



Dear parents and carers

I write to you with great news for Catholic schools around Australia.

After 16 months of intense lobbying from school communities like yours, the Australian Government and the National Catholic Education Commission announced that they have agreed to new arrangements under the Gonski 2.0 funding policy.

Under these new arrangements, the Australian Government will make changes to how it calculates the funding each school receives. Revisions to the existing SES funding methodology will take parent income into account to ensure a fairer and more accurate measure of school community wealth. The new arrangements also provide more time to schools considered 'overfunded' under the model to transition to their new funding arrangements.

The Australian Government has also established a new fund to support struggling schools.

Since May last year, Catholic schools in Victoria faced more than one billion dollars in funding cuts over the next decade.

Today, the announced changes will put a stop to these funding losses and actually provide additional funding to schools in our sector.

None of this would have been achieved without your efforts, and those of parents and carers in other school communities across Victoria.

When confronted with the government's funding policy changes last year, Victorian Catholic school communities were the first, and for a long time the only, voices advocating for Catholic schools across Australia.

Thank you for standing up for your community over the last 16 months.

Victorian Catholic school family efforts inspired other dioceses and their school communities to have the confidence to take up the fight and to bring about today's announcement.

There is no doubt that your efforts have resulted in the fresh approach taken by the new Minister for Education, Dan Tehan. Minister Tehan has genuinely listened to the concerns of Catholic education and recognised that there are major flaws in the funding model. We are grateful for his intervention and efforts to resolve this impasse.

While I am hopeful that we won't face this type of challenge again, I am gratified to know that there are parents and carers like you ready to stand up for our Catholic schools.

Thank you once again for your efforts.

Good wishes

Stephen Elder
Executive Director



Dear parents and carers

I write to you with great news about a recent funding commitment for our schools.

The Premier of Victoria, Daniel Andrews, and the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, James Merlino have announced the ALP's commitment to provide \$400 million in funding over the next four years to upgrade and build new Catholic and other non-government schools.

Catholic education will be the big winners from the fund, with the Premier indicating that our schools will receive 70-80% of the new funding.

The Andrews Labor Government has also announced a range of planning reforms which will streamline existing processes to help us build and maintain facilities for Catholic school communities across the state.

On top of this, Mr Andrews has committed funding to support the removal of asbestos and the other hazardous materials, which will ensure that all of our schools, wherever they are, are safe.

This is a huge announcement for the Catholic sector, and is the largest capital funding commitment a Victorian Government has made to our schools.

I know the significant contribution you already make to maintaining and upgrading the facilities at your child's school, and I also know that you keep putting your hands in your own pockets to make sure that they can have the best places to learn in. Across Victoria, parents and carers are contributing 80 cents in every dollar that our school sector spends on capital works in our schools.

Today's announcement is an acknowledgement of that fact.

Today's announcement is also a welcome recognition of the hard work from you and other members of your school community have put in over the last 18 months, sending a very clear message to decision-makers: Catholic education matters.

If you have the opportunity, I encourage you to write and thank the Premier and the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education for their support of your school. Their addresses are:

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002
daniel.andrews@parliament.vic.gov.au

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier and Minister for Education
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002
james.merlino@parliament.vic.gov.au

Your principal will pass on any further updates on the policies of the other major parties in the weeks ahead.

Thank you for your continued support for your school community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Elder', written in a cursive style.

Stephen Elder
Executive Director

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Dear parents and carers

For the second time this week, I am writing to you with good news on school funding.

The Liberal Nationals leader Matthew Guy and his education spokesman, Tim Smith, have pledged to match the Victorian Government's \$400 million commitment for the upgrading and building of new Catholic and non-government schools over the four years, if elected on 24 November.

The Liberal Nationals have also committed to planning reforms they say will offer more streamlined procedures and enable Catholic and other non-government schools to be more responsive to community demands by transferring planning responsibility for applications relating to non-government schools from councils directly to the Minister for Planning.

Importantly, Mr Guy has said 'giving parents and children choice in education is a core value of the Liberal Nationals', adding 'a critically important part of that choice is for parents to have the option of low-fee independent and Catholic schools'.

Shadow Minister for Education, Tim Smith, acknowledged that Victoria has the highest rate in the country of students attending non-government schools and, like the ALP, has committed funding to support the removal of asbestos and other hazardous materials to ensure our schools, wherever they are, are safe.

Yet again, this is a terrific announcement for Catholic education, and is further recognition of your commitment to seeing that your children are taught, in not only caring learning environments, but great teaching spaces that can inspire.

In the space of just three days, both major parties have offered a public endorsement of the quality and strength of our schools in the Catholic sector – and recognised their significance to the state.

Again, if you have the opportunity I would encourage you to write or email thanking Mr Guy and Mr Smith for their support for our education sector. Their addresses are:

The Hon Matthew Guy MP
Leader of the Opposition
157 Spring Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
matthew.guy@parliament.vic.gov.au

Mr Tim Smith MP
Shadow Minister for Education
Suite 1, 400 High Street
KEW VIC 3101
tim.smith@parliament.vic.gov.au

Thank you for your continued support for your school community.

Good wishes

Stephen Elder
Executive Director