

New school for Armidale

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ARMIDALE is soon to have a new school.

Work has started on the school, being built on a block in Maude St (off O'Dell St) that backs on to Donnelly St.

The new school comes under the umbrella of the Sydney-based Meadowbank Education Trust (MET) run by the Exclusive Brethren.

To be known as MET Armidale Campus, it will cost \$1.64 million but is eligible for funding from the Federal Government.

It replaces a school which the Brethren previously operated in Allingham St.

All access to the new school will be from the end of the Maude St cul de sac.

The Express sought comment from a representative of the Brethren in Armidale, but received no response.

Construction will be in three stages:

Stage 1 - main administration building and classrooms (two storeys);

Stage 2 - covered outdoor learning area; and

Stage 3 - auditorium and technics building (single storey).

The project includes roadworks in Maude St and on-site manoeuvring for small buses.

A derelict dwelling fronting Donnelly St will be demolished.

The Armidale school, designed for a maximum of 110 students for Years 7 to 12, is one of 16 which form a MET 'super campus' based at Meadowbank, Sydney.

Tamworth also has a MET campus, with students there moving into a newly-built school for the start of the 2008 school year.

Earlier this year, the Exclusive Brethren were under fire following a claim they had structured their educational arrangements in such a way as to maximise Federal Government funding.

A Sydney Morning Herald report claimed that, by registering schools that are in some cases hundreds of kilometres apart as campuses of the Meadowbank School, the organisation was able to access a much higher rate of funding.

Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard has promised a review of the SES (socioeconomic status) funding model over the next quadrennium 'to see what if any improvements can be made to the model for funding arrangements beyond the 2009-2012 quadrennium'.

The SES model transfers money to all non-government schools based on the relative wealth of the area where parents of students at each school live.

The scheme does not take into account what facilities a school has or what fees are charged.

Comments

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