

GBW:vt

8 May 2017

Dear Parents and Carers

As you are aware, there has been significant media attention around the Federal Government's proposed new education funding model announced last week. The announcement includes the commissioning of a second education review by Professor David Gonski.

The Government has yet to reveal the full details of this funding package. While it appears that the new model will provide acceptable funding for Catholic schools for 2018, there are serious concerns about the long-term funding of Catholic schools. As you can appreciate, systems need funding certainty so that they can plan for the future needs of students. It is also disappointing that no consultation with the Catholic sector took place before this new funding model was announced. Given that Catholic schools educate more than 20 percent of Australian students, that is unfortunate.

The National Catholic Education Commission has called on the Federal Government to immediately begin a dialogue with Catholic education. I support this call. This dialogue is critical to ensure that Catholic systemic schools receive a fair portion of the funding pie so that it can continue to provide high quality education to more than 1 in 5 Australian students.

I want to take this opportunity to reassure all parents and carers that Bishop Vincent and I are well aware of the sacrifices that parents make when they choose a Catholic education for their child. We have absolutely no desire to increase fees, outside of the normal annual increases that reflect cost of living. It is for this reason that a fair, needs-based, long-term funding model is needed.

We will be communicating with local Federal members in our Diocese to express our concerns. Our aim in doing this is simply to ensure Catholic school children receive the same equitable student funding as every other young Australian.

Our commitment to providing every student in our schools with the very best educational experience possible is as strong as ever. With this in mind, we will continue to advocate for a fair and equitable funding model so that a Catholic education remains affordable for families in the Diocese of Parramatta.

Yours sincerely



**Gregory B Whitby**  
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