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# Budget Submission

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## Non-Government School Sector Priorities for the 2026-27 Queensland Budget

Catholic Education Queensland Limited (CEQL) and Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) are pleased to present the non-government school sector's priorities to the Queensland Government for the 2026-27 Budget.

Queensland Catholic and Independent schools offer high-quality, affordable education for local families. In 2025, a total of 320,000 Queensland children attended 550 non-government schools, each with different religious or philosophical backgrounds.

CEQL and ISQ appreciate the Crisafulli Government's ongoing support, which has had a positive impact on school communities throughout the state. Continued government funding is vital to maintain these educational choices and ease pressure on state schools and kindergartens.

The development and maintenance of school infrastructure is crucial for fostering the growth of Queensland communities, boosting the state's economy, and giving families more educational options.

While most capital investment in the non-government sector comes from contributions by school communities, financial support from the Australian and State governments is critical for schools with the greatest need.

Non-government schools can currently apply for funding through the Queensland Government Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS), the Capital Assistance Supplementary Scheme (CASS), and the Government's External Infrastructure Subsidy (EIS) scheme. These schemes, provided under the *Education (Capital Assistance) Act 1993* and the *Education (Capital Assistance) Regulation 2015*, help non-state schools to build, convert, refurbish, and upgrade educational facilities or boarding accommodation.

Government support has assisted with many school infrastructure projects, but ongoing assistance, including additional funding, is needed to keep up with demand. Shortages in workers and building materials are increasing prices and construction costs, and these challenges are expected to grow as preparations for the 2032 Brisbane Olympics continue.

Capital assistance from the Queensland Government is intended to supplement, not fully replace, financial contributions from schools and communities, especially for those schools with the highest needs. However, the rising demand for new schools and escalating building costs mean non-government schools are bearing most of the capital project costs themselves, including initiatives for disability access and student safety, resulting in increased debt for many schools.

Establishing new schools in high-growth areas, particularly in South East Queensland, is a major priority to accommodate increasing student numbers. At the same time, it is important to preserve and enhance existing educational infrastructure to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality learning experiences. A balanced approach of strategic expansion and maintenance will secure the long-term resilience of the education system and uphold standards for current and future students.

Construction costs in regional and remote areas are significantly higher due to the expense of sourcing materials and labour. Although a locality index is used to allocate capital funding fairly for these projects, some school authorities must self-fund large portions due to cost overruns, making some projects unfeasible including one on Thursday Island.

CEQL and ISQ recommend that the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) and Capital Assistance Supplementary Scheme (CASS) be consolidated, adjusted annually according to the Building Price Index (BPI), and increased to an annual allocation of \$200 million for the non-government sector. This funding, combining CAS and CASS, will be proportionally allocated to CEQL and ISQ and supplemented by EIS funding. Such an investment will support the timely construction of new schools and the expansion of existing facilities in rapidly growing areas, while also addressing the refurbishment needs of ageing infrastructure to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality education.

Without increased capital assistance, the non-government sector will not be able to build new schools in high-growth areas. This will reduce parental choice and shift the cost burden to the state, including operational expenses that are mainly funded by the Australian Government for non-government schools.

CEQL and ISQ look forward to working with the Crisafulli Government to ensure that every child in Queensland has access to their preferred schooling option.

For further discussion regarding this budget submission, please contact us at [ceo@ceql.catholic.edu.au](mailto:ceo@ceql.catholic.edu.au) / (07) 3316 5800 or [office@isq.qld.edu.au](mailto:office@isq.qld.edu.au) / (07) 3228 1515.



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