Shortsighted policy is no solution to NSW budget problems

Executive director of schools in the Diocese of Parramatta, Greg Whitby, today called on parents to complain in the strongest possible terms about the injustice of cutting funding to Catholic schools.

‘It is appalling to see the issue dismissed when there is universal agreement that we need to invest more heavily in educating young people,’ Greg Whitby said.

‘Catholic education has a proud history of providing quality education in western Sydney for 190 years,’ he pointed out. ‘We have only had government funding since the 1960s so for the majority of that time the Catholic community has carried more than its fair share.’

While noting that Catholic schools will not be the only ones to lose funding, Greg said the reality is that the Catholic parent community would have to bear the extra cost burden if the government chose to implement these unprecedented cuts.

‘My office has been inundated with concerned and distraught parents seeking ways to have their voices heard to get this decision overturned because they do not want to be forced to move their children out of Catholic schools,’ he said.

‘If Catholic schools were to close tomorrow the O’Farrell Government would face a massive funding blow out in terms of recurrent and capital costs. This is a shortsighted policy which won’t solve the budgetary problems of NSW.’

Greg said Catholic schools have, for decades, consistently worked with governments to ensure they play their part in delivering quality education.

‘To have the government take action without consultation flies in the face of the longstanding commitment, cooperation and trust needed to ensure the Catholic sector has the capacity to educate its share of young people.’

Greg said this issue would be a test of the Liberal Party’s integrity, who promised, while in opposition, there would be no state funding cuts to Catholic schools.

‘Less than halfway through their first term they see fit to break this bedrock promise and it has disappointed the people who put their faith in the O’Farrell Government.’

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