

MEDIA STATEMENT

26 August 2026



Camp fee increases reported at Victorian Catholic schools are a school budget issue, not a camp provider price rise.

The Australian Camps Association (ACA) is seeking to correct a potential misunderstanding that may arise from recent media coverage from the Herald Sun dated 25th August 2026, regarding rising camp fees for students at Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS).

The article suggested that next year, two-night camps could blow out to \$1,000 per child. In response to the article, ACA polled Victorian camps, and the feedback indicated a trend that \$1,000 for two-nights is not accurate. It's important for families to understand that the cost for a child to attend camp is not entirely camp operator costs, rather, a combination of costs including, school staffing, transport and other fees that a school may incur.

The ACA's concern is that The Herald Sun's article, may leave the impression that camp providers themselves are responsible for the fee increases that parents are being asked to pay. We'd like to gently clarify that this isn't the case. Camp operators across the sector work hard to keep camps affordable, all whilst meeting safety and compliance expectations.

Like many parts of the education sector, school systems such as MACS, are currently navigating a genuinely difficult and broader budget environment, and the additional costs passed on to families, reflect that wider context rather than any significant change in pricing from camp and outdoor education providers. The ACA would like to ensure families and media have an accurate picture of where these costs originate, so that confidence in the camps sector, which is already navigating cost-of-living pressure on participation, isn't affected unnecessarily.

School Camps contribute to building self-awareness, confidence, leadership, a sense of belonging, resilience, a sense of place, and inclusion are just some of what students take from a camp experience, alongside skills and memories that stay with them well beyond their school years – that's value.

The ACA urges Principals and decision makers to look at other areas in which savings can be made within their budgets keeping camps the honoured aspect of school life it has been for decades. Continue to talk to camp providers and transport companies before making the decision to change plans. There are almost always solutions - adjusted logistics, or revised program structures - which can keep camps accessible for all students. Our hope is that MACS and the Catholic governing body more broadly, can resolve any budgetary constraints they may be facing with little to no effect on their camps and outdoor education programs - an essential aspect of the Catholic educational experience and school life nationwide.

The ACA welcomes the opportunity to work with schools, school systems, and governments to find sustainable ways to keep camps affordable and accessible for all students.

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