



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Catholic School Principals and Catholic School Parents Australia united around funding concerns

Tony O’Byrne (Chair) of Catholic School Parents Australia (CSPA), Mark Mowbray (President) of the Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association (ACPPA) and Phil Lewis (President) of Catholic Secondary Principals Australia (CaSPA) today said their associations are proud of the Catholic sector’s 200 -year contribution to education across Australia.

“However”, Tony O’Byrne stated, “as the advocates for well over a million parents with children in Catholic schools across Australia, and the tens of thousands of committed staff, we express our serious concerns that the recently announced funding package will unfairly undermine the Catholic sector’s ability to offer affordable and accessible Catholic education to all those who seek it”.

“As one, our three associations call into question this new model which has the potential to significantly change the provision of Catholic education in Australia”, indicated Mark Mowbray. “While the proposal promises to deliver increased funding overall, the complex interplay of factors within the model delivers significant funding cuts in some areas and constrains the ability of systems to redistribute funds in a way that will allow Catholic education to continue to offer a low-fee schooling option”, Mr Mowbray said.

These associations believe that the Government has grossly misunderstood system funding arrangements and the benefits to Government and the community when systems, such as Catholic education, are funded to deliver education in an equitable and efficient way. Phil Lewis indicated, “Children of low to middle income families make up the majority of students in local, low-fee parish schools, schools that often closely aligned with local government schools. Every endeavour is pursued to minimise fees so that a Catholic education is accessible to all parents who seek it for their children. This is important”, Mr Lewis continued, “As the vast majority of local parish Catholic schools do not have students from predominantly high income families”.

These representatives also believe the system weighted average SES goes some way to moderating the negative effects of the SES methodology on systems and allows Catholic education to remain an accessible and affordable option in every community. “So we support Catholic education’s call for the SES methodology to be reviewed”, Mr O’Byrne said, and concluded, “The Government’s pursuit of a simple, one-size fits all approach to school funding reform, as well-intentioned as it may be, does not take account of the historical and present realities facing complex systems like Catholic education”.

These three Catholic leaders indicated that they are respectfully bringing their concerns to the attention of the Prime Minister, the Minister for Education and Federal MPs and Senators. They stressed that the wisdom of Principals and Parents should be valued in determining how education funding can be directed to best support learning and teaching.

*Ends ..... 22 May 2017*

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