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MEDIA STATEMENT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ROSS FOX

NCEC Welcomes Funding Certainty For Catholic Schools

The National Catholic Education Commission has welcomed the funding certainty delivered by today’s announcement that if elected the Coalition would honour the Commonwealth Government’s Better Schools funding plan for Catholic schools in 2014 and Commonwealth school funding over the forward estimates period to 2016-17.

NCEC Executive Director Ross Fox said the Coalition’s commitment establishes bi-partisan support for the Commonwealth funding that will support Catholic schools and provides welcome certainty.

“Catholic education welcomes today’s commitment by Opposition Leader Tony Abbott and Shadow Education Minister Christopher Pyne to match current commonwealth school funding proposals to 2016-17,” Mr Fox said.

“Catholic schools and systems are currently budgeting for 2014 and beyond and this certainty will be welcomed. This certainty will also assist Catholic education systems to plan to support the needs of schools and students into the years ahead.

“The NCEC particularly welcomes the Coalition’s commitment to review the Australian Education Act to ensure school systems maintain appropriate levels of autonomy.

“Catholic education has consistently raised issues through the legislative process in relation to preserving system autonomy and the scope of Ministerial power over schools. This commitment represents a welcome opportunity to further consider these arrangements for the benefit of schools and systems,” Ross Fox said.

Mr Fox says the NCEC also acknowledges the significant work of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Education Minister Bill Shorten in clarifying the Better Schools funding arrangements with the Catholic sector in recent weeks.

“The Catholic sector looks forward to ongoing discussions with both the Government and Opposition about further development of their plans and policies for education in Australia,” he said.

The Australian Government’s Better Schools plan will progressively deliver increased Commonwealth funding to Catholic education systems in Australia based on common measures of student need across all education sectors.

1 in 5 or 735,403 Australian students currently attend the 1,706 Catholic schools across the country.

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