Media Release

NSW Government must ease capital funding burden on parents

Catholic Schools NSW (CSNSW) said today the NSW Government must reduce the load on parents who currently fund some 80% of capital projects in the state’s Catholic schools.

CSNSW Chief Executive Officer Dallas McInerney said the NSW Government needed to use this month’s State Budget to raise the level of capital funding support to non-government schools, which was ridiculously low compared with other major states.

“The Victorian Government is providing $120 million in capital funding support this financial year to a non-government sector that has 711 schools,” Mr McInerney said.

“The Queensland Government is providing $92.7 million to support capital works among its 491 non-government schools.

“But in its last Budget, the NSW Government allocated just $33.3 million for this state’s 944 non-government schools,” he said.

Speaking at the EduTECH conference in Darling Harbour today, Mr McInerney said the share of this funding available to NSW’s 595 Catholic schools was some $20 million – barely enough to build one new primary school.

He said CSNSW prioritised all the government funding it receives for capital projects to Catholic schools with the least ability to raise funds.

“Capital funds from government go to the Catholic schools that need it most,” Mr McInerney said.

“This year, we allocated $20.2 million in state government funding to support 12 projects in Catholic schools in places like in Nyngan, Wyalong, Branxton, Lewisham and Toormina, as well as in growth areas like Marsden Park and Edmondson Park.”

Mr McInerney said Catholic schools have relied for years on the generosity and commitment of parents to fund at least 80% of capital works each year through building levies and other fund-raising.

“With the rising cost of land, construction and classroom technology, parents cannot be expected to shoulder this burden to the same degree much longer.

“Otherwise, we will have a slowdown in construction activity, constraining our ability to meet the Catholic sector’s share of demand for new student places. The government will be then forced to spend much more than it gives our sector to increase capacity in government schools.”

Mr McInerney said the Catholic schools sector supports the government’s $4.2 billion capital works plan over three years for its 2200 government schools.

“Government schools in NSW educate three times as many students as Catholic schools do - and receive 70 times the level of capital funding support from the state government.

“We ask the NSW Government - which boasts a strong balance sheet - to do as its neighbouring states have done and ease the pressure on parents with children in non-government schools.”

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