

## Federal Funding Q&A

### **Why is the Catholic sector unhappy with the deal being offered by the Federal Government?**

The proposal from the Federal Government changes the basis for funding Catholic schools which currently educate 147,000 Queensland students in 302 schools. The Government says it has created a needs-based system but it has changed the way Catholic School Authorities are able to respond to need, based on our detailed knowledge and understanding of local contexts, without any consultation with the Catholic sector.

We are asking the Federal Government as a matter of urgency to sit down with us and discuss this proposal.

### **But at the end of the day you are getting more money for education. Isn't that a good thing?**

We appreciate that in the first instance we will receive an increase in funding in 2018 which will be in the order of 3.7 per cent overall. The issue is that this is a 10-year deal with no certainty of funding beyond the first few years.

What Catholic schools want is certainty going forward that we will be able to continue to sustainably deliver Catholic education to students from the diversity of cultural, social and economic groups we currently provide for all over Queensland from Thursday Island to the Gold Coast and out to Mt Isa and Quilpie.

### **Is the information on the School Funding Estimator website correct?**

The figures provided in the Schools Funding Estimator are not reliable. This is because they are based on a new funding model which doesn't apply in 2017. This does not equate to the actual funding which will be received by system schools in 2017.

The estimator then applies a 3.7% increase on this notional funding amount for 2018 without allowing for redistribution of funds by systems under Group Funding.

The site carries a disclaimer that the numbers are not the actual funds that flow to system schools. Catholic schools fall within the category of system schools.

### **How are funds redistributed to Queensland Catholic schools?**

The Federal Government recognises that the Catholic system in Queensland has better local knowledge than a Canberra bureaucrat to determine where funding is most needed and can be best used. That is why the Government allows us to redistribute funds within our sector.

We do redistribute funds to ensure that families in our regional and remote communities and our less well-off areas can still have access to Catholic education.

### **Is the process for redistributing funds transparent and public?**

The total funding available to every Catholic school in Queensland is published on the My School website and has been for the last five years.

Our school communities understand that there are particular schools within our Catholic system that need and deserve our help to ensure that students continue to have access to a Catholic education. Fairness and justice for all are integral elements of the ethos of Catholic schooling.

### **Why should some Catholic schools be funded above their Schooling Resource Standard?**

We accept the move to bring school funding for each school into line with the Schooling Resource Standard calculated for its particular circumstances. In fact, we've been transitioning towards that for some years now and we certainly think it can be achieved within the 10-year time frame set out by the Federal Government in this package.

### **How much will school fees go up as a result of this announcement?**

That's a question we simply can't answer because of the lack of detail the Federal Government has provided to us in announcing this package.

At this point we can't say what the impacts will be on individual schools.

### **Will you look at closing schools as a result of this funding package?**

We're not currently looking at closing any schools. What we want is the opportunity to sit down with the Federal Government and understand how this proposed funding scheme will work, what are the assumptions that have been built into it and how will that affect us.

We recognise that the Federal Government is providing a funding increase but we need to be certain that in a 10-year package our schools will be properly funded throughout that period. Right now we don't have that certainty.

### **The Catholic sector says the removal of the System Weighted Average is problematic. Why?**

The Catholic school sector operates as a system – the second biggest education system in the country – and we want to be treated as a system. In fact, the original Gonski report recognised the value of treating our sector as a system.

The loss of the System Weighted Average ultimately means that we will have less money available to support schools with services like learning support, student protection services, improved governance structures and professional development for teachers.

We will lose our capacity to provide the extra support that we now give to the schools most in need.

### **Isn't this a better deal for students with a disability?**

The Government is moving to a funding model that will use the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) as the basis for funding students with disabilities. Both the Federal Minister and an independent report have previously said that NCCD does not provide a robust set of data.

Using unreliable data as the basis for funding our most vulnerable students is not acceptable.