



# The Federation of Parents and Friends Associations of Catholic Schools in Queensland

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The Federation of Parents & Friends Associations in Catholic Schools in Queensland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the issues in the paper *A Flying Start for Queensland Children* – Education Green Paper for public consultation.

**The Federation of Parents & Friends Associations in Catholic Schools in Queensland has worked closely with the Queensland Catholic Education Commission in preparation of the response to this paper. The Federation has representation on the Queensland Catholic Education Commission.**

**The response from QCEC is very strongly supported by Catholic Parents. We have therefore decided not to replicate these responses but would like recorded our complete agreement with the QCEC response.**

**We would however like to offer some additional comments.**

## **Getting ready for school:**

### ***Introducing a kindergarten year for all children –***

Resourcing – Parents are concerned that the present costs of kindergarten will be prohibitive for those families from low SES backgrounds and will not provide the opportunity for children from these families to have the same opportunities as those who can afford the fees. As stated in the QCEC paper funding arrangements for kindergartens must be equitable, viable and sustainable. There should be fee structures which allow all children to have access to the kindergarten of their choice.

### ***Encouraging families to read to their children***

***Supporting disadvantaged families*** – Those parents who have little or no skills in the area of literacy should be encouraged to participate in activities which will enhance these skills. Opportunity should be provided for these parents to increase their knowledge and skills by Certificate courses in Adult Literacy being provided at convenient times during the school day which could be accessed with little or no cost to the participants. The chances of success for those students most at risk would be greatly enhanced if their parents improved their skills and thereby their ability to assist and encourage their children.

***Enlisting volunteer Ready Readers in schools*** - The federation would like to see a process where a volunteer connects with a school before completing the Support-A-Reader training so that Principals can be sure that a volunteer is supportive of the ethos and values espoused by that school. This would save any later embarrassment for the volunteer and/or the Principal.

## **Getting ready for secondary school**

The Federation has concerns that this government initiative may have significant cost implications for parents of students in Catholic Schools unless adequate provision is made by the Government to cