



EDUCATION, TOURISM AND SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mr SJ Stewart MP (Chair)
Mr MA Boothman MP
Mr SE Cramp MP
Dr JJ McVeigh MP
Ms JE Pease MP
Mr BM Saunders MP

Staff present:

Ms S Cawcutt (Research Director)
Ms K Christensen (Principal Research Officer)

PUBLIC BRIEFING—QUEENSLAND CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2015

Brisbane

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Committee met at 11.10 am

PERRY, Dr Lee-Anne, Executive Director, Queensland Catholic Education Commission

CHAIR: I declare open the committee's public briefing to hear from the Queensland Catholic Education Commission. I want to introduce members of the committee. My name is Scott Stewart. I am the member for Townsville and chair of the committee. Other committee members present today are Dr John McVeigh, member for Toowoomba South and deputy chair; Ms Joan Pease, member for Lytton; Mr Mark Boothman, member for Albert; Mr Bruce Saunders, member for Maryborough; and Mr Sid Cramp, member for Gaven. The committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to its standing rules and orders. The proceedings are being recorded by Hansard and a transcript of these proceedings will be published on the committee's webpage unless the committee decides otherwise. If you have not done so already, please turn off your mobile phones or at least switch them to silent. In the unlikely event we need to evacuate, please follow staff directions. Representatives of the media may attend and may also record proceedings subject to the media guidelines endorsed by this committee. The guidelines are available from staff if required. The purpose of this briefing is to inform the committee of the work of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission. I welcome Dr Lee-Anne Perry, Executive Director of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission. We have until 11.45—we have cut down your time, Lee-Anne, if that is okay, but if you want to extend we will accommodate you—and that includes members' questions as well. Dr Perry, I invite you to commence your briefing.

Dr Perry: Thanks very much, Mr Stewart and members of the committee. I commenced in this position on 29 July this year, so I still consider myself very new in the role. Prior to commencing in this position I was principal of a number of Catholic schools for about 25 years, most recently principal of All Hallows' School here in Brisbane. On behalf of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission, I am pleased to have the opportunity to inform the committee of the work of the commission, to highlight the key issues currently on the commission's agenda and to report on some of the outcomes and achievements of the Catholic education sector. I will just work through the notes that I have here, but I am happy to take any questions.

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission, which is often referred to as QCEC, is a 16-member body established in 1973 by the bishops of Queensland. The commission exercises certain statewide responsibilities in respect of schools operated by our five diocesan authorities in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton and 17 religious institute or other incorporated bodies. It is supported by a secretariat located at 143 Edward Street here in Brisbane. The commission's role is to support and advance Catholic education in Queensland and in particular to engage with government on behalf of the sector. Among the key responsibilities of the commission is the negotiation and distribution of government funding, advocating the position of Catholic education to government and other bodies, contributing to policy and legislative formation on issues of relevance to education, communicating and responding to media issues of a statewide nature, facilitating collaboration between employing authorities in areas such as employee relations and curriculum as well as researching and managing relevant statistical and financial data. The commission seeks to adopt a collaborative and constructive approach, working in partnership with government and other sectors to deliver the best possible education for all Queensland children.

With regard to just a little bit of history of Catholic education, Catholic education began in Queensland with the first Catholic school established in 1845 and since then of course Catholic education has expanded across the state. Today the Catholic education sector is one of the state's major education providers, with Catholic schools educating 18.5 per cent or almost one in five of all Queensland students. Catholic schools provide a high-quality faith based educational option for Queensland families. Our schools believe in the intrinsic value of each student based on a distinctive educational vision inspired by Jesus and the values of the gospel, including compassion, respect and justice. Catholic schools aim to be open and inclusive to all who seek their values. The schools strive to cater for the needs of all students and families and welcome students from diverse cultural, social

and economic backgrounds, which include some of the most disadvantaged communities in Queensland. There are currently 298 Catholic schools in Queensland in communities from Thursday Island in the north; Mount Isa, Weipa and Longreach in the west; and south to the border.

Compared to last year, enrolments in Catholic schools have increased by 1.9 per cent to just over 146,000 students. This was the largest growth in any sector. Enrolments in our prep year in the same time period have increased by 2.7 per cent; enrolments of Indigenous students in the Catholic sector have grown by 6.1 per cent; and enrolments of students with disabilities have grown by 7.8 per cent over that last 12 months. It is worth noting that enrolments of students with disabilities have more than doubled in our Catholic schools in the past decade, up from just over 2,000 students to just over 5,000 today. Catholic education also operates 13 special assistance schools catering for students who have become marginalised from mainstream schooling, and these schools are available in every diocese.

I would like to turn now to some of the issues that the Catholic education sector is addressing. Thanks to the ongoing support of governments of both persuasions, Catholic education is continuing to deliver high-quality education. Some of our current and emerging issues are firstly student protection. QCEC reaffirms that Catholic school authorities are fully committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Catholic schools in Queensland by being compliant with all legislative requirements and particularly through the delivery of best practice procedures for student care and protection. Catholic school authorities have addressed a number of issues which have arisen from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and stand ready to respond to any further recommendations of the royal commission. In this context the following key issues and initiatives are priorities from 2016: Indigenous student protection and wellbeing. We look forward to engaging in further formal and informal interagency collaboration to assist in the development of high-quality education strategies to address student protection and wellbeing issues within the Indigenous communities in Queensland. Secondly, the area of harmonisation of child protection components of four pieces of legislation in Queensland. Those pieces of legislation are the Child Protection Act 1999, the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2001, and the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000. In our view there is an urgent need to streamline or harmonise child protection aspects of these four pieces of legislation to be more efficient and easier to understand. A clear example is the requirement for staff as defined in particular legislation to make a mandatory report of sexual abuse under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 compared with the requirement of a teacher to make a mandatory report of significant harm which includes sexual abuse under the Child Protection Act 1999.

We would also like to address the area of information sharing. Chapter 16A of the New South Wales Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2000 allows information to be exchanged between prescribed bodies despite other laws that prohibit or restrict the disclosure of personal information. Prescribed bodies for the purposes of that regulation include a registered non-government school, a designated agency and any other organisation the duties of include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services or law enforcement wholly or partly to children. The introduction of similar provisions in Queensland would, in our view, facilitate a consistent and higher standard of service delivery in this important area. Similarly, the codification of communication protocols between government agencies such as the Queensland Police Service, the Department of Communities and non-government agencies such as the Catholic school sector would also facilitate a consistent, higher standard of service delivery.

If I could turn to the area of funding for the Catholic school sector. Catholic schools receive about 20 per cent of their total annual recurrent income from the state government. On average, Catholic schools receive approximately 80 per cent of the combined state and federal annual per student government funding received by state schools. State annual recurrent funding is delivered through the basket nexus mechanism. Non-government schools currently receive around 21 per cent of the average cost of educating a student in a state school. The Queensland Catholic Education Commission welcomed the Palaszczuk government's overall increase of 7.5 per cent in funding for non-state schools announced in this year's budget. This was made up of 3.3 per cent in annual per student funding, 2.5 per cent in program funding and 1.7 per cent for enrolment growth. These increases in per student funding will assist Catholic schools to keep pace with the rising costs of education and take pressure off school fees at a time when many of our families are struggling.

