Victorian Catholic Education Authority

5 October 2026

Victoria's 494 Catholic schools welcome Opposition funding commitment and call on Government to match

The Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA) has welcomed a commitment this week from the Victorian Opposition to retain existing recurrent funding arrangements for Catholic and other non-government schools if elected, and called on the Victorian Government to provide the same certainty.

The Liberals and Nationals have committed to retaining the existing funding formula, which guarantees state recurrent funding for non-government schools at no less than 25 per cent of per-student recurrent funding for government schools.

VCEA Chief Executive Officer Professor Elizabeth Labone said the commitment provided welcome certainty for Catholic school communities across the state facing rising cost of living pressures.

"We welcome this week's commitment from the Liberals and Nationals to retain the existing funding arrangements for Catholic schools if they form government, with no cut to recurrent funding for our 218,000 students.

"The Coalition commitment is an enormous relief for 160,000 Catholic school families. With 90 per cent of Catholic schools receiving less than $5,000 a year in fees, Catholic schools are an affordable choice for thousands of Victorian families and our communities cannot afford state government funding cuts."

VCEA understands the Victorian Government is considering changes to the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*, which provides for the longstanding 25 per cent funding link. The guarantee was introduced by the Labor Government in 2015 to provide funding certainty for Catholic and independent schools.

VCEA has been actively pursuing a commitment from the Opposition and the Government not to change the legislation for many weeks, after becoming aware that changes were under consideration.

We are calling on the Government to retain the 25 per cent link and rule out any cuts to existing recurrent funding arrangements for Catholic schools.

"Families are already dealing with significant pressure on household budgets. The Reserve Bank's decision this week to lift the cash rate by 25 basis points to 4.60 per cent will add further pressure for many households.

"The last thing families need is further uncertainty about the funding of their children's schools. Any reduction in government funding would put additional pressure on Catholic school budgets at a time when schools and families are already facing rising costs," Professor Labone said.

"We are asking the current Government to retain that longstanding commitment and rule out any cuts. "Catholic school families deserve to know where the Government stands on school funding well before they cast their vote.

"Catholic schools educate more than 218,000 Victorian children, save taxpayer funds and reduce pressure on the public system. The latest Productivity Commission data shows government funding and in-kind support is more than $9,000 lower per student, on average, in Victorian non-government schools than in government schools."

“We will not sit back and be ignored. The almost 160,000 families who choose Catholic education are taxpayers too, and their children deserve a fair share of government funding.”

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