

Media Statement

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CATHOLIC EDUCATION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PARENTS CARRY UNFAIR LOAD AS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS CONTINUE TO GROW

As more parents are choosing to send their children to Catholic schools than ever before, there is a growing call for the McGowan Government to ensure fairer funding for education.

Catholic School Parents WA (CSPWA) Executive Director Siobhan Allen said across Western Australia parents were seeking meetings with newly elected Members of Parliament to highlight the disproportionate financial pressure being placed on families who choose a Catholic education.

“We congratulate all MPs on their election and are keen to meet with each and every one of them,” Mrs Allen said.

“We want them to understand the unfair burden currently being carried by parents who choose to send their children to Catholic schools.

“This is a choice that should be supported, acknowledging the great contribution our schools make to WA.”

CEWA Executive Director, Dr Debra Sayce said primary and secondary school principals were working closely with parents.

“Enrolments in Catholic schools have grown by more than seven per cent in the past decade. The savings to the WA Government are estimated to be almost \$800 million as a result of students attending Catholic Schools,” Dr Sayce said.

“It is time for that contribution to be acknowledged and we are keen to ensure all MPs understand the important role our schools play in the State’s education system.”

With 163 schools in Western Australian, CEWA educates more than 78,000 students and employs 10,982 staff around the State.

CEWA operates three schools in the Central Wheatbelt electorate, providing an option for parents wanting a Catholic education for their children where a choice of schools exists.

“The McGowan Government has promised to invest more than \$900 million to build new public schools and to maintain and upgrade existing public schools,” Dr Sayce said.

“But not a single cent has been committed to capital works for Catholic schools.”

In addition to saving the State Budget hundreds of millions of dollars every year by educating more children than ever in Catholic schools, replicating CEWA’s facilities around the State would cost the WA Government more than \$5.1 billion in capital expenditure.

Almost all CEWA's capital costs – from buying land to constructing buildings – are currently funded by private contributions only, with no direct government contribution at either the State or Federal level.

Dr Sayce said, unlike Government schools, a Catholic primary school with an average SES score in WA will receive up to a fifth less funding per-student from the State and Commonwealth governments combined, while an average Catholic secondary school in WA faces an even less equitable per-student government funding allocation.

“This material funding discrepancy is based solely on the choice of parents to send their children to a Catholic school and is not calculated on the needs of each individual student,” Dr Sayce said.

“In effect, the current funding model penalises our students for the financial contribution their parents are willing to make to their education.

“CEWA also provides fee relief and a low-fee school program, contributing to further savings for State and Federal governments.

“Fair and timely provision of additional and recurrent school infrastructure and equitable funding for Catholic schools is an ongoing area of advocacy for CEWA.

“We are only asking for what is fair and we will continue to seek change.”

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