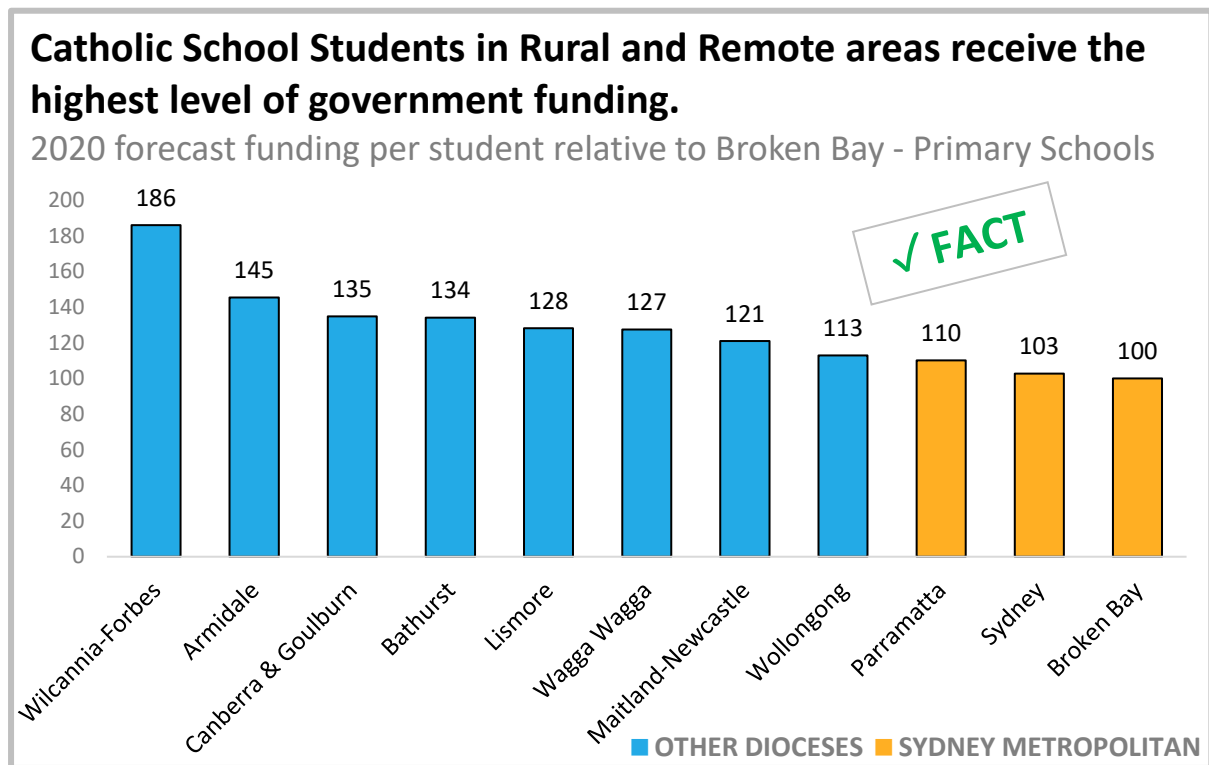


# 'ABC vs The Facts' on School Funding

1. Catholic Schools in New South Wales are supported by the contributions of families and parents as well as government funding.
2. Government funding is distributed in accordance with government legislation and requirements.
3. The CSNSW funding model complies with the law, is publicly available and also works to support government policy of school choice for Australian families.
4. Catholic School students in Rural and regional dioceses are the highest funded students in NSW Catholic Schools, reflecting the needs-based intent of government policy.



Catholic School students in the diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes are forecast to receive approximately 86% more per student than those in the diocese of Broken Bay, or for every \$1 in funding received by students in Broken Bay, \$1.86 is received by students in Wilcannia-Forbes.

**#1 ABC CLAIM:**

“Leaked documents seen exclusively by the ABC suggest hundreds of NSW Catholic schools are missing out under a scheme that will have diverted more than \$300 million in public funding from the system’s poorer to richer primary schools by 2023.” ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

The magnitude of this error is approximately \$100,000,000. The amounts re-distributed are less than 1% of total government funding, and only 30% of that redistribution comes from rural dioceses.

In fact, the effect of the CEC model in 2016 for example was a net transfer of funds in favour of rural and regional dioceses.

**#2 ABC CLAIM:**

“The details of these distributions have long been kept secret...” ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

The Catholic Schools NSW Funding Model is publicly available on our website, and complies with the Australian Education Act.

**#3 ABC CLAIM:**

“According to a draft proposal, CSNSW’s 2020-23 distribution model gives three times more government funding to the system’s highest-SES primary schools than they are entitled to under the Australian Education Act (AEA).” ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

This is incorrect, because the ABC analysis ignores the significant impact of loadings, the other component of recurrent funding.

**#4 ABC CLAIM:**

“Mr McInerney confirmed that this accurately describes the current model.” ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

Mr McInerney said no such thing, which is why they could supply no such direct quote despite ABC News interviewing Mr McInerney for over an hour.

**#5 ABC CLAIM:**

The centre piece of the story, an interactive dashboard that allows readers to select a primary school has used the 2018 fees per MySchool and then inflated them by 7.92% per annum over the next two years. ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

The average fee increase for primary schools across all dioceses, excluding Broken Bay and Sydney, has been 4.6% per annum for the last four years in the analysis.

For more recent years in particular, the ABC has drastically overestimated the level of fee increases. For some dioceses, the ABC estimate is almost quadruple the actual average increase.

**#6 ABC CLAIM:**

“Piecing together data from the documents, the ABC estimates that between 2015 and 2023, Catholic school authorities will have diverted some \$309 million in government funding from poor and middle-income dioceses to the state’s wealthiest dioceses.” ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

Piecing together bits of information from six years of leaked documents, some in draft form, is not analysis and accounts for the multitude of errors made by the ABC.

**#7 ABC CLAIM:**

“Mr McInerney initially told the ABC the redistribution was “inside Sydney metropolitan schools, so it’s not ... a rural to metro redistribution at all.” ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

Not so, Mr McInerney said the small redistribution is largely inside the Sydney Basin and this claim holds true with 70% of funds coming from metropolitan dioceses.

**#8 ABC CLAIM:**

“Broken Bay will have been given 10 per cent more than its intended government funding.”

❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

In 2020, the amount is 5%.

**#9 ABC CLAIM:**

“However, experts say the documents reveal CSNSW’s intention to subvert the aim of public policy.” ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

The CSNSW funding model aligns with the policy and complies with legislation. CSNSW does not believe complying with the law is ‘subversion’.

**#10 ABC CLAIM:**

“Dr Goss said “Cross-subsidies ... are now effectively frozen in time, with the scales tilted permanently towards the more advantaged schools.”” ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

This is not a permanent arrangement. The methodology has been agreed to 2023, at which time it is subject to review.

**#11 ABC CLAIM:**

“Compared to the other dioceses, Wilcannia Forbes has the highest share of students who are Indigenous, low-SES or have a disability.” ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

Other dioceses have higher shares of students with disability (Wilcannia-Forbes ranks 6<sup>th</sup> out of 11 dioceses in this category)

Again, Wilcannia-Forbes students receive the most funding per student, forecast at \$20k per student in 2020.

**#12 ABC CLAIM:**

“After initially saying that loadings for disadvantage — such as disability, Indigenous background and low proficiency in English — were “passed on in full” to the dioceses, Mr McInerney clarified the 2020-23 redistribution affected both base funding and loadings, as outlined in the draft proposal.” ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

The Catholic Schools NSW policy is to affect a full pass-through of loadings as attracted.

**#13 ABC CLAIM:**

“It comes at a hefty cost for low- and middle-income families in the system, who are asked to pay much higher fees to make up the shortfall.” ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

The model seeks to support low- and middle-income families. Less than 1% (0.7%) of the total funding pool is subject to redistribution in 2020. Additionally, the most funding that any one diocese will redistribute is 1.2%

The ABC is only looking at average fees, and is ignoring the range of fees charged within schools. For low-income families, Catholic schools typically offer a multitude of bursaries, fee relief programs, and sibling discounts.

**#14 ABC CLAIM:**

“This allows schools in some of the state’s wealthiest areas to collect roughly one-third to half of the fees parents at those schools are estimated to be able to afford, the documents suggest.”

❌ **MISLEADING**

**FACTS:**

Catholic schools are better situated to estimate how much parents can afford, through knowledge of their local community, and setting policies on fee relief and sibling discounts.

This superiority of local knowledge to a one-size-fits-all national curve is recognised by all government entities, including the Gonski Review.

The National School Resourcing Board had stated: “The Australian Government recognises that Systems have more detailed knowledge of their students and schools and provides flexibility to allow Systems to apply that knowledge to address needs as they see them, according to the principle of subsidiarity.”

**#15 ABC CLAIM:**

“The Catholic sector’s share of full-time equivalent primary school enrolments fell to 17.9 per cent in 2019, from a peak of 19.4 per cent in 2012.” ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

In 2019, the Catholic sector’s share of full-time equivalent primary school enrolments in NSW was 18.4 per cent, not 17.9 per cent. The ABC has left out over 3,500 students.

**#16 ABC CLAIM:**

“Since 2020, the socio-economic status (SES) of a school has been based on the median income of parents and determines their capacity to contribute.” ❌ **INCORRECT**

**FACTS:**

In 2020 and 2021, the median income of parents will only determine the capacity to contribute in the event that it is beneficial to a school. It will only be fully implemented from 2022.