Funding is of course based on enrolment numbers in each school. Queensland Catholic school authorities take the student census process very seriously and are committed to continual improvement in respect of accuracy and documentation. QCEC supports the implementation of all of

the recommendations of the recent review by the state Auditor-General. Although no errors were found at the Catholic school that was reviewed as part of the audit, we are committed to ongoing reflection on our practices to ensure the highest levels of accuracy and documentation. QCEC agrees with the Auditor-General's report that a key weakness of the student census process is some lack of clarity in the guidelines. It needs to be noted that the eligibility criteria for recording students are more prescriptive for non-state schools than state schools; for example, for non-state schools if a student does not meet the attendance requirements—which is that they are in attendance at least 11 days between the commencement of school and the census day, which is the last day in February—a strict 'beyond parental control' test must be met. In contrast, state schools can enter students that have not physically attended a school as long as some indication has been received that the student will attend at a future date. Aligning student eligibility criteria for all Queensland schools would be a positive step, in our view, towards improving consistency and accountability for public funding.

The commission is committed to working in partnership with the Queensland government to meet the schooling needs of Queensland's growing population and has been a strong contributor to the Queensland Schools Planning Commission process over recent years. The additional \$25 million per annum over the next three years in capital funding delivered by the current government in this year's budget will be invaluable in assisting us to keep pace with enrolment growth in the short term. The additional funds are allowing us to bring forward plans for new school developments, particularly in high growth areas. Taking into account the new funding and construction schedule, we are currently working through a process of reassessing our plans for meeting growth in the medium to longer term, re-examination of our enrolment projections and the resource requirements.

I would like to touch on the area of the Living Away from Home Allowance for boarders. The commission welcomed the recent announcement by the Hon. Kate Jones MP, Minister for Education, that eligible families living in rural and remote Queensland will receive additional support for students living and studying away from home at non-state boarding schools. This is a welcome announcement, particularly at a time when many of our rural and remote families are facing particular economic stresses, including those caused by drought. There are 15 Catholic secondary colleges in Queensland currently providing boarding opportunities for over 2,000 students. We expect this particular increase will directly benefit more than 300 of those students. Both the Queensland and Australian governments are providing financial support for geographically remote students to attend boarding schools; however, additional support for boarding students is needed to more closely reflect the actual costs of boarding places. Additionally, the current schemes are focused primarily on providing access to the appropriate year level of schooling; that is, if a state school is accessible to a rural or remote student and offers the required year level, no boarding assistance is provided except for the case of a limited number of bypass schools. Increase in support for students to attend Catholic boarding schools could potentially involve adjustments to the three existing government schemes in this area: the Living Away From Home Allowance Scheme; Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme; and ABSTUDY. What adjustments would be required would obviously be subject to further discussion.

School transport is another area of funding which we are most appreciative of. The funding for school transport has increased from \$5.474 million to \$5.880 million this year. This increase reflects funds provided for additional eligible students utilising the scheme following the move of year 7 to secondary and is greatly appreciated.

I would next like to address a few of the education initiatives and issues that Catholic schools are facing: firstly, the Australian curriculum. QCEC has participated in the ongoing development of the Australian curriculum and was an active contributor to the review and revision of the curriculum. Queensland schools have generally adopted the curriculum directly from the Australian curriculum website and Queensland Catholic schooling authorities have expressed a preference to continue to do so. Phase 1—Australian curriculum English, mathematics, science and history—were implemented as per a schedule agreed across the Queensland schooling sectors over 2011-13. The recent endorsement by the Education Council of the remaining Australian curriculum phase 2 and 3 learning areas and the revised phase 1 learning areas gives some clarity to curriculum to be progressed. Consultation may now occur across the schooling sectors in Queensland to inform further work in implementing the remainder of the Australian curriculum, including the development of any agreed implementation schedule guidelines and resources.

The timing of implementation is still a little uncertain, and we look forward to engaging in any dialogue with the government regarding this. Catholic schools have certainly appreciated the opportunity to use state schooling C2C resources when they choose and where appropriate. Opportunities exist to collaborate further, particularly on the development of quality curriculum resources to support the learning of students with disability in all schools.

Another key area for us is the new system of senior assessment and tertiary entrance. QCEC welcomes the recent announcement around the implementation of a revised system of senior assessment and tertiary entrance. We have been actively involved in consultation and input to the review, and we are highly supportive of the establishment by the Minister for Education of a task force to engage stakeholders in further consideration of how the review's recommendations should be most appropriately enacted in Queensland's senior schooling. QCEC supports in principle the move to some element of external assessment in senior schooling processes while continuing to support the positive elements of school based assessment.

QCEC highlights that the review remains silent on the area of vocational education and training and how assessment and tertiary entrance may progress equitably in this area. QCEC is pleased that this has been noted by the task force, and particular attention will be given to the vocational education area by the task force and its working parties. QCEC is very mindful of the necessary resourcing required to implement significant changes in senior assessment and tertiary entrance processes. These costs will potentially impact at the same time as additional cost impacts are felt from the implementation of NAPLAN online nationally. QCEC is therefore cautious that the introduction of these reforms should not have a negative effect on general school funding from either state or federal governments. We will continue to actively engage in the further development of these initiatives and commend governments for the collaborative approaches to progressing these.

Which leads me to NAPLAN online. QCEC acknowledges the potential benefits of NAPLAN online as articulated by both state and federal government ministers through the Education Council. QCEC is highly conscious, though, of the additional costs attendant upon the implementation of NAPLAN online and seeks to work with governments in ensuring that investments in NAPLAN online also underpin real benefits for student learning in classrooms. QCEC continues to caution about the use to which NAPLAN data is put, particularly by the media and at times by government, and also has reservations about the continued use of full cohort testing for years 3, 5, 7 and 9. It would welcome a review of the benefits of this process of testing to ensure that the significant cost is justified in terms of improvement in student learning and providing the necessary government accountability.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is one which we continue to monitor. There have been various projections about how the scheme will intersect with education and what it will mean for schools and students with disabilities and their families. QCEC notes the recent state government announcements about the early scheduled rollout of the scheme in North Queensland in Townsville, Charters Towers and Palm Island. We commend the support proposed for those with disability and their families and seek the opportunity to establish what part schooling will play in the proposed scheme. It remains essential to engage all stakeholders, including all school sectors and schooling authorities, in the development of NDIS strategies.

Another program is the Teacher Capability Program, formerly known as the Great Teachers = Great Results program. QCEC would like to highly commend both the previous state coalition government and the current state Labor government for the establishment and progression of this initiative. QCEC believes that this way of working between government and non-government schooling provides a good model for future practice and quality outcomes from government investment. QCEC worked with Catholic schooling authorities in developing this program to best address their needs and their contexts in enhancing teacher capability and to provide reporting structures to government to enable sharing of this work and appropriate accountability, and we would be proud to share this work with other stakeholders and government.

Another initiative is the Deadly Ears, Deadly Kids, Deadly Communities framework. In 2009 the Queensland government launched the Deadly Ears, Deadly Kids, Deadly Communities framework to address middle ear disease in Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. QCEC was not invited at that time to contribute to the initial discussions and developments. However, the QCEC Indigenous education subcommittee and our equity subcommittee have over the last 18 months been actively engaged and have lobbied those responsible for the deadly ears program to gain equitable access to the program and screening services that were being targeted at children in state schools. QCEC recognises the generosity of the deadly ears program team in meeting frequently with us and sharing their resources and information, and services are now committed to Catholic schools.

The commission recently supplied a letter of support and endorsement for the Deadly Ears, Deadly Kids, Deadly Communities framework and was very pleased to provide the QCEC logo for inclusion on the 2015 framework documents. We commend to the committee this model of interaction and engagement across education sectors and health providers. From our experiences, we would recommend that future programs such as this should involve all sectors from the point of development and initiation.

Another major initiative is the year 7 to secondary initiative. The move of year 7 to secondary school occurred very smoothly at the beginning of this year, 2015. QCEC attributes the ease with which this very significant and historic transition in education occurred across Queensland schools to some policy factors that might inform other future success in education. The policy was very well consulted in the making and had bipartisan support. There was adequate time and information available for careful planning for implementation. The government provided sufficient funding to support the transition and there was effective collaboration supported across and within the sectors. QCEC commends these factors as attributes of future effective policy development and implementation.

