Funding cuts undermines Catholic schooling

The NSW government will announce next week an unprecedented cut to funding for Catholic schools in NSW of $24.5 million annually.

‘The decision by the O’Farrell government to take this unilateral action places the provision of quality Catholic schooling for 26 percent of children in western Sydney in peril,’ said Greg Whitby, executive director of schools in the Diocese of Parramatta.

‘We have a proud record of nearly 190 years of providing Catholic schooling in western Sydney that delivers recognised quality on a much smaller funding base than other sectors,’ he said. ‘This decision makes a mockery of the work that our Catholic school communities are doing.’

If the State Government proceeds with the intended cuts to funding for Catholic systemic schools, it will result in increased school fees beyond planned annual inflation and potential cuts in other areas.

‘It is shortsighted policy that will undermine community confidence in the State Government’s ability to deliver on their rhetoric of the critical importance of schooling,’ said Greg.

‘This decision comes at a time when we are facing unprecedented pressure to provide extra Catholic schools in the growing urban development in the north-west sector as well as provision for out-of-hours care and early childhood centres.

‘It is a nonsense to place this demand on the Catholic sector and at the same time cut levels of funding without any regard or consultation.

‘I remind the State Government that Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta provides education to 46,000 students delivered by approximately 5,000 staff in greater western Sydney. These communities deserve an education policy that builds on the work we do, not undermines it.

‘I urge all local State Members to take a stand on this critical issue and continue the investment that we need to ensure the young people in our schools get the best education possible,’ he said.