



Provision of Catholic schooling policy

Rationale

The Diocese of Toowoomba through the Catholic Schools Office has legislative and legal obligations which it shares with parish and school communities. The Catholic Schools Office has responsibility for ensuring that Catholic schooling is accessible to Catholic families throughout the Diocese in a way which is fair and equitable. The Catholic Schools Office engages in strategic planning processes to evaluate and analyse demographic changes; local pastoral needs; changes in the nature or structure of an existing school; the sustainability of an existing school community and the equitable distribution of financial resources available to Diocesan school communities.

The provision and operation of Catholic schools encompasses the needs and aspirations of many groups. Broad and purposeful consultation with all interested parties is integral to the decision making process.

Values

Providing access to Catholic schooling wherever possible is an integral part of the pastoral and educational mission of the Church in the Diocese of Toowoomba. Catholic schools have an important role in educating and evangelising students and their families. Access to authentic Catholic schooling may be affected when demand for places in Catholic schooling outstrips availability of places, where geographical remoteness restricts access or in situations of poverty or social disadvantage. Values of inclusion, equity and a preferential option for the poor will be major considerations for decision-making in this area.

Policy statement

The Diocese of Toowoomba through the Catholic Schools Office is committed to the provision of quality and inclusive Catholic schooling wherever possible across the Diocese.

Consequences

- The Catholic Schools Office will have a strategic plan for future provision of Catholic schooling to guide decision making and allocation of resources.
- The Catholic Schools Office will have written guidelines to manage the consultative, planning and decision-making processes associated with changes in attribute of schools including:
 - establishing new schools
 - closing an existing school
 - relocating of a school or part thereof to another campus
 - expanding or contracting the enrolment profile of a school
- The Catholic Schools Office will lead the change process associated with a change of attribute and works closely with the relevant parish/es, educational authorities, statutory authorities and community groups to ensure a timely and proper outcome.
- Through their leadership teams and School Boards, schools will develop and maintain facility master plans that document the community's consciousness of future trends that may lead to possible changes of attribute.

Most Reverend Robert McGuckin | Bishop of Toowoomba