

with vision and spirit



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Mike Byrne Executive Director
Queensland Catholic Education Commission

From the Executive Director...

Welcome to the second edition of *With Vision and Spirit* for 2011. As another busy school term draws to a close, QCEC has also been busy engaging with a range of issues on behalf of Catholic education at both State and Federal government levels.

Planning for the move of Year 7 to secondary school continues to be a focus as are preparations to raise various issues with government ahead of the upcoming State election.

The support of school community leaders will be vital in this regard and a package of materials will be made available in the coming weeks.

QCEC has also been closely involved with the development of the NCEC submission to the Gonski Review of school funding in March. I encourage all stakeholders to familiarise themselves with this submission and other materials associated with the Catholic sector engagement with the review process.

I trust you have plans in place to celebrate Catholic Education Week from 24-30 July with its theme *Excelling in Education – heart, mind and spirit*. The week provides a special opportunity to showcase to the wider community the great work that Catholic schools and other Catholic education agencies are doing.

With best wishes.

Mike Byrne
QCEC Executive Director

New Funding Model Should Deliver at least Current Levels in Real Terms

QCEC Executive Director Mike Byrne says the Catholic sector submission to the Federal government's Gonski review of school funding is seeking a new model that will deliver as a minimum, current levels of funding in real terms.

Mr Byrne was speaking to clarify the Catholic sector position after recent reports in the media that have included lists of schools and amounts of funding they could potentially lose if current funding arrangements are not maintained.

"The Catholic sector already operates as the lowest resourced schooling sector in Australia and any potential loss of funding is extremely concerning," Mr Byrne said.

"What is critical into the future is that the overall amount of funding delivered to the Catholic sector does not decrease in real terms, regardless of the model used to deliver those funds."

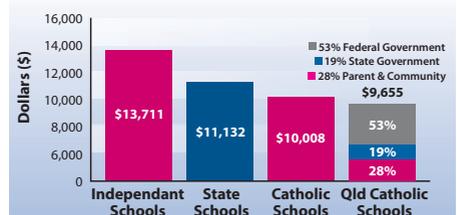
Mr Byrne said the financial information published on the My School website in March this year shows that average Catholic school net recurrent income per student is \$10,000, compared with average government school income per student of \$11,100.

"This is even taking into account average parent and community contributions to Catholic schools of \$3,200 per student," he said.

"In effect, Australia's 1,700 Catholic schools that educate 704,000 or 1 in 5 children, operate at an average resourcing level that is around 11% lower than State schools.

Mr Byrne said Catholic schools strive to cater for the needs of all students and families, and welcome students from diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds, including from some

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS - ALL SOURCES OF AVERAGE NET RECURRENT INCOME PER STUDENT



Source: ACARA My School Website (March 2011)

of the most disadvantaged communities in Australia.

"However, while they operate efficiently and effectively, this commitment has meant that Catholic schools are relatively under-resourced," he said.

"The Catholic sector is keen to see vibrant schools in all sectors working for better learning outcomes for all young people, and a better future for all families and for Australia.

"We believe the Gonski review provides an opportunity for governments and Catholic education to work together to improve equity in Australian schooling by building together on the strong performance of Catholic schools," Mike Byrne said.

The full Catholic sector submission to the Gonski Review can be found on the QCEC website at www.qcec.catholic.edu.au.

Commissioners Visit Schools

The strong spirit of community and warmth evident in the Catholic schools they visited was a talking point following the QCEC members' annual visit to regional schools on 23 and 24 May.



QCEC Chair, Professor Peter Sheehan speaks with students from Star of the Sea Catholic School, Torquay.



St Patrick's College Gympie Principal Tricia Kennedy and students with Executive Director Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane David Hutton.



Carmel Nash Executive Director of the Parents & Friends Federation and Dr Lee-Anne Perry Principal of All Hallows' School and Deputy Chair of the Commission with students from St Patrick's Primary School, Gympie.



Principal of Star of the Sea Catholic School, Torquay Patrick Colley and APA Stephanie Smith with Marie Radford QCEC Commission Representative of Diocesan Education Council Townsville, Leesa Jeffcoat Director of Catholic Education Office Diocese of Rockhampton and Director of Catholic Education Diocese of Townsville Dr Cathy Day.

