

MEDIA RELEASE

August 29, 2014



FUNDING FOR SCHOOL CHAPLAINS WILL SUPPORT STUDENTS' WELL-BEING

The National Catholic Education Commission has welcomed the announcement of the extension of a program that supports the well-being of school students across Australia.

NCEC executive director Ross Fox said Parliamentary Secretary Scott Ryan's announcement that the Abbott Government will honour its pre-election promise to continue the National School Chaplaincy Programme will be welcomed by schools across Australia.

"Many schools, including Catholic schools, have benefited from this program – set up by the Howard Government and continued under the Rudd and Gillard Governments – and its extension for another four years will benefit students," Mr Fox said.

Mr Fox said the program guidelines were yet to be released, and he called for the Government to be as flexible as possible in finalising the program's guidelines, to ensure they support the well-being and pastoral needs of students.

"Catholic education encourages states and territory governments to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by this funding to support students," Mr Fox said.

"Catholic education hopes that the excessive regulatory requirements that have previously burdened the program will be eliminated by the new administrative arrangements through state and territory governments."

Mr Fox said the two-tier system that will see schools in remote area receive \$24,000, compared to \$20,000 in other parts of the country, was an appropriate approach to reflect the challenges in regional areas.

"Catholic schools see pastoral care and chaplaincy support as an important part of a holistic school approach to care for the whole child and ensure the well-being of students," Mr Fox concluded.