Background
This summary has been prepared to inform parents and families about the funding of Catholic schools in South Australia.

In Australia, there are three education sectors – Government schools, Catholic schools and Independent schools. Catholic and Independent schools make up the Non–Government school sector.

The Australian and State/Territory Governments share responsibility for the public funding of schooling in Australia as per the Better Schools Funding model legislated in the Australian Education Act 2013 and agreed to in federal/state government bi-lateral agreements.

The Better Schools Funding model applies from 2014. The additional state and federal government dollars required to fund the new model in South Australia will be rolled out over six years, although only the first four years have been committed in budget forward estimates.

Funding for students in the Catholic sector comes from three different sources:

1. The Australian (Federal) Government
2. The South Australian Government
3. Parents, parishes and school communities.

Government funding is provided in two forms: recurrent and capital funding.
**Recurrent Funding**

Recurrent funding is agreed funding received annually for the term of the relevant federal/state funding agreement to fund the everyday expenses of schooling such as staffing, teaching resources, maintenance etc.

Recurrent funding is made up of two elements:

*The School Resource Standard (SRS)*

The SRS is the per-capita amount determined to meet the basic educational needs of children in school. There is a primary SRS and a secondary SRS reflecting the different educational costs of these levels of schooling.

In 2014, the primary SRS is set at $9,271 and the secondary SRS is set at $12,193 per student.

The SRS will be indexed at 3.6% per year. However, to provide some additional funds to better meet the ‘ideal’ SRS of the model, transitional arrangements in the Act see the Commonwealth proportion of funds having a 4.7% indexation applied and the State proportion indexed at 3%.

Students in government schools, special schools, special assistant schools and school servicing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities attract 100% of the SRS (i.e. fully supported by government funding).

For students in non-governments schools, the SRS is adjusted according to the school community’s capacity to raise funds through school fees and levies. The Capacity to Contribute (CTC) percentage is determined using the school community’s determined Socio Economic Status as reflected in its SES score. The SES score is calculated on measures such as family income, educational attainment and parent occupation of the families within the school community based on Australian Bureau of Statistics census data.

Most Catholic schools in South Australia belong to the Catholic Education System - ‘systemic schools’ - and for these schools a weighted average SES score of 98 applies and the CTC percentage is calculated accordingly.

For ‘non-systemic’ SA Catholic schools, their SES is calculated individually according to the characteristics of its community as described above and its CTC percentage is calculated accordingly.

The higher a school’s SES score, the lower the proportion of the SRS is allocated per student and vice versa.

In 2014, students in systemic and non-systemic Catholic schools will attract an adjusted percentage of the School Resource Standard based on whatever SES and subsequent CTC percentage applies to their school.
For example a school with an SES of 98 has a CTC percentage of 11.43% for primary and 20.94% for secondary. Primary students will, therefore, attract 88.57% of the primary SRS ($8,211.32) and secondary students will attract 79.06% of the secondary SRS ($9,639).


Loadings

There will also be loadings, on top of the SRS, to assist in meeting the additional educational needs of students and/or the school community irrespective of schooling sector including loadings for:

a) Students with a disability (SWD)
b) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (ATSI)
c) Students from low SES backgrounds (Low SES)
d) Students with Low English Proficiency (LEP)
e) The location of the school (Location)
f) The size of the school (Size)

a) Students with a disability - SWD (Note: for 2014 only as is still being refined)

Each SWD in a special school will attract a loading of 223% of the SRS
Each SWD in mainstream schools will attract 186% of the SRS.

b) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI)

The ATSI loading is on a sliding scale between 20% and 120% of the SRS depending on the number of ATSI students in the school. For example one ATSI student will attract a loading of 20% of the SRS whereas if there was a 100% enrolment of ATSI students each would attract an additional loading of 120% of the SRS.

c) Students from low SES backgrounds

The Low SES loading is paid for students whose socio-economic background places them in the lowest two quartiles of socio-economic advantage based on data collected by schools through the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on variables including parental education and occupation and/or socioeconomic characteristics of the areas where students live.

