

### Introduction

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Productivity Commission's review of the National Policy Initiatives and the Measurement Framework under the National School Reform Agreement.

This submission has been developed in consultation with state and territory Catholic Education Authorities. The submission includes a supplement that discusses the issue of capital funding for Catholic schools as a policy initiative that falls outside of the NSRA framework but would produce a productivity dividend for the education sector and the Australian economy as a whole.

The NCEC is the peak body for Catholic education in Australia and is responsible for the national coordination and representation of Catholic schools and school authorities.

Working collaboratively with state and territory Catholic Education Authorities the NCEC advocates through effective liaison with the federal, state and territory governments, and key national education bodies. Our role is to ensure the needs of Catholic schools are served through funding, legislation, and policy.

Our work is to foster a thriving Catholic education sector that offers parents a choice of, and affordable access to, faith-based education for their children. Catholic Education continues to advocate for fair and inclusive funding that sustains both government and accessible faith-based school across Australia.

Catholic schools are universal in reach and open to all families who seek a Catholic education. Australia's 1,755 Catholic schools educate one in five, or over 777,000 students and employs over 100,000 Australians. This makes Catholic schools the nation's largest provider of education outside government.

Our schools' welcome students from a range of backgrounds including an increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (up 168% since 2000). Students with disability represent around 19% of attending Catholic schools and 40% of students experience socio-educational disadvantage.

In making the choice of a Catholic education, families take on nearly 29% of the annual cost of their child's education and almost 90% of the funding required to support school buildings and capital works in Catholic schools. In 2019, Catholic school families contributed approximately \$3.9 billion towards their children's education, representing a substantial saving to Australian taxpayers. Catholic Education also acknowledges the ongoing support by the Australian government in the funding of Catholic schools.

Catholic schools make a significant contribution to the educational, moral, and social fabric of this nation. Our schools ensure that parents can choose an affordable education that is consistent with Catholic beliefs, values, and teachings. Catholic schools are committed to educational excellence and are underpinned by charisms of prayer, witness, catechesis, social justice, and pastoral care.

This submission to the Review of the National Policy Initiatives and the Measurement Framework under the National School Reform Agreement responds to the issues raised in the discussion paper and makes some broad observations regarding a new reform agreement.

## **Background**

The current National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) was developed with consultation during 2018 and signed by the States and Territories and the Australian Government to take effect from 2019 – 2023. All Governments have agreed common goals for schooling in Australia through the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration which sets out a vision for a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face. Building on the Melbourne Declaration, it recommits to the twin principles of excellence and equity to enable all Australian students to become confident and creative individuals, successful learners, and active and informed community members.

The NSRA and the National policy Initiatives (NPIs) within it were developed largely in response to the 2018 Report, *Through Growth to Achievement: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools*, chaired by Mr David Gonski AC and guided by the Closing the Gap agenda and the findings of the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education, the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools through Early Childhood Interventions and the STEM Partnerships Forum.

The NSRA sets out three high level outcomes:

- academic achievement improves for all students, including priority equity groups;
- all students are engaged in their schooling; and
- students gain the skills they need to transition to further study and/or work and life success.

and identifies 8 national policy initiatives against 3 reform directions that all parties have agreed to implement across the 5 years to December 2023:

### **A. Supporting students, student learning and student achievement**

- i. Enhancing the Australian Curriculum to support teacher assessment of student attainment and growth against clear descriptors
- ii. Assisting teachers monitor individual student progress and identify student learning needs through opt-in online and on demand student learning assessment tools with links to student learning resources, prioritising early years foundation skills
- iii. Reviewing senior secondary pathways into work, further education, and training

### **B. Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement**

- i. Reviewing teacher workforce needs of the future to attract and retain the best and brightest to the teaching profession and attract teachers to areas of need
- ii. Strengthening the initial teacher education accreditation system

### **C. Enhancing the national evidence base**

- i. Implementing a national unique student identifier (USI) that meets national privacy requirements in order to support better understanding of student progression and improve the national evidence base
- ii. Establishing an independent national evidence institute to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development
- iii. Improving national data quality, consistency, and collection to improve the national evidence base and inform policy development.

Catholic education strongly supports the national vision, outcomes and principles underpinning the NSRA.

The National Measurement Framework (NMF) underpins the National Report on Schooling in Australia and the ACARA MySchool Website and details nationally agreed key performance measures (KPMs) for schooling and outlines the annual assessment and reporting cycle. The NMF also informs other reports including the Report on Government Services released by the Productivity Commission.

The NMF also supports the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration which states that “Australian Governments commit to continuing to provide public reporting that:

- focuses on improving performance and student growth and outcomes for all students
- provides parents with information on their child’s performance, progress, and outcomes
- is locally, nationally, and internationally relevant
- is accessible, timely, consistent, and comparable.”

Key performance measures in the NMF cover participation, student achievement and student attainment.

The following sections provide some broad observations.

### **Support for National Collaboration**

Catholic education, with its national footprint, is a strong supporter of coherent and aligned national policy and reform. There are clear national interest considerations and benefits of national collaborative approaches to improving outcomes for all Australian students irrespective of where they live and attend school. Significant benefits accrue from nationally harmonised or uniform approaches to many areas of education policy including schools funding, teacher registration and accreditation, curriculum and assessment and safeguarding children. However, these benefits should not come at the expense of diversity and innovation arising from local state, territory and/or sector reform efforts. State-based Catholic Education Authorities have strong working relationships with their State Governments and also respond collaboratively to local policy reform efforts.

### **A New National Schools Reform Agreement**

The early and active engagement of the non-government school sector in the development of a new national schools reform agreement, and bilateral agreements, is critical. While there are some excellent examples of close collaboration between state governments and the non-government sector, they are not uniform across all jurisdictions. The intent of the NSRA, and the Alice Springs Declaration, is that all jurisdictions and all sectors are jointly responsible for achieving the overarching vision for all young Australians. This can only be achieved if there is a close partnership among all who have responsibility for implementing the agreed reforms.

While funding is not in scope for this review, it will be key consideration in the negotiations of a new agreement. For the Catholic sector there are two important, and distinct, considerations in relation to funding:

1. The discussion paper states that funding is not necessary to lift outcomes (p7). While NCEC agrees, it does matter how money is spent. NCEC believes this statement is a significant oversimplification.
2. Currently, Non-Government Representative Bodies (such as State and Territory Catholic Education Authorities) receive funding under the Non-Government Reform Support Fund (NGRSF) to support their member schools and systems in the implementation of national and

state/territory school reform policy initiatives which may include NPIs but in the main include a much broader array of related reform activity directly aligned to the three key priority areas in the NRSA. These funded initiatives are reflected in both the national *and* bilateral agreements and have led to more timely and direct initiatives related to supporting student outcomes, including priority equity cohorts. This fund has supported greater flexibility and agility in responding to student and school needs and has led to some good innovation. This fund has been extended for one year (to end in 2023) to coincide with the NSRA cycle. After that there is no certainty of on-going funding for the sector to support the implementation of any new reform priorities.

Significantly, the NGRSF does not provide specific funding to implement the large-scale infrastructure NPIs such as the USI and the OFAI which will inevitably require expensive changes to schools' and systems' IT infrastructure. This is of significant concern to the non-government school sector.

### **Current National Policy Initiatives**

Catholic Education is broadly supportive of the current set of NPIs but notes that they are at varying stages of maturity; some are complete, and others will require more time to be realised. The Review of the Australian Curriculum and the establishment of AERO are two examples of initiatives that have been achieved thus far. The national unique student identifier will likely require more time and may need to be rolled over into a new agreement. The current approach has not been entirely successful due to siloed initiatives, tight timelines, and a lack of consensus from states and territory jurisdictions.

