

Clearing up the facts on enrolments

Both Fairfax and the Australian Education Union need to check their facts when conflating and sensationalising enrolment projections against funding, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) Executive Director Stephen Elder says.

‘Fairfax and the AEU have jumped on the pile started by New South Wales Education Minister Rob Stokes and his predecessor, Adrian Piccoli, of so-called experts making claims about non-government school funding’, Mr Elder said.

‘It’s become abundantly clear that public school proponents don’t understand how school funding works.

‘Anyone with a basic grasp of the federal funding model for schools should know that they are funded on a per capita basis – that means they are funded based on the number of students attending each school.

‘The funding announced by the Australian Government last week is calculated based on assumptions about enrolments.

‘If enrolments go up, the funding goes up.

‘If enrolments go down, the funding goes down.

‘This has been the basic principle of non-government school funding since the Whitlam Government acted on the Karmel Report in the mid-1970s.’

Mr Elder pointed to the recent federal funding debate for Catholic schools as one of the reasons for recent declines in enrolments for the sector.

‘Blind Freddy could have told you that Simon Birmingham’s funding debacle was having an impact on Catholic school enrolments’, he said.

‘No parent wants to face \$8,000-a-year fees in a parish primary school, when they can go to a government primary school for free.

‘As we have seen in the Diocese of Broken Bay and elsewhere, when faced with an onslaught of excessive fee increases, as required under the Birmingham model, parents were forced to rethink their education choices for their children.

Mr Elder also pointed to recent comments he made about the impact of capital funding support from state government for the non-government sector.

‘How time flies’, Mr Elder said.

‘As I told *The Age* only last week, Catholic school enrolments are being choked in Victoria because the Andrews Government has been dragging its heels on providing adequate capital funding and planning support for our sector.

Media Release



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION OF VICTORIA LTD

'We can build schools faster and cheaper than the Victorian Government can.

'We also save the Victorian treasury nearly \$100,000 over the life of schooling for every child enrolled in a Catholic school.

'Freeing the Catholic sector up to build new schools and to upgrade existing ones will see enrolment trends in Victoria change overnight.'

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