



CATHOLIC EDUCATION  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## **Media Statement 30 April 2019**

### **Renewable energy important to Catholic Education Western Australia**

Catholic Education Western Australia has welcomed Federal Opposition Leader Bill Shorten's announcement at St Maria Goretti's Catholic School in Redcliffe this morning that a Labor government would establish a \$1 billion Solar School's program.

With Deputy Opposition Leader Tanya Plibersek, Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy Mark Butler, and Labor candidate for Swan Hannah Beazley by his side, Mr Shorten said the initiative would help schools access solar panels and battery storage, providing yearly savings of an estimated \$89,000 for large schools, and \$15,000 for small schools.

CEWA Executive Director Dr Debra Sayce said one in three Catholic schools in WA had solar panels, saving primary schools between \$10,000 and \$13,000 and secondary schools up to \$30,000 a year.

"Our schools make significant cost savings when they have solar panels, but we are also saving the environment and educating our children about the importance of environmental sustainability."

St Maria Goretti's Acting Principal Andrew Gaudoin said the school had also installed sensor lights which switch off automatically when classrooms are not in use.

"These measures are important because they not only support our focus on sustainability but also allow savings to be invested in other areas of need," he said.

Although the focus today was on energy and climate, Shadow Education Minister Ms Plibersek's attendance drew focus to education policy.

Dr Sayce spoke with Ms Plibersek and said her discussion centred around the sustainable future of Catholic schools in WA.

"We talked about CEWA's priorities which include early years education, capital expenditure and engagement with Aboriginal families," Dr Sayce said.

"We want to ensure the interests of our families and our students are kept at the heart of government decision making.

"We are always very grateful for government support and it was wonderful to showcase St Maria Goretti's which reflects so much of what we have in our schools - warm, engaging environments where children are given opportunities to learn and develop, as well as being formed in their faith," she said.



During this morning's media conference, Mr Shorten said he respected the right of parents to send their children to a school based upon their faith, adding he did not want to see "religion becoming a political football".

Dr Sayce supported Mr Shorten's statement.

"Parents should be free to choose a faith-based education," she said.

**ENDS**

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