As mentioned above some of the NPIs focus on large scale infrastructure and educational architecture rather than student outcomes. While some reforms need to establish the required architecture and broad measurement structures for school education, the aim of school reform should be to raise the level of student achievement and wellbeing. These structures need to recognise the school-specific enablers which are supported by evidence, i.e., empowering schools to be the drivers of learning and wellbeing.

### **A. Australian Curriculum and links to Post Secondary Schooling**

#### *A(i) Enhancing Australian Curriculum with a focus on assessment, attainment, and growth against clear descriptors*

NCEC supports the work undertaken by the Australian Curriculum Assessment Authority (ACARA) in producing and publishing version 9 of the Australian Curriculum but notes that further work needs to be undertaken in languages, consent, and mental health content in the Australian: Health and Physical Education curriculum. Enhancing the Australian Curriculum to support teacher assessment of student attainment and growth against clear descriptors is particularly relevant now that the new version of the Australian Curriculum has been released.

Further targeted support and development is required for students in remote communities, particularly First Nations students, who may be unable to access the Australian Curriculum and require a modified curriculum based on literacy and numeracy. Investment in the development of an appropriate alternative curriculum, especially for EAL/D (English as an additional language or dialect) students, needs to be a priority.

A cross-sectoral approach with consultation and implementation support (including professional learning opportunities) for teachers will support curriculum rollout across states and territories. It should be noted that some states 'adopt and adapt' the Australian Curriculum by embedding it win

their curriculum framework. This will result in different implementation approaches across the country.

*A(ii) Assisting teachers monitoring of student progress through a range of opt-in online and other tools with a priority on foundation years*

The continued development of the Australian Curriculum and related achievement literacy and numeracy learning progressions, remains an important focus for Catholic Education. Having quality access to resources aligned to the Australian Curriculum and the national literacy and numeracy learning progressions (NLNLP) is vital. Much work will be needed by teachers to embed NLNLP into their curriculum planning, as well as utilising new tools such as the Online Formative Assessment Initiative (OFAI) platform. While there has been significant take-up of the learning progressions in NSW, other states have been slow to respond to embedding the learning progressions and have focused on literacy and numeracy continuums with an emphasis on the early years of learning.

Professional learning in applying the learning progressions across jurisdictions is needed. A significant investment by the states and territories will be crucial to support this work. It is important that there is a broader understanding of the purpose of assessment and the use of formative assessment to provide feedback to students to inform next steps in their learning.

It is important that the OFAI remains opt-in in principle. Feedback from teachers is that they are fatigued, they want to see how the OFAI can reduce workload and burden and are keen to see recognition of professional judgement. Deep consideration of changes to workplace practices are needed to ensure allocated time for teachers to engage and collaborate on pedagogy and formative assessment. The relationship between OFAI and other NPIs needs to be better communicated to systems and schools. The siloed approach to the implementation of many of the NPIs has resulted in systems and schools not understanding the relationships between the initiatives.

*A(iii) Reviewing senior secondary pathways into work, further education, and training*

NCEC supports the recommendations of *Looking to the Future: Report of the Review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education, and training* (the Shergold review). It is important to value and promote the various pathways that students may take to further learning and employment beyond compulsory schooling. Progress on this NPI has been slow however the findings and recommendations continue to be important and relevant.

There remains a lack of agreement regarding the proposed purpose and scope of a national strategy for vocational education and training delivered to secondary students, as well as a clear plan to assist schools to provide appropriate VET courses and facilitate student access to TAFE.

Implementation of appropriate provision of career-related programs to students, especially in TAFE and related training, will require a considerable injection of funding from the Australian and state and territory governments.

## **B. Workforce Development and Initial Teacher Education (ITE)**

*B (i) Reviewing teacher workforce needs to attract the best applicants to the workforce and areas of need*

The current teacher workforce shortage is having a significant impact across the Catholic sector. Most Catholic Education Authorities reported difficulties in recruiting and retaining appropriately experienced teachers and quality applicants, particularly in regional and remote locations. Securing a quality supply of teachers will be an ongoing issue. The pandemic over the past two years has highlighted the fragility of the workforce and issues with the workforce pipeline including ITE

providers, to meet supply and demand needs. One impact that has not been widely researched or documented nationally has been the significant rise in our casual and part-time workforce.

The findings of the ACPPE Research Project: *initial Teacher Education – Principals’ perspective on ITE and ways to collaborate and improve the process into the future*, identifies key areas of improvement. The teacher workforce initiative is a challenge; pre-service providers have difficulties in attracting suitable applicants and the practice-readiness of graduates is variable, especially in classroom and in terms of positive behavioural management practices. Literacy and numeracy standards remain an issue for many of our pre-service teachers. Competence in STEM also remains an issue, especially in the supply of teachers. There is an unmet demand across learning areas, in STEM, Languages, HPE and digital technologies. This unmet demand often results in teachers teaching out of their discipline. Additionally, the development of standards for middle leaders in supporting their career growth is an important issue that needs to be addressed.

In the current context, teachers require significantly more training in the area of effective online delivery and blended delivery. This model will be with schools for some time and properly implemented, can create efficiencies and flexibility for schools and students. Catholic Education Western Australia has approached this with a focus on digital pedagogy and support for early career teachers in their first two years of teaching. There is a benefit in forging partnerships between schools and tertiary providers to support classrooms contextually.

#### *B(ii) Strengthening the Initial Teacher Education accreditation system*

Initiatives to ensure high quality procedures and processes for ITE accreditation procedures and processes have been slow and tenuous. The varied registration standards and processes in state and territory authorities have been a confounding factor. Catholic Education supports implementation of consistent, high-quality standards in initial teacher education.

Catholic Education regards the *Next Steps: Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review* as an important step forward in attracting and retaining high quality teachers to the profession. The report builds on the strength of current programs and practices to support the delivery of quality teaching and to ensure Australian students receive a high-quality education. The report’s key recommendations are aimed at attracting high-quality, diverse candidates, ensuring evidence-based preparation, and inducting new teachers well. These recommendations provide a strong foundation for further collaboration, developments, and implementation to support both initial and ongoing teacher education in Australia.

Another important area for national leadership and intergovernmental collaboration is child protection and safety registration which is both a national and state issue. As recommended by the Royal Commission, national child safe standards and a national approach to working with children checks (WWCCs) would achieve better consistency. This has been a whole of government response. Currently, approaches to child safety in institutions at the state, territory, and sector levels vary in scope and content. Moreover, none of the eight state/territory WWCC schemes are identical.

### **C. Establishing National Evidence base and other information databases**

#### *C(i) Implement a national unique student identifier (USI) to better understand student progression and improve the national evidence base*

NCEC recognises that implementation of a USI is an important initiative with multiple benefits. There is concern, however, about the tight timelines for implementation which will also include a change to existing legislation. While the pilot has been successful the scope of the pilot was limited and many scenarios such as students with duplicate records have not been tested. More information is required

on how the student USI will interact with VET USI and legislative architecture. As with the OFAI the overlap of the policy and design between USI and the Student Data Transfer Protocol (SDTP) needs to be further explained as the USI and the SDTP project work are interrelated. The USI identifier should be able to engage with a range of data sets held in different places including the SDTP. While the Catholic sector supports the SDTP project, concerns regarding data, particularly from a privacy perspective, should be adequately addressed.

*C(ii) Establish an independent national evidence institute to inform teacher practice, system improvement and policy development*

Progress has been made in establishing an independent national evidence institute, AERO. This is an excellent initiative and independent research is vital to informing teacher practice, system improvement and policy development.

AERO has been very active in collaborating with Catholic Education through their Project Advisory Groups (PAGs) on policy areas of national interest. Consideration should be given as to how AERO can play its part in enhancing the national evidence base.