The 16 Commissioners broke into small groups to visit 11 schools in the northern region of the Archdiocese of Brisbane at Nambour, Kingaroy, Nanango, Murgon, Hervey Bay, Gympie, Childers and Maryborough before meeting at Xavier College, Hervey Bay.

QCEC Executive Director Mike Byrne who visited St Joseph's, Childers, St Mary's Primary School, Maryborough and St Mary's College, Maryborough said the opportunity to meet with Principals, teachers, staff and students, and hear of both the joys and challenges of life in the regional Catholic schools was uplifting.

"Commission members were particularly impressed with the warmth of the welcome they received and the enthusiasm that staff and students showed for both their work and their school communities generally.

"The lasting impression was one of optimism and hope," he said.

The QCEC meets monthly in Brisbane however commits to meet and visit regional schools in one of the five Queensland dioceses annually.

Environmental Sustainability Statement Launched

The QCEC's position statement on environmental sustainability, *Education for Sustainable Futures in Catholic Schools in Queensland* was officially launched prior to the Commission meeting at Xavier College, Hervey Bay by Fraser Coast Mayor Mick Kruger.

The position statement advocates that Catholic schooling authorities should establish or enhance long-term goals of educating for a sustainable future and place stewardship of the environment at the forefront of their activities.

Professor Peter Sheehan Chair of QCEC, Mike Byrne Executive Director QCEC, Fraser Coast Mayor Mick Kruger, Marie Wilkinson Elder of the Butchulla People, and Principal Kerry Swann with students from Xavier Catholic College, Hervey Bay.



Catholic Sector Welcomes Decision on Year 7 Move

QCEC Executive Director Mike Byrne welcomed the recent announcement by the Premier that Year 7 will become part of secondary school in Queensland from 2015.

"This move will be educationally beneficial for our children and needs to be made if Queensland is to maintain a world class education system," he said.

"The move will more closely align Queensland school structures with the Australian curriculum and better enable teachers to deliver the specialist programs required by students of this age.

"Since the introduction of the Prep Year students moving into Year 7 will be a year older and ready to be challenged by the greater options and specialist teachers that the secondary school setting provides.

"I believe parents will also welcome the announcement as it now gives them a firm timeframe for clarifying secondary school options for their children."

Mr Byrne said the transition would be a major undertaking both educationally and in terms of staffing and facilities for Catholic schools.

"Projections indicate that more than 10,000 additional students will need to be accommodated at the State's 85 Catholic secondary colleges from 2015," he said.

He said the Catholic sector was in the final stages of discussions with the State government about the funding that would be available to assist the Catholic sector to make the transition.

Catholic sector on target to reach 'One to One' computer ratio

The Queensland Catholic education sector is on target to achieve a 1:1 computer to student ratio across Years 9-12 by the end of this year.

QCEC Executive Officer ICT Liam Garvey, says 22,000 computers have been rolled out in the State's 94 Catholic secondary schools under the Federal government's National Secondary School Computer Fund (NSSCF) meaning all Round 1 and 2 targets have been met within the required time frames.

"A further 12,000 computers will be purchased by the end of this year bringing the total deployed to 34,000 and effectively achieving the program aim of a 1:1 model for all Year 9-12 students in Queensland Catholic schools," he said.

Mr Garvey said that "a significant proportion of the \$28m available for on-costs associated with the effective deployment of the computers had also been used to support the rollout.

"By the end of this year, the Australian government will have provided in excess of \$65m for computers and on-costs with some additional money earmarked for contributing towards the maintenance of computers once the 1:1 target is achieved.

"Queensland Catholic school authorities recognise the benefits that teaching and learning through technology brings for students.

"The NSSCF program has allowed Catholic schools to move forward more quickly and effectively in this area than they otherwise would have been able to," Mr Garvey said.

Digital Education Revolution Forum

More than 50 representatives of Queensland Catholic school authorities took part in an annual *Digital Education Revolution Forum* organised by QCEC in late March. The forum focussed heavily on innovative uses of technology to support teachers and students as co-creators of educational experiences.



QCEC Executive Officer ICT and forum organiser Liam Garvey presents an overview of the program.



Geoff Thomas from Good Counsel College, Innisfail and Michael Norman Catholic Education Services Diocese of Cairns who is also a member of the QCEC ICT Subcommittee.



Janet Brennan and Sean Udal from Shalom College, Bundaberg.

