



Sustainable funding distribution framework

Purpose

The Sustainable funding distribution framework informs the allocation of resources by the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (TCSO) to ensure the highest standard of Catholic education to every student enrolled in system Catholic schools regardless of enrolment profile, SES, location or size of the school.

To whom it applies

This framework applies to the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (TCSO) and the 31 system schools in the Toowoomba Diocese.

Guiding principles

The Sustainable funding distribution framework is underpinned by the principles of collegiality, interdependence and subsidiarity.

It supports the interests of each school in responding to their local context whilst ensuring that system initiatives are appropriately funded and delivered.

Key considerations in this framework are as follows.

- Our system values and agreed mission underpin this framework.
- A consistent, accountable and fair funding distribution model applies across all Toowoomba Catholic schools.
- Sustainability of funding is assured, particularly when enrolments are unstable.
- Strategic planning is informed by agreed resourcing benchmarks.
- The combined resources and collective capacity of the system benefits all schools.
- Disadvantage is addressed through fair, transparent and defensible measures.

The distribution of resources that forms part of the Sustainable funding distribution framework is shaped by the following principles.

1. Offering the very best educational opportunities to every student enrolled in system Catholic schools is best achieved through the aggregation of funding to ensure the appropriate allocations of staffing and other resources can be directed according to need and overall strategic direction.
2. Principals and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) share responsibility for a stable and flourishing system through good management of enrolments, staffing and resources. The interdependence of all parties is maintained by clear strategic planning and an agreed mission.
3. A strong, united system is more able to support students and schools with additional needs. Specific student and school attributes receive additional loadings. These include, but are not limited to, students with disabilities, Indigenous students, students with low literacy, numeracy and English language skills, low SES schools, small schools and schools in rural and remote locations.
4. Collegiality in decisions involving resource allocations is achieved through agreed communication and consultative processes.
5. Subsidiarity at the school level is enhanced by the availability of discretionary resources to empower local decisions based on context and circumstance.

The framework

Sources of funding

1. All sources of funding for schools

- a. Federal Government recurrent grants, targeted program funding and capital works assistance
- b. State Government recurrent grants, targeted program funding and capital works assistance
- c. school fees, general purpose levies and capital levies
- d. other private income including school related trading operations, fundraising activities and donations

2. Funding included in this framework

- a. Federal and State Government general recurrent funds, targeted program funding and the TCS Special Purpose Levy
- b. The State Government stipulates that each school 'receives' its own allocation of State recurrent funding. This is achieved through the central staffing allocations to schools being initially funded from State grants and the balance from Federal Government and other funds.

3. Funding not included in this framework

- a. fees and levies set and collected by schools
- b. income from one-off, school-specific grants, interest, donations and fundraising activities
- c. income from school-related services such as tuckshops, bookshops and uniform shops

4. TCS Tuition fees and levies

- a. The TCS Tuition fee and levy guideline is reviewed annually, endorsed by the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Council and provided to schools to set fees and levies for the following year.

5. Standard discount structure for TCS tuition fees

- a. Primary and secondary fees are discounted for the second, third, fourth and fifth child in a family.
- b. Discount rates for children in primary and secondary education are included in the TCS Tuition fee and levy guideline.
- c. The differential between primary and secondary reflects the additional costs of secondary education.
- d. Families receive the benefit of sibling discounts when their children attend both primary and secondary Diocesan schools. Ranking will be by age in ascending order.

6. Concessions for Federal Government concession card holders

- a. In considering requests for fee concessions, the principal applies the fee concession process as set out in the School fee collection procedure.
- b. Families holding an eligible means-tested Federal Government concession card are eligible for a fee concession. The concession is at the discretion of the principal in accordance with the School fee collection procedure.
- c. Group 4 Primary Schools (see TCS Tuition fee and levy guideline) may be reimbursed for the amount of approved concessions. This is at the discretion of the Executive Director: Catholic Schools.

Allocation of funding

7. Allocation of funds to staff schools

- a. An annual budget, endorsed by the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Council and approved by the Bishop, is the key accountability measure for the allocation of funding.
- b. The provision of staff to all schools is the first priority in funds allocation.
- c. Industrial agreements largely determine the minimum staffing requirements for each school. Adherence to these is the first step in developing a school's staffing entitlement.