*C(iii) Improve national data quality, consistency, and collection to improve the national evidence base and inform policy development*

NCEC supports this initiative, however, the national evidence base needs to be broadened to include measures other than NAPLAN data to determine student achievement and growth. An evidence base should also include post-school destination data, student wellbeing data, learning progressions, early childhood data and EALD progression data.

### **Gaps in the National Schools Reform Agreement**

While the reform directions are still highly relevant to the work that needs to be done to improve student learning and wellbeing outcomes they can be further enhanced. There are some policy areas which could be included in a new agreement. They include:

#### *I. Student Wellbeing*

Student wellbeing and the needs of equity groups should be included in a revised NSRA as this is a growing area of need across all areas of education. While the issues of student wellbeing are implied in reform goal two, relating to student engagement, such is the complexity of the challenge that it should be included in the NPIS.

The impact of COVID-19 on student wellbeing is still being felt in many school communities, with some students facing the compounding effects of floods and similar traumatic events. This creates a challenge for schools, accepting that positive wellbeing is the precondition for health, thriving and learning.

The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework should form the basis of this initiative. Several Catholic Education Authorities have developed a comprehensive evidence-based student wellbeing framework that closely aligns with the national framework. Strategies to build and strengthen parent partnerships with schools are a vital foundation for the effective pursuit of student wellbeing. Likewise, student wellbeing initiatives with a strong focus on responding to the increasing challenges of student mental health need consideration beyond simple inclusion of content in the curriculum.

#### *II. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education*

Educational disadvantage is wide-ranging and diverse. Specific references and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are missing from the current reform agreement. This includes

support for culturally relevant and purposeful education in metropolitan, regional, rural, and remote areas of Australia. Initial teacher education programs need to be culturally responsive, to equip teachers to be effective in their teaching practice especially in remote areas in New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia. The development of a national regional, rural, and remote education strategy for school education (K-12) focused on contextually relevant and best evidence-based learning would lift student outcomes. Furthermore, funding to support closing the gap initiatives and teacher resources needs to be considered in any future agreement.

### *III. Early Childhood*

Early Childhood education should be considered in future agreements, especially programs that support the transition from home or prior to school services to the early years of schooling. Data is needed to inform the strong foundations required to support continuity of learning and future pathways. A single source or repository of high-quality data could be used to highlight insights and improve the quality of ECEC services by identifying key issues such as early childhood workforce, mental and physical health, equity of access and the progress of vulnerable cohorts over time. Data on workforce supply and demand is disparate (AEDC, MADIP) and held by many organisations making it difficult for policymakers and sector leaders to gain line-of-sight across the sector. It is important that both school data and ECEC data are accessible to inform policy and transition practices. NCEC strongly supports the implementation of the national ECEC workforce strategy over the next ten years in ensuring that we have a sustainable high quality children's education and care workforce.

### *Continuum of Learning*

It may be worth considering other transition points in the education journey such as primary into early secondary and early secondary into senior secondary transitions to promote a continuum of learning. These are all potential disengagement points that impact student outcomes. An initiative focusing on strengthening engagement and transitions would be welcome.

### **National Measurement Framework (NMF)**

The Measurement Framework currently measures student achievement, enrolment, and attendance. Recent work undertaken by ACARA to update the NMF revealed gaps in the capacity to assess and monitor progress in achieving the wide-ranging goals and commitments made by ministers and documented in the Mparntwe Declaration. ACARA's review highlighted a need for the framework to be strengthened through the development of additional collections, measures, and a rigorous review of the existing ones.

Of the eleven commitments in the Mparntwe Declaration, four have no items captured. These are:

- quality early childhood education
- teacher quality and support of principals and school leaders
- partnership with families and communities in supporting young people through education
- capturing student wellbeing, critical and creative thinking, and English language proficiency data.