Just to touch briefly on kindergartens, QCEC is an approved central governing body that distributes Queensland kindergarten funding scheme subsidies to five delegated Catholic agencies that, as approved providers, deliver approved educational programs in 24 Catholic kindergarten services. QCEC has provided feedback and submissions on a number of issues impacting on the early education and care sector including the review of the national quality framework and standards, disability support for children with high needs, transition to school, changes to legislation affecting early entry into prep, amendments to the vaccination legislation and mandatory reporting in the early childhood and education sector.

Domestic violence is obviously another key issue for all of us in the community. The Queensland Catholic Education Commission has signalled a keen interest in domestic violence as an issue with high impact on student and family wellbeing and on student learning. Catholic education, valuing and respecting each person, is framed on respect for self and others as a fundamental principle. QCEC seeks to work with government in their multidimensional approach in addressing domestic violence. For QCEC, the focus will be on elements related to schooling and student protection, but QCEC seeks as well to be part of the broader collaborative efforts to address domestic violence.

We believe that an approach that focuses on holistic education and respect will be more fruitful and sustainable than a fragmented approach to separate topics added in an ad hoc manner to the curriculum. There is a risk in the foregoing approach that school curriculum is seen as a convenient vehicle for progressing multiple social issues that, in fact, require broader community involvement to address. Catholic schools address topics of respectful relationships in various programs such as pastoral care and religious education and in integrated ways across the whole school.

Schooling sectors and stakeholders are very cautious to avoid overloading already full curriculum with ad hoc additional materials. Health and physical education, for example, has increasingly been suggested as the vehicle of choice for addressing emergent topics and issues, including in recent years issues related to drugs and alcohol, violence, and radicalisation to name just a few. QCEC is mindful of maintaining the integrity of this important subject so that there is a strong physical component sustained as important to individual development. We once again stress the importance of a holistic rather than a compartmentalised approach to addressing key social issues and behaviours.

Finally, I turn to radicalisation. QCEC provided a report to both the department of education and the National Catholic Education Commission on current initiatives that support young people at risk of radicalisation. The response outlined how Catholic schools aim to achieve a safe and supportive environment through whole-school approaches which provide pastoral care, connection and protection of students, student behaviour and support, social and emotional wellbeing.

As I noted at the outset, Catholic schools are an integral and vibrant part of the educational provision in Queensland. We are very proud of our ongoing commitment to providing wonderful educational opportunities and outcomes for young people and choice for parents. We look forward to continuing to engage collaboratively with the government and other education sectors in enhancing the educational provision for the young people of this state. I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

CHAIR: Thank you Dr Perry. That was very comprehensive. I will now open up to questions from the committee this morning.

Ms PEASE: I was interested in the figures that you were talking about right at the beginning and the growth and the increasing numbers, particularly with the disability area. Is there any explanation as to why, because that has been a substantial growth area. Are you doing something different in the sector now, or is it just that more people are accessing you?

Dr Perry: I do not think we are doing anything substantially different. We have always been committed to inclusion as much as it is possible to do that. I think that as parents gain confidence that our schools can provide the level of support that is required for their students, they are increasingly accessing us as an option.

Dr McVEIGH: Welcome to the parliament and thanks for your presentation. I note the first couple of key issues that you discussed were student protection. I guess you were talking about that as a significant priority for QCEC. The second issue you talked about was harmonisation of child protection legislation. They are obviously related issues for QCEC. Could you explore that with us a little more please?

