In reply please quote: GE10/0176

21 December 2011

Mr Nathan Bunt, Executive Officer
Outer Suburban / Interface Services and Development Committee
Parliament of Victoria
Parliament House, Spring Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Dear Mr Bunt

RE: Outer Suburban / Interface Services and Development Committee –
Developer Contributions and non-government schools

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee.

In relation to the Terms of Reference we are submitting that non-government schools ought to be exempted from payment of Development contributions in respect of community, road, drainage and recreation levies.

It has been a constant argument that we have made with all levels of government that Catholic schools should be afforded the same privileges as government schools. The following information denotes some of the reasons we feel are validation for Catholic schools being exempt from developer contributions.

Government school planning is based on the assumption that 30% of educational services provision will be delivered by non-government agencies. 23% of that provision is delivered by Catholic Education. The State government has a clear expectation that the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) and other dioceses meet the need of the Catholic population and provide schools accordingly.

Catholic schools cater to a demonstrated community need and, as such, the same advantages afforded government schools should be afforded to Catholic schools. Catholic schools also provide much needed social infrastructure in both established and establishing areas within Metropolitan Melbourne and throughout the State of Victoria.

The CEOM has systemically provided strategic reports on future Catholic school needs based on the Catholic participation rate as identified by the latest available census data, and on reliable forecasts of school age population across the State. The participation rate is the percentage of the Catholic population of school age that attend Catholic schools.

The CEOM and other diocesan offices are not for profit organisations.

Catholic schools, like government schools, fulfill the role of education providers and education is a fundamental right of individuals under the Australian Constitution.
There is adequate justification why schools, both government and non-government warrant exemption from developer contributions. Central to this is the issue of equity when it comes to community, road, drainage and recreation levies.

We seek a level playing field with government schools and submit that Catholic schools should be exempt from the land budget and developer contribution fees.

Should you have any query in relation to the above do not hesitate to contact Ms Carol Pilatti, Senior Planner on 9267 0228 or via email <cpilatti@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Stephen Elder
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION