



# **Queensland Catholic Education Commission**

## **Capital Assistance Reference Group**

### **Terms of Reference**

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

This document sets out the Terms of Reference for the Capital Assistance Reference Group, which is a committee of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (the Commission).

### 1. AUTHORITY

- 1.1 Under its constitution, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (the Commission) has delegated responsibility for the State-wide management and distribution of government funding for Catholic schools.
- 1.2 The Commission is the approved agent to administer capital grant on behalf of the Australia Government Block Grant Authority (BGA) and Queensland Government Capital Assistance Authorities (CAAs). The Commission's role is to receive and assess applications for capital assistance from affiliated schools and make recommendations to the Minister for Education (Australian and State Governments).
- 1.3 Capital grants are available for planning, construction, alteration, extension, renovation, relocation or upgrading of educational facilities for students; boarding facilities for students (and supervisors); and residential accommodation for teachers in remote areas (subject to Ministerial approval). Capital assistance is available for the following types of work:
  - conversion or refurbishment of existing facilities
  - preparation of sites for building
  - installation or upgrading of water, sewerage, electricity, and other services
  - charges imposed by the local authority that are not funded under the External Infrastructure Subsidy Scheme
  - the purchase of furniture and equipment
  - architectural, engineering, local authority and other professional fees
  - the provision of modular classrooms
- 1.4 The CAA and BGA for Queensland Catholic schools is the Corporation of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Queensland trading as Queensland Catholic Education Commission.

### 2. LEGISLATION

#### Queensland Government

- 2.1 The administration of Queensland Government capital funding is governed by the [\*Education \(Capital Assistance\) Act 1993\*](#) and the [\*Education \(Capital Assistance\) Regulation 2005\*](#). The [\*Capital Assistance Scheme Guidelines\*](#), and [\*External Infrastructure Subsidy Scheme Guidelines\*](#), published by the Queensland Department of Education, summarise and provide more explanation of the provisions set out in the Act and Regulation.

#### Australian Government

- 2.3 The [\*Australian Education Act 2013\*](#), authorises the Federal Minister of Education to determine an amount of capital funding that is payable to a BGA. The details of the operation and management of Australian Government capital funding are set out in the [\*Capital Grants Program Guidelines 2022\*](#).

### **3. ROLE**

- 3.1. The role of the Committee is to assist the Commission fulfil its legislated responsibilities as a CAA and BGA for the purpose of Queensland and Australian Government capital funding for schools.
- 3.2. Specifically, the Committee is to provide advice to the Commission on the aspects of the Queensland and Australian Government capital funding programs for schools listed in section 4 below.

### **4. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 4.1 The Committee will undertake the following areas of responsibility:
  - a) The development (for Commission endorsement) of the *QCEC Capital Assistance Guidelines* and other relevant guidelines to apply for each annual capital assistance funding round, including overall program requirements and criteria for capital expenditure, application eligibility requirements, setting functional area costs and area allocations.
  - b) Provision of advice to schools and Catholic School Authorities, at their request, on planning and building projects through the capital application review visit arrangements.
  - c) Assistance to QCEC Secretariat staff during the capital application review visit to:
    - provide clarification, if required, about the *Capital Assistance Round* to the applicant
    - undertake a walk-through of the site to confirm all facilities have been fully and accurately included within the capital application and meet eligibility requirements with respect to area and rate allowances
    - review for completeness all information included in any conversion or refurbishment project within the *QCEC's Capital Projects Online Application Form*
    - review for completeness all information included in any *Capital Projects Online External Infrastructure Subsidy Application Form and associated Capital Projects Online Civil Works Form*
    - seek clarification, if required, of any aspect of the project application
    - provide advice to the Capital Assistance Assessment Committee (CAAC) through the reporting process
  - d) At the direction of the Commission, undertaking a cost review of External Infrastructure Subsidy Applications and associated civil works documentation.
  - e) Act as a network for the sharing of information on school planning and infrastructure issues.

## 5. MEMBERSHIP, MEETINGS AND CAPITAL APPLICATION REVIEW VISITS

### Membership

5.1. Membership of the Committee is as below:

<b>Membership</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Voting Rights</b>
Chairperson - Catholic School Parents Queensland Nominee	1	1
Chief Financial Officer QCEC (as the Executive Director's ex officio delegate under section 7.1 of the QCEC Constitution)	1	
Manager - QCEC Capital Programs	1	
Nominee of Catholic Education Service – Diocese of Cairns	1	1
Nominee of Catholic Education Office – Diocese of Townsville	1	1
Nominee of Catholic Education Office – Diocese of Rockhampton	1	1
Nominee of Catholic Schools Office – Diocese of Toowoomba	1	1
Nominees of Brisbane Catholic Education – Archdiocese of Brisbane	2	2
RI/PJP CSAs Nominee	2	2
Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) Nominee	1	1

5.2. Members are appointed by the Commission, based on advice from nominating bodies.

5.3. The QCEC Secretariat will invite relevant nominating Catholic School Authorities to review the members appointed to this Reference Group on an annual basis at the end of each calendar year.

### Meetings

5.4. Generally, up to five meetings per year, meeting dates will be notified in advance, with an out-of-session meeting able to be called by the Chairperson, if required. Meetings may be face-to-face or by videoconference as determined by the Chairperson based on the meeting agenda. Each Catholic School Authority will bear all costs associated with travelling to and from the Secretariat.

5.5. A quorum consists of a majority of the members of the Committee.

5.6. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, a proxy (i.e. a substitute member) may be utilised only if prior written advice has been provided to the Chairperson setting out the name of the proposed proxy, their position and, if appropriate, endorsement by the nominating body.

5.7. Discussion and decision making by the Committee will be governed by a process of discernment and consensus. If, after that process has been exhausted, a deliberate vote becomes necessary, the Chairperson will have a casting vote in the case of a tied vote.

### Capital Application Review Visit

5.8. Generally, capital application review visits will occur between March and May each year. Committee member(s) must attend at least one review visit during each Capital Assistance Round.

## **6. COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS**

### **Secretariat functions**

- 6.1 The QCEC Secretariat will provide support for the Committee. This will include notification and organisation of meetings, the timely provision of all relevant information, recording of decisions and preparation of reports to QCEC.

### **Ethical Practices**

- 6.2 Committee members are subject to the standards specified in relevant QCEC policies and procedural manuals (as they may apply from time-to-time) and will be required to make a written statement with respect to ethical practice, confidentiality and conflict of interest on appointment to the Committee.
- 6.3 Committee members are required to declare any interests that could constitute a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest with respect to participation on the Committee. The declaration must be made on appointment to the Committee and in relation to specific agenda items at the commencement of each Committee meeting and be updated annually.
- 6.4 While Committee members may communicate relevant matters to their nominating body, members should be cognisant that matters dealt with by the Committee are not suitable for general publication. If deemed necessary by the Chairperson, or requested by a member, specific matter can be declared in confidence and must not be discussed outside of the Committee.
- 6.5 All Committee matters are to remain confidential to Committee members, except for appropriate reporting to their nominating body.

## **7. RELATIONSHIPS**

- 7.1 The Committee will report directly to the Commission in writing after each meeting.
- 7.2 In turn, the Commission may issue binding directives to the Committee, including changing any of its procedures, membership or methodology. A directive may include notice of the disbandment of the Committee, to take effect immediately in accordance with section 7.2 of the *QCEC Constitution*.

## **8. REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 8.1 The Terms of Reference are to be reviewed every five years, or as otherwise requested by the Commission.
- 8.2 All amendments to the Terms of Reference must be approved by the Commission.