



Media release

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CATHOLIC EDUCATION WELCOMES CAPITAL FUNDING BOOST

Catholic Education Commission NSW (CECNSW) today welcomed the NSW Government's move to increase capital funding to non-government schools over the next four years.

CECNSW Acting Chairman Peter Turner said the additional funding would help build new classrooms to meet a forecast 23% growth in enrolments across all school sectors in NSW by 2031.

"NSW Catholic schools currently educate almost 254,000 students, or one in five enrolled in this state.

"To maintain the status quo, Catholic schools will need to accommodate 58,000 additional students by 2031. This will require us to build 131 new classrooms each year over the next 16 years."

Mr Turner said parents currently provided two-thirds of the capital funding needed in NSW Catholic schools with the remainder coming from the Australian Government (27%) and the NSW Government (7.6%)

"The announcement by NSW Education Minister Adrian Piccoli will help ease the pressure on parents, who have funded the bulk of Catholic school construction for generations of students - and will continue to do so.

"However, parents will not be able to contribute to the same degree going forward, given the growing cost of land, construction and technology as well as rising birth rates. The NSW birth-rate is now 10,000 per year higher than it was in 2010; that's enough to fill 500 extra classrooms each year."

Mr Turner said today's announcement means the state's 588 Catholic schools will compete for some \$15 million in capital funding each year from the NSW Government, doubling the current funding level.

He said an increase was necessary because current NSW Government capital grants to Catholic schools were virtually cancelled out by infrastructure charges imposed by local councils and state-owned utilities on new school building works.

"From 2012 to 2014, Catholic schools received \$21.9 million in capital grants from the NSW Government but were forced to pay \$21.3 million in infrastructure charges – charges not levied on government schools."

Mr Piccoli announced the capital funding boost - \$50 million over four years to all non-government schools - during a visit to St Benedict's Catholic College at Oran Park in Sydney's south west, one of the state's fastest growing schools.

Principal Michael Hanratty said the College already had more than 230 enrolment applications for Year 7 in 2016, but will only be able to accommodate 183 of those who apply.

"The College has received \$10.8 million in NSW Government funding and \$12 million from the school community over the past four years to help build new classrooms and other facilities such as science laboratories.

"Next year, the College will complete work on the library and six classrooms and begin another stage of building which includes 18 classrooms," Mr Hanratty said.

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