Safer Schools 2011 - Student Protection Training

Over 75 staff representing Catholic schools and authorities across the state came together for a student protection in-service training day, *Safer Schools 2011* in May.

The day was highlighted by keynote addresses on 'The Interface between Catholic Schools and Department of Communities (Child Safety)' and 'Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence (QSAAV) and The Declaration Against Bullying and Violence'.

Executive Secretary to the Commission, Mike Wilkinson, said the day provided both valuable insights into child safety best practice as well as an opportunity to build on good relationships with Department officials and police.

"Having the opportunity to engage directly with these 'outside' agencies not only brings a broader perspective to the issues for our staff but also helps build relationships that will benefit both the agencies, the schools and ultimately the children in our care," he said.



Kevin Twomey Director Employee Services Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane and Chair of the QCEC Student Protection Subcommittee with Vicky Yarrow Acting Senior Practitioner Department of Communities Child Safety Services, Detective Senior Sergeant Brett Barlow Officer in Charge of the QPS Child Protection and Investigation Unit and Mike Byrne Executive Director QCEC.



Assistant to the Director Schools Craig Fairbairn from Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Rockhampton and Principals Mary Jones (St Peter's, Rockhampton) and Lorraine Specogna (St John's, Walkerston).



Neville Eckersley and Anita Smith from the Catholic Education Office Archdiocese of Brisbane.

'Kids Connect' With Catholic Education Week

'Kids Connect' is a technology-based learning conference run 'by kids for kids' and will, for the first time, be held during Catholic Education Week this year to help highlight the theme for celebrations *Excelling in Education – heart, mind and spirit*.

Catholic Education Week will be a sponsor of the event that will be attended by around 150 Year 5-7 students from Catholic schools at Brisbane's New Farm Powerhouse on 27 and 28 July.

The conference is an initiative of Information Communication Learning Technology Activator Paul Shaw who works across three Brisbane Catholic Education schools and was first run in 2004.

Kids Connect focuses on students working together to develop an event for other students at which they are challenged to explore the use of technology in a supportive and dynamic environment with a valid educational purpose.

"The core outcome of the conference is that students and teachers, in conjunction with expert facilitators, have the chance to use technology and software to create a presentation based around the theme of the conference," Mr Shaw said.

The conference will be organised for the second year in a row by Year 7 students at St Thomas's School, Camp Hill with their teacher Anna Wavell-Smith.

QCEC Executive Director Mike Byrne visited the organising class recently to present a sponsorship cheque for \$2000.

"I am pleased that the Catholic Education Week planning committee has forged this partnership with *Kids Connect* in a year where Catholic education celebrates and showcases *Excelling in education – heart, mind and spirit*.

"Events such as this highlight the commitment of the Catholic sector in Queensland to innovation and leadership in education.

Mr Byrne said the sponsorship of *Kids Connect* had helped break new ground with teachers and students from regional dioceses invited to participate for the first time.

"At this stage I understand that teachers from the Diocese of Rockhampton as well as teachers and students from the Toowoomba Diocese will participate."

The *Kids Connect* website www.kids-connect.net provides details of the conference and has information about the sessions that will be available.



QCEC Executive Director Mike Byrne signs off on a sponsorship arrangement with Kids Connect public relations team member Gabrielle Dallas representing the St Thomas's Camp Hill Yr 7 organising class. Also in the photo are St Thomas's Year 7 teacher Anna Wavell-Smith, Kids Connect initiator Paul Shaw and Catholic Education Week planning committee representative Jane Connolly.

From the Editor

Many thanks to all who contributed to this edition of "With Vision and Spirit".

Please forward any suggestions and/or feedback to:

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Assistant Director Finance and Resourcing Appointed

In May, QCEC welcomed Mr Steven Jeffery to the position of Assistant Director Finance and Resourcing following the retirement of Vic Lorenz after 24 years service.

Steven came from Edmund Rice Education Australia where he was the Regional Manager, Finance and Resourcing. Prior to this he held roles at Queensland Department of Education, Training and the Arts and Brisbane North Institute of TAFE.

Stephen holds an MBA and a Master of Professional Accounting, is a CPA and a member of the Australian Institute of Management. Stephen has two children at St Patrick's College Shorncliffe and is actively involved at the school.



Catholic Education Week 2011 will be celebrated across Queensland from 24-30 July. For all information and resources please visit www.catholiceducationweek.com.au



www.qcec.catholic.edu.au