Dr Perry: If I could speak firstly as someone who is a recent practitioner, student protection of course is a key issue for every school, and the care of our young people is of critical importance. As you would be aware, there has been increasing legislation and regulation around that area. Schools are very mindful of their responsibilities. One of the challenges is to ensure you are doing the right thing and following the right procedures. The situation exists where there are different references. So the use of the term 'staff' in a school refers not just to teaching staff; it refers to every member who is employed in the school. So it would include the groundsman, the tuckshop convenor and so on. In other legislation it refers to 'teachers'. It is ensuring that there is clear consistency. If we want to do the best by our students, the more straightforward we make it and the more consistent we make it in terms of the terminology that is used, who is covered by that terminology—from a practitioner's point of view, particularly from the teachers who are the front line, it would make it so much easier for them. Where you have inconsistency, it just makes it that much more challenging.

Dr McVEIGH: For any school, for any teacher, for any staff?

Dr Perry: Yes, for those in the non-government sector because we are covered by all those different pieces of legislation. Some of them are developed in an educational context; others are developed in a broader context. The terminology is not always the same. The expectations are not always the same. That just adds another level of challenge. We want to focus our efforts on the young people. The easier and the clearer and the simpler and the more coherent and consistent that is would facilitate that.

CHAIR: You highlighted Great Teachers = Great Results and the work that your schools are doing there. I congratulate you for that work on developing those teacher capabilities. I wonder if you are in a position to make comment around attracting high calibre people into the teaching profession and then supporting particularly rural and regional parts across the state and how difficult or how easy that may be for your sector.

Dr Perry: It is an ongoing challenge I think. It has been well discussed in the public area. Having just come back from Townsville yesterday—and I was in Toowoomba last week; as I am new in this role, I am visiting all of the diocese, and I was in Cairns recently—it is a particular challenge for rural and remote schools. Townsville is certainly no exception. We can talk about places like Mount Isa, Cloncurry, Hughenden; it is extremely challenging to attract teachers. As the director of Townsville Catholic Education was saying to me, they will be planning their staffing for next year. They will think they have their staff. They gave me an example for this year. They overstaffed a school by about six teachers and then still started the year with not enough teachers because of the challenge of appointing someone and then that person getting a more attractive offer. So you have a very limited pool to start with and then if they get what they see as a more attractive offer, they go. It is a challenge.

How do we attract people into the teaching profession? I could probably take another whole day to go through all of my issues around that. There are multiple. There is no simple solution. I do know that there are lots of views around what we should do in terms of entry, OP cut-offs, ATAR cut-offs and so on. That is one element of it. I think if you talk to parents, most parents would highly value their children's teachers, but as a society it does not translate in the same way; there is not the same valuing of it. Teachers tend to be publicly criticised. If something goes wrong, everyone wears that. I think it is a very challenging profession to be in; there is no question about that. I was touching on it in terms of what schools are expected to do. They are not just expected to implement an academic curriculum, which is their fundamental responsibility—teaching and learning outcomes—but also young people are part of the broader society and there are a whole lot of social impacts there which schools are also asked to address. Schools work with young people who are also living in families where there are dysfunctions and challenges, and schools are expected to support that. It is very difficult to do that. Young people come through the schools. They see what it is like and I think that is part of the challenge as well—seeing the struggle some of their own teachers experience. How do we address it?

I think we have to really publicly value teachers and consistently publicly value our teachers, recognising in any profession not everyone is perfect but to recognise the challenges that are there to encourage people of all abilities. I used to challenge parents of my own school: what are you encouraging your son or your daughter to do? They are headed towards an OP 1. Is teaching No. 1 on their list? As a parent would you say to your student who is going to get an OP 1 to consider teaching? Most of them would say no. We differentially value professions in our communities. I think as a community we have to look at whether we value teachers. How do we value them? It is in our public discourse. Of course, there are issues around remuneration, conditions and those sorts of things. I think the starting point is actually the public discourse around teaching and then there are a lot of strategies. How do we support them? I know there are lots of strategies in place for rural and remote. There are incentives in place. Still, the reality is that often it is young teachers who go there and that is very difficult. I am saying the same thing, but teaching is a highly complex profession. It is not an easy profession. When you are a beginning teacher you need support, and the best support is by experienced teachers. Unfortunately, increasing numbers of the young teachers are placed in schools where there are lots of young teachers. That makes it even more challenging. So we get attrition happening. I will stop there. I could keep going. I suppose my plea would be that people recognise it is multifaceted and it is complex. We just need to keep working on all of those areas, but particularly supporting young people and not seeing that the solution is in more behaviour management training for teachers, more of this, more of that. I think it is important they have a very strong academic foundation because their No. 1 responsibility is actually around teaching and learning. So we cannot compromise that. I do think we need to look at teacher education programs. I know that is outside my remit, but I do think we need to look at teacher education programs as well.

