



Political Agenda

State/Federal Issues for South Australia

June 2016

Federal Issues

Government Funding that keeps pace with school costs (Indexation).

If government funding for Catholic schools fails to keep pace with school costs, that could lead to even larger fee increases, affect school quality or lead to school closures.

Government Funding that is needs based.

School funding should reflect students' learning needs, with greater educational need attracting additional funding. Catholic schools' commitment to meeting the learning needs of all students requires appropriate government funding.

Government funding to support the construction of new Catholic schools (Capital Funding)

More than 70 new Catholic schools are planned across Australia in the next five years to meet growing demand for school places. Without additional capital funding, these schools may not be built. Government funding is also needed to maintain and upgrade existing Catholic schools. South Australia currently receives only \$5.5m per annum for capital development.

State Issues

Recurrent Funding

South Australian Catholic school students receive the lowest recurrent funding from any state government in the nation.

Consequently, school fees in SA Catholic schools are, on average, the highest in the nation.

Access and Equity

Students in Catholic schools are denied access to the same Allied Health services that students in government schools are able to access.

Students in country Catholic schools have limited access to free bus transport to a Catholic school.

Students have had their current bus arrangements terminated at very short notice

Government funding to support the construction of new Catholic schools (Capital Funding)

South Australia is the only state/territory in Australia that does not receive any capital funding from the state government.

The resultant capital debt to fund loans to build new schools and expand and maintain existing schools contributes to higher, on average, school fees and levies in SA Catholic schools.

Federal Issues

Respect for the autonomy of Catholic schools

The ability of Catholic schools and systems to meet the local needs of a school community is one of their strengths. Government funding arrangements should respect the identity, integrity and autonomy of Catholic school and education systems.

Equalisation

If the full Better Schools Funding agreement isn't honoured until the conclusion of 2019, South Australia will be severely disadvantaged. We would require equalization in order to put us in line with other state and territories.

Funding of Year 7 Students

The federal government deflects paying the South Australian Year 7 students at the secondary per capita recurrent grant rate stating it is a state government issue - while requiring them to study the same curriculum and sit the same NAPLAN tests as other states.

South Australia is the only state where Year 7 students are funded at a primary per capita recurrent grant level.

Funding direct from Commonwealth

Catholic Education SA values the direct relationship with the Commonwealth for funding and communication.

There is no advantage in shifting commonwealth funding through the state government. This will add time delays and extra, unnecessary bureaucracy.

Respect for religious freedom in Catholic schools.

Catholic schools, respecting the rights and freedoms of parents and carers to choose schooling for their children in the Catholic tradition, should continue to be free to form and instruct students in the Catholic faith and celebrate the faith as an integral and inseparable activity of the Catholic school.

State Issues

Early Years

The state government provides no funding that would enable the expansion of early years services in the SA Catholic sector.

Northern Initiative

The Catholic sector is ready to contribute to the people in the northern suburbs where disadvantage is great. The South Australian government must work in partnership with Catholic Education SA in such an initiative.

Funding of Year 7 Students

South Australia is the only state that deems Year 7 as primary, therefore, students attract the primary rate of per capita recurrent funding. In every other state and territory, Year 7 is deemed secondary and students, therefore, attract the secondary per capita rate of recurrent funding.

All Year 7 students should attract the same level of funding as all other Year 7 students across Australia irrespective of setting.

This requires the state government to "deem" Year 7 as secondary in South Australia.

We call for the state government to deem Year 7 as secondary in the Education Act regulations so as to attract the secondary level of per capita recurrent funding as per the model legislated in the Education Act 2013.

Respect for religious freedom in Catholic schools.

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