The inclusion of quality early childhood data and student wellbeing data would strengthen overall performance indicators and enable a more complete view of student outcomes. The national agencies could work in partnership with sectors and jurisdictions to advance the development of new collections and measures, ensuring that any sensitive data is deidentified and not published in the public domain. NSRA needs to be agreed before the Measurement Framework is revised.

## Summary and recommendations

The agreement provides a good framework for student outcomes, however, it can be further enhanced by clarifying the existing NPIs and the inclusion of further initiatives in relevant key policy areas. It is important that the NPIs are more aligned to student outcomes and are based on a strong evidence base, better planned, and sequenced with clear costed outcomes. Flexibility needs to be built in to allow jurisdictions and sectors to pursue local reform initiatives in pursuit of the common agreed national goals. The NGRSF is critical in supporting the outcomes and intent of this work.

### Recommendations

1. Greater consultation in the development of the national and bilateral agreements with the non-government sector at the outset
2. Provide funding for teacher professional opportunities such as support for teacher curriculum implementation and applying learning progressions and developing rich formative assessment resources
3. Invest in the development of an appropriate alternative curriculum, especially for EAL/D (English as an additional language or dialect) learners
4. Support implementation of consistent, high-quality standards in initial teacher education and a national approach to child protection and safety registration
5. Develop the recommendations of the Next Steps: Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review
6. Broaden the national evidence base to include new data sets including post-school destination data, student wellbeing data, learning progressions, early childhood data
7. The inclusion of relevant education policy areas in the new agreement including Wellbeing, early childcare transition to early years schooling and other transitions to improve student engagement
8. Ensure the NMF aligns with the NSRA in measuring progress towards achieving the goals and commitments in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration

### Where to Next?

Catholic education supports the continuation of a small number of existing NPIs with consideration being given to one or two new NPIs. Overall, however, there should be a targeted number of NPIs in a new agreement which:

- Sit within a broader reform effort and context
- Have a clear evidence base and potential for high impact
- Are well planned with clear outcomes and costed
- Are integrated (coherent and aligned)
- Can be sequenced to avoid reform overload

## **Supplement**

The NCEC offers the following brief discussion of capital funding for Catholic schools as a policy initiative that falls outside of the NSRA framework but would produce a productivity dividend for the education sector and the Australian economy as a whole.

The Australian Government has committed to a policy agenda that supports early childhood education, helping school students bounce back after COVID, upgrading schools, and rebuilding skills and training. The government rightly recognises that investing in education and skills now will drive Australia's future economic growth.

Currently, the Australian Government provides approximately \$100 million per annum to Catholic Education through the Non-government School Capital Grants Program. State and territory governments contribute a similar amount each year. There is significant variation in the level and nature of capital contributions from state and territory jurisdictions with some measures, such as low-interest loans, offering little or no benefit during recent times. Total government capital funding contributions to Catholic schools equate to less than ten per cent of the annual Catholic school expenditure on capital works, the other 90 per cent is funded by loans and private income. For each dollar Australian governments provide to Catholic schools for capital works attracts another nine dollars in Catholic Education contribution.

An increase in government capital funding, either by the Australian Government or by state and territory governments, but preferably both, working together with Catholic Education, will produce a significant productivity and financial dividend for the Australian economy immediately and into the future.

### **Government Supported Capital Funding for Catholic Schools**

Aging facilities in many Australian schools are an issue across education sectors and jurisdictions. It is exacerbated by the recent high inflation and increased cost pressure to upgrade existing facilities and build new schools.

While government schools have access to capital funding provided by state and territory governments, Catholic schools rely significantly on loans and other private sources to pay for capital expenditure.

