



Media Release

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Time to end the misinformation around school funding

The Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW) today called on National Catholic Education authorities to re-engage with the Independent schools sector and take control of the messages and claims about the funding of non-government schools currently being promoted by a small group within the Catholic schools bureaucracy.

Dr Geoff Newcombe AM, Chief Executive of AISNSW, said it was vitally important for Catholic and Independent school sectors to continue working closely together, as they have for several decades, to ensure that every child's entitlement to Australian Government funding support for their education continues to be realised.

"The National Catholic Education Commission meeting taking place in Melbourne today provides the perfect opportunity for senior Catholic education officials to end the divisive approach being taken to date, which is unrepresentative of the views of many in the Catholic education community across Australia, including many of its leaders," Dr Newcombe said.

"To now argue that students in some schools deserve no government funding is a profound shift in philosophy for some Catholic education authorities.

"The facts are that parents of children in Catholic and Independent schools make a significant contribution to school infrastructure, funding the bulk of capital works, new and refurbished classrooms and other school facilities out of their after-tax dollars, in addition to paying annual fees for their child's education. This saves governments and taxpayers billions of dollars annually.

Dr Newcombe also said the current campaign being waged against the Federal Minister for Education and Training, Simon Birmingham, and the members of the National School Resourcing Board (NSRB), in which their integrity has been unfairly questioned, was shameful and tantamount to bullying.

"The irony of the ongoing and unjustified personal attacks on the Minister and the members of the NSRB is not lost on educators from all school sectors who are trying to stamp out bullying.

The Independent schools sector strongly supports the statement made by former Prime Minister Julia Gillard who, when developing the needs-based funding model currently in place, said "*It is a right of citizenship of every child to receive government funding support for their education.*"

Dr Newcombe said: "Every child in this country deserves government funding to support their education. It is in the common and shared interest of both the Catholic and Independent school sectors to re-engage as partners to ensure the best possible future for all Australian children – regardless of their parents' choice of school.

"We will also continue to work closely with our colleagues in the government school sector to improve the quality of education provided to all children in Australia."