



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

26 February 2025

Dear Parents/Caregivers and Colleagues

On Saturday, 8 March, Western Australians will vote in the State Government election. This communication aims to inform you of the requests that Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) has made to the next State Government concerning support for capital development in Catholic schools.

At present, Western Australia is the only state in Australia that does not provide capital grants to Catholic schools. For example, in 2023, the State Governments in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland allocated capital grants of \$117 million, \$75 million, and \$93 million, respectively, to Catholic schools. In contrast, CEWA is granted access to an annual low-interest loan of approximately \$30 million, which must be repaid.

In the absence of capital grants from the Western Australian State Government, the responsibility for constructing and developing Catholic schools is borne by parents through school fees and loans which are also financed through school fees and levies. In 2025, more than 1 in 3 school-aged children will attend non-government schools, and 1 in 5 will be enrolled in Catholic schools.

All children in Western Australia are entitled to an education provided by the State Government. The presence of 162 Catholic schools across the State offers parents the option of a faith-based education for their children, while also enabling the state to save approximately \$700 million each year by not having to provide education to 84,000 children.

CEWA is the sole education provider in seven Kimberley locations. Without Catholic schools, children in these areas would need alternative educational facilities, which would require the State Government to construct new schools.

In July 2024, CEWA asked the incoming WA State Government for:

- An annual \$25 million capital grant to ensure Catholic school students have parity with other students across Australia.
- A one-off \$100 million capital injection over 5 years to address underfunding in Catholic schools in the Kimberley.
- An annual \$2 million grant for insurance and risk management costs in the Kimberley.

CEWA has received the following responses from the three major parties regarding our capital grants requests:

- The Labor Party, if re-elected, will introduce an \$8 million infrastructure grants program for 14 sole-provider schools in Kimberley, including seven Catholic schools, and will continue the low-interest loans scheme.
- The National Party has not made specific commitments but acknowledged the role of Catholic education in WA, especially in remote areas.
- The Liberal Party has not responded to our capital grant requests.

State Government capital grants to Catholic schools will ease the financial burden on parents and will ensure that children attending our schools continue to have access to appropriate learning facilities.

We urge you to contact your local candidates to inquire about their party's stance on capital funding for Catholic schools. This information can help you decide whom to vote for in the 8 March election.



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Catholic Education Western Australia



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