- d. Additional allocations can occur when the ELT considers other priorities that relate to the teaching and learning environment of schools.
- e. Schools can make submissions to the relevant Senior Education Leader (SEL) for above-schedule staffing when special, unforeseen circumstances arise.
- f. The staffing schedule outlines each school's entitlement of teaching and support staff roles that are common across all schools with similar educational offerings. School specific allocations due to student and/or school attributes and the Resource Grant to support the operation of the school is also included.
- g. Teacher and school officer entitlement is provided in two ways; hours required for each role or position and/or in cash to allow for local decision-making. This is inclusive of salaries, on-costs and allowances.
- h. The staffing schedule does not include school paid staffing for activities or services that a school may choose to offer to their students and/or communities.

8. Allocation of funds for the operation of TCSO

- a. A portion of Federal Government recurrent funds covers the operating costs of the TCSO.
- b. TCSO, as the central office, provides the administrative and support services to schools that are completed more efficiently and effectively centrally than if each school employed their own staff to attend to these tasks.
- c. Interactions with external agencies and organisations are streamlined with a central contact point.
- d. Each school benefits from the economies of scale that flow from the provision of specialist staff to support multiple schools.
- e. Centrally provided support promotes consistent quality of service and currency of practice, policies and procedures. This also assists quality control, compliance and accountability.
- f. Funds allocated are for the full amount of salaries and on costs, tools of trade and other costs required to provide the agreed services to schools.

9. Allocation of funds for centrally managed school support services

- a. Most of the services provided by TCSO are specifically directed at schools, their students and/or their staff.
- b. Services are designed to enhance the teaching and learning enterprise and are centrally managed for equity and efficiency of resource utilisation.
- c. The services are generally provided
 - i. to address specific needs arising from particular student characteristics
 - ii. as initiatives for enhancing staff capacity, abilities and performance
 - iii. to improve school/system operating environments.
- d. A portion of funding received for specific student attributes is allocated for the employment of staff in system roles and the remainder distributed proportionately to schools.
- e. A portion of funding is utilised to enhance capabilities of all staff across TCS. This allows for a focus on whole of system professional development initiatives which are supported by TCSO specialist staff and utilise TCSO facilities. External providers and facilities are accessed when appropriate.

10. Centrally managed reserves

- a. Appropriate provision for employee entitlements for annual, sick, long service and sabbatical leave is made.
- b. This provision and cash reserves are held centrally. An annual review of leave provisions determines whether additional cash is needed to top up reserves.
- c. Other reserves are held to cover land acquisition and initial development costs for new schools, new cohorts in existing schools and a contingency reserve to manage unexpected and/or unintended

school level resourcing issues. Decisions on these reserves are made by the ELT in line with the System reserves policy.

11. Allocation of Resource Grant for maintenance and resources

- a. A Resource Grant is distributed to schools to provide support for maintenance and resources.
- b. The calculation of the Resource Grant is reviewed annually.
- c. This distribution is paid to schools by the end of Term 1.
- d. Schools are required to have an approved budget and maintenance plan in place prior to distribution.

12. Special Purpose Levy

- a. The TCS Special Purpose Levy is a per capita levy used to support system-wide projects. Current system-wide initiatives include
 - i. establishment of kindergartens
 - ii. major maintenance projects
 - iii. principal and teacher accommodation in rural and remote schools.
- b. The Levy amount is reviewed annually and schools advised for the following year.

13. Budget parameters

- a. Schools and TCSO set annual budgets with modest surpluses after recurrent operations, loan repayments and capital expenditure. In special circumstances where a deficit budget is approved, existing cash reserves must be able to cover particular items of expenditure that cause the annual result to be in deficit.
- b. All reserves should be tagged to a specific appropriate purpose.

14. Distribution of surplus funds to schools

- a. In September each year, the budgeting process for the future school year will identify the balance of funds remaining after meeting the priorities listed in Guidelines 7 to 12.
- b. After determining appropriate cash levels for centralised capital expenditure, debt servicing, topping-up cash reserves (if necessary) and funding system priorities, a cash distribution is made to schools.
- c. The ELT determines the level and method of distribution when this occurs.

Related policies

Toowoomba Catholic Schools Provision of Catholic schooling policy
Toowoomba Catholic Schools School fees policy
Toowoomba Catholic Schools System reserves policy
Toowoomba Catholic Schools Tuition fees and levy guideline
Toowoomba Catholic Schools Financial management guidelines

Authority

This Sustainable funding distribution framework is the responsibility of the Executive Director: Catholic Schools. Any changes to this Framework can only be made with the approval of the Executive Director: Catholic Schools.

Version control and change history

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