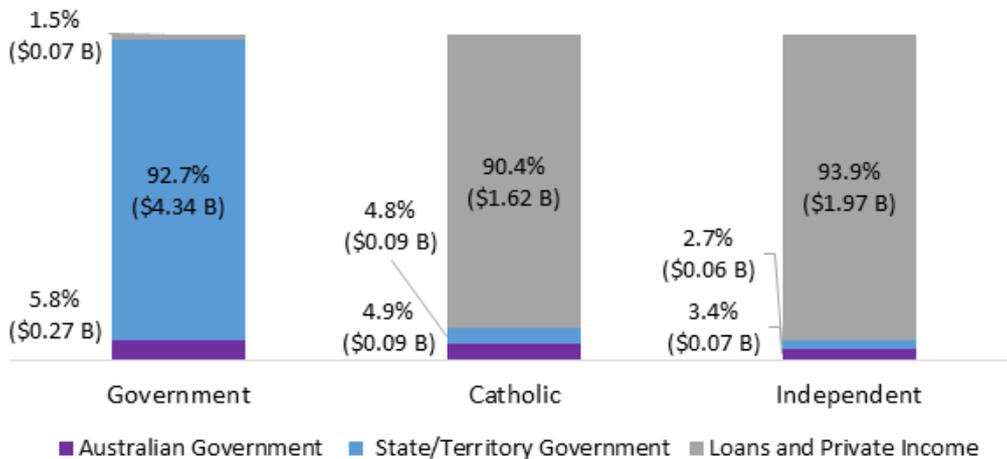
The NCEC promotes the continuation and expansion of capital funding to Catholic schools which will help increase enrolments in Catholic schools and achieve savings for the public purse.

### **The current status**

The current economic climate has created an environment of rising cost pressure to upgrade existing school facilities and build new schools, which is a common issue in both government and non-government sectors as they attempt to cope with aging facilities and growing enrolment demands.

Currently, state and territory governments are the main contributors to capital expenditure in government schools. For example, as the chart below shows, state and territory governments contributed to more than 98% of capital expenditure in government schools in 2020.

**Capital Expenditure Funding Source, 2020**  
(ACARA MySchool data)



For Catholic schools, capital funding from the Commonwealth government and state and territory governments only accounts for a small portion of total capital expenditure. Capital expenditure in Catholic schools is mainly funded by loans and other private sources (i.e., school communities and private income). As can be seen in the chart above, in 2020, more than 90% of capital expenditure incurred in Catholic schools was funded by loans and private income.

Similar to Catholic schools, loans and private income contributed to nearly 94% of capital expenditure in independent schools.

### **Why capital funding to Catholic schools is important?**

While currently the Commonwealth government only provides capital funding to non-government schools (including Catholic schools), for every dollar provided by governments, Catholic schools and their parents provide nine dollars of privately sourced income to cover capital expenditure.

Catholic schools and their parents have in the past and are currently still making a significant financial contribution to educating Australian children through paying for the day-to-day operation of schools as well as facility maintenance, upgrades and even building new schools.

Without Catholic schools, most of the financial burden will be transferred to government schools, putting a financial strain on state and territory annual budgets which were already facing increased pressures due to the recent Covid-19 pandemic.

In the past ten years or so, demand for Catholic education remained high. New Catholic schools opened in a few states in recent years attracted increasing enrolments. Were ACARA to collect and report the data on capital expenditure of building new schools (prior to schools' registration) the actual capital expenditure contributed by loans and private sources in Catholic schools would only be higher.

With increased enrolments and anticipated growth of Catholic schools and the continuing financial contribution by Catholic schools and their parents, more public money is expected to be saved in the future. In order to achieve this, the continuation and expansion of government provided capital funding to support Catholic school infrastructure will be important.

## Further References

Catholic Education Western Australia 'Economic Contribution & Funding Investigation' (Ernst & Young, 2020)

Catholic Education, New South Wales, The Case for Catholic Schools

<https://www.csnsw.catholic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The-Case-for-Catholic-Schools-Volume-1.pdf>

Catholic Education New South Wales 'Analysis of Financial and Economic Impacts – Factual Findings Report' (Ernst & Young, 2019)