Dear families,

As you know from July 2013, the NSW Premier Barry O’Farrell is planning to cut school education funding by $1.7 billion and cap the level of funding to non-government schools over the next four years.

Additionally, the current funding model - which links state education expenditure to federal government funding - means for every $1 of state funding lost we stand to lose $3 dollars in federal funding (public schools stand to lose 30c in federal funding).

While there is still some uncertainty about the actual amount of the loss, we know this will have a substantial impact on the amount of government funding Catholic schools receive in the Diocese of Parramatta.

To give parents greater certainty for the 2013 school year and bearing in mind the financial pressures many families are facing, the Parramatta Diocesan Catholic Schools Council has recommended an increase in tuition fees and the building levy. This increase will not make up the shortfall from the funding cuts but is necessary to help meet the rising educational costs for each child.

Diocesan tuition fees
In 2013, Kindergarten tuition fees will remain at $19 per week, which has not been increased for the past three years recognising the additional costs young families face with children commencing school. Tuition fees for Years 1 – 6 will increase by 3.9% to $24 per week. This increase is significantly less than the average educational CPI (inflation rate) of 6%. Sibling discounts, which benefit over 60% of families, will remain the same for 2013 (as per the table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TUITION FEES PAID IN TERMS 1, 2, &amp; 3</th>
<th>1st Child</th>
<th>2nd Child</th>
<th>3rd Child</th>
<th>4th Child or Subsequent Child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>No tuition fee payable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 1 – 6</td>
<td>$332</td>
<td>$249</td>
<td>$166</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$413</td>
<td>$309</td>
<td>$206</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diocesan Building Levy
The building levy supports the capital works of all Catholic schools in the diocese and is payable per family. In 2013, the building levy will be increased by $30 per annum to $645 per family.

Financial assistance
We can help assist families experiencing financial hardship through the Bishop Manning Scholarship Fund, the Byallawa Co-contribution scheme for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and fee concessions. Families can apply for a full or part scholarship at the time of enrolment in a primary or secondary school by speaking with the principal of their chosen school. For families with children already enrolled in Catholic schools, principals have the discretion to defer or reduce fees if a family is experiencing financial hardship. The process is confidential and will not disadvantage students.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding fee changes for next year, please contact your school office for further clarification. If, at any time, you experience financial difficulty please arrange to speak confidentially with your school principal.

We are still working to convince the State Government to overturn the decision to cut school funding. You can help by contacting your local state and Federal MPs - see www.parra.catholic.edu.au/schoolfunding for more details.

Yours sincerely,

Greg Whitby
Executive Director of Schools