

Media Release

Queensland Catholic Education Commission – July 2 2009

ACU (National) wins tender for *Access to Catholic Schools* research

A Queensland Catholic Education Commission research project to investigate issues affecting the decisions of Catholic families in low socio-economic circumstances when choosing a school for their children will be carried out by the Australian Catholic University.

"I am delighted that the Australian Catholic University has won the tender to carry out this critical research for us," QCEC Executive Director Mike Byrne said.

"I am confident the research findings will constructively inform ways to improve support for, and encourage greater access to our schools, by low income Catholic families."

Mr Byrne said the research project would focus on the key question:

"What are the issues that affect the decisions of Catholic families in low socio-economic circumstances in Queensland when choosing schools for their children?"

He said a range of research methods including questionnaires and interviews would be used to gather data throughout the state during the remainder of this year.

Chief researchers for the project will be Dr Joy Kennedy, A/Prof Jeffrey Dorman and A/Prof Judith Mulholland. Research assistants will also be employed in each diocese to support the data collection process.

Mr Byrne said the project was responding to data, including the 2006 ABS Census, which indicates that fewer lower income Catholic families are enrolling their children in Catholic schools than those in middle and higher income circumstances.

"The Commission wants to be proactive in discovering the reasons underlying this situation," he said.

"Catholic schools are called to serve all those who seek their values regardless of socio-economic circumstances.

"This research goes to the heart of the mission of Catholic education to reach out to those who are disadvantaged or marginalised in any way."

The research report is expected to be completed by the 31 March 2010.

Ends

Photo attached: The ACU research team (from left) A/Prof Judith Mulholland, Dr Joy Kennedy, A/Prof Jeffrey Dorman with Dean of the Faculty of Education Professor Marie Emmitt.

For further information please contact Gerard Delaney on Ph 3336 9350 or 041 327 4176



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