CHAIR: I agree. Thank you.

Mr SAUNDERS: Dr Perry, I concur with what you say because my son is a teacher. In relation to the bullying in Catholic education, what procedures do you have in place for bullying inside and outside the school?

Dr Perry: It comes back to what you would have heard me saying there around respectful relationships. Bullying is an adverse consequence of where there are not respectful relationships. Catholic schools would operate from the foundational principle of our values—so our values of respect for every person. How do we demonstrate our respect for other people and what are the consequences and how do we manage it? We come out of a values perspective. We expect respectful relationships. What does that look like? What does that mean, because that is an important part of bullying as well: understanding what is actually meant by respectful relationships. Again, I do think that is not always well modelled in the broader society—so what young people see on TV, what they see on the news, what they see in the paper, what they see on the sporting fields. What are they demonstrating? We need to educate them around that. We cannot assume that young people come to schools knowing what respectful relationships are. They may not have had them modelled in their homes and they certainly are not always having them modelled in the wider society. It is around educating them. What does it mean to be in respectful relationships? What are some of the strategies we need to show? One of the other key issues is the bystander. Most young people do not treat others poorly, but too many of them, just as too many adults, see other people acting inappropriately and do not challenge it and so it is a learning strategy. We take a proactive approach as well as we have to respond obviously when there are inappropriate behaviours. Schools would have a range of strategies around doing that. It is intended to improve the behavioural outcomes for everyone concerned.

Mr SAUNDERS: I would just like to say that I have two great Catholic schools in my electorate, St Mary's Primary School and St Mary's College. They are very good schools and offer very high-quality education.

Dr Perry: Thanks, Mr Saunders. I have visited them when wearing a different hat in previous years, and I concur.

Mr CRAMP: Dr Perry, thank you for coming. Following up on the talk around bullying, you are obviously acutely aware of some of the management of it. Does the Catholic system undertake an actual practical application? Do they follow a certain program? Is it run centrally, or does each school have their own bounds to manage it in whatever way they see fit?

Dr Perry: It would vary. Each diocese would probably have some central guidelines and they would work together in terms of having a unified approach across their diocese and schools. We also have what we call the religious institute schools—the school I was principal at for example, All Hallows' School was an independent Catholic school. So we would have developed our own programs. There are wonderful resources available around bullying, protective behaviours and safe

schools, and Catholic schools would draw on those resources. The consistency comes out of a values perspective. It is around appropriate relationships. It is around treating others with respect, compassion, understanding, inclusion, justice. That is the common theme you would see across every Catholic school.

The particular procedures that they would follow would be—in the case of the diocese, there would be some centralisation of that. But, again, each school would be expected to respond in their own local school context, working with their communities. Most schools would be working obviously with the teachers but also with their parents in terms of coming up with what are the best strategies. Schools cannot address bullying or other inappropriate behaviours by themselves; they have to work with their parents.

CHAIR: Dr Perry, unfortunately, we have come to the end of our time. It was most informative. We really appreciate the time you have given to us this morning. This will conclude the briefing. Thank you for coming in.

Dr Perry: Thank you, it was a pleasure. Thank you everyone.

Committee adjourned at 11.46 am