



31 May 2017

Dear Parents,

We are writing to families with children on our enrolment lists for 2018, 2019 and 2020 as you may have heard about the proposed changes to Federal Government school funding that are to take effect from 2018. We would like to provide you with information about the effect of these changes on future fee increases. It is important to recognise that we are still working through information around these changes with the Government, and at the same time working on plans that will minimise the impact on our school fees.

If we go back to 1987 when the school was founded, schools were funded by a model that looked at the resources of each school. As you can imagine, Hillbrook was very resource poor in the early days and as a result was given a high level of Federal Government funding. If we fast forward to 2001, the then Federal Government changed the funding model to one based on the Socio-Economic Status (SES) of the parent body, and guaranteed that any changes would not adversely affect school funding.

Hillbrook's funding was therefore maintained at the previous model funding level. This model lasted until 2013 when, due to political pressure and the Gonski report, schools such as Hillbrook that were "funding maintained" had their indexation lowered. This means that eventually they would return to the appropriate level of funding based on the SES of the school. However, it would have taken decades.

This brings us to the current reforms. The current Federal Government has decided to speed up the Gonski recommendations and transition schools (such as Hillbrook) back to the funding level based on the SES of the parent body. Unfortunately, this means a cut to the funding we receive from the Federal Government.

We are hopeful that we can negotiate a longer time frame for these cuts, or at best a freeze at current levels. We believe this is a reasonable position given our present level of funding is a result of the previous government's funding arrangements. Whatever the outcome of these negotiations, the Board and our representative bodies are working towards minimising fee increases as a result of these changes. In fact we had already factored in much of the proposed changes into our longer term projections.

We are working on a number of strategies so that Hillbrook remains a moderate fee school and will keep families informed as the story unfolds.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Newton', written over a white background.

Geoff Newton
PRINCIPAL