This loading is on a sliding scale from 7.5% to 50% of the SRS depending on the number of students in each of the lowest two quartiles enrolled at the school.
d) Low English Proficiency

Each student with either a language background other than English and/or who has at least one parent who left school at the end of Year 9 or below, will attract a loading of 10% of the SRS.


e) Location

A per school loading is assigned on a sliding scale based on the school’s Accessibility and Remoteness Index (ARIA) rating and applied as a percentage to both the SRS and the school’s size loading. The further a school is from a service centre and the smaller the school, the higher the loading.

http://aeaguide.education.gov.au/content/b2125-location-loading

f) Size

A per school loading is assigned to schools on a sliding scale based on their enrolment size.

http://aeaguide.education.gov.au/content/f561-classifying-school-size

**Distribution of Recurrent Funding**

For schools in the SA Catholic Education System (‘systemic schools’), the total recurrent per student funding calculated as per the model outlined above is paid to the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) and is then redistributed to each school based on a pre-determined SACCS re-distribution model. This model is based on ‘common good’ principles taking into account the individual and the collective needs of schools in the ‘System’.

*Note:* This model for system re-distribution of recurrent funding for SA Catholic schools is being reviewed in 2014 in light of the new Better Schools funding model.

For non-systemic Catholic schools in SA, the school’s recurrent funding as determined by their student numbers (SRS adjusted depending on CTC) and student needs (loadings) comes directly to the school.

**Capital funding**

Catholic schools in SA receive no targeted capital funding from the SA state Government to support new development in growth areas or to distribute to existing SA Catholic schools requiring expansion/capital improvement.

The Federal Government provides annual block grant funding to South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) for capital development in the SA Catholic Education sector.

This amount ranges from $5 - $6 million dollars per year.
SACCS oversees an annual capital grants application process for schools to apply for access to some of this block grant funding.

Applications are prioritised annually taking school and sector needs into account.

Parents provide the majority of funding for capital development projects in SA Catholic Schools via building funds/levies, school fees and donations and an annual per family levy to Diocesan Capital Funds.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- The 2013 agreement between the SA State Government and the Australian Government for the funding of schooling in SA sees an additional $197 million to be rolled out to SA Catholic schools over 6 years. The majority of this additional funding was negotiated to be delivered in years 5 and 6 of the agreement. Only years 1-4 of the agreement have been guaranteed by the Federal Government.

  The additional funding in the first four years, whilst welcomed, will have minimal impact on our schools already straining to meet salary agreements, contemporary educational resourcing and loan repayments. This results in pressure on schools to raise fees impacting on families.

  The indexation rate built into the model is lower than what the rate has been historically and may not reflect salary increases and other education cost increases over the next four years.

- Year 7 in SA is classified as primary, therefore, unlike Year 7 students in most other states/territories, SA Year 7 students attract the lower primary schooling resource standard with associated loadings being calculated at this lower amount. This creates an inequity in funding of Year 7’s across the nation. This is despite requirements to teach the same curriculum and participate in the same national testing regime.

- Limited public funding for capital development in the SA Catholic sector, impacts on the sector’s ability to build new schools to meet the right of families in new areas to access a Catholic education if they wish.

  Loans taken by schools to meet capital need impacts on fees.
The Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities (SA) is your VOICE in advocating for funding fairness and funding certainty for our children’s education so that a Catholic education remains affordable and accessible to all families.

On a national level, this is achieved through our affiliation with the Australian Parents Council (APC) and Catholic School Parents Australia (CSPA). Both APC and CSPA are committed to seek an equitable allocation and distribution of government funds for schooling.

‘All students have the right to an equitable share of government funding for their schooling’
(Key Principle 5 on the APC Principles and Objectives)