MEDIA RELEASE
Parents Challenge Garrett on School Funding Details

The Council of Catholic School Parents and the NSW Parents’ Council are calling on the Prime Minister and Minister Garrett to explain to the parents of approximately 420,000 students in Catholic and Independent Schools in NSW the new funding model so that parents know what their funding and school fees will be next year.

Australian parents have been promised a more transparent, more equitable and more sustainable funding model by the Federal Government. With the passing of the 71 page Australian Education Bill (2012) through the House of Representatives in the Federal Parliament yesterday, this promise appears to remain unfulfilled. It is an overly complex, convoluted model which lacks transparency in terms of detailing in any concrete way what a school’s actual funding will be.

‘If a doctor of mathematics cannot understand the model and what funding our children will get next year, how are parents meant to comprehend the bill?’ asked Stephen Grieve, President, NSW Parents’ Council today.

Both parent organisations have appealed to their education authorities for details, but due to the confidentiality agreements the authorities have been forced to sign by the Federal Government they are constrained in what they can share with parents. This also begs the question, if the model is transparent and equitable, why is so much secrecy needed and why have parents been excluded from the negotiations. In the end, it’s the parents who pay school fees (and vote).

Trevor Kellam, Chairperson of the Council of Catholic School Parents stated ‘Parents have waited long enough to know just what the funding reforms will mean for the school fees next year. Parents need certainty, as do our schools, to plan for what they will need to pay for their children’s education next year’.

The current funding agreement for non-government schools expires 31 December 2013 and with the government going into caretaker mode shortly time is running out for schools to plan ahead and for parents to know and understand their financial education commitments for next year.

The NSW Parents’ Council and the Council of Catholic School Parents are challenging Minister Garrett to explain to parents the funding model and what it means for them in 2014 and beyond and will be inviting the Minister to a local school to explain to parents, in person, just what their funding will be.

For further comment, please contact Danielle Cronin, Executive Director, CCSP on 0420 518 616 or Anne Crabb, Executive Officer, NSW Parents’ Council on 0438 558 276.

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