’?

Claims by the federal Education Minister that data released by Catholic education highlighting that some of Australia’s most disadvantaged public schools will receive less federal funding in 2017 have been produced to suit a particular narrative are patently untrue, Catholic Education Executive Director, Stephen Elder says.

‘In his response to new Catholic education analysis of school funding data, Simon Birmingham accused us of “conflating two different data sets to produce a result that suited a particular narrative”,’ Mr Elder said.

‘Yet he remained tight-lipped on the quality of “previously secret Department of Education data” that were leaked to Fairfax Media yesterday, which purportedly showed that Catholic schools misallocate funds.’

‘Where was his commentary on the data yesterday?’

Mr Elder said the Minister had a pattern of taking hypocritical positions in the current funding debate.

‘So far, the Minister has:

- claimed he is implementing the recommendations of the Gonski Review while failing to replace school SES scores and removing system-average calculations of SES scores for school systems, in direct contradiction of the Gonski recommendations.
“The Turnbull Government will deliver the real ‘Gonski’ needs-based funding model that Labor didn’t” – Senator Birmingham, media release, 2 May 2017.
- claimed he was ending ‘special deals’ in school funding while maintaining two special deals for wealthy independent schools to buy their endorsement of his funding proposals.
“We will end Labor’s 27 special deals with states and territories, unions and non-government school leaders” – Senator Birmingham, media release, 2 May 2017.
Catholic education analysis of the independent school special deals is available on the [CECV website](http://www.cecv.org.au) and can be downloaded directly at: <http://bit.ly/2rylqJv>
- claimed the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students With Disability ‘failed a basic credibility test’, only to announce the discredited data would form the basis for allocating over \$200 million in funding per annum from 2018.
“Education Minister Simon Birmingham said the study showed ‘extreme’ discrepancies between the states and territories and ‘failed a basic credibility test’” – The Age, 20 December 2016.

Media Release



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- expressed concerns that increases in school funding have not improved education outcomes, while planning to provide record amounts of government money to wealthy independent schools, where additional federal funds are highly unlikely to boost educational outcomes.

“We’ve pumped an awful lot of extra money in, yet over the same period of time our performance has gone backwards. So clearly we now need to really focus the debate, on how it is we can get more bang for our buck out of that money” – Senator Birmingham, Drive with Ben Fordham, Radio 2GB, 7 December 2016.’

Mr Elder said that the Minister’s lack of consistency in the funding debate was hurting schools.

‘What is missing from all of this is a fair and equitable deal for Catholic and other low-fee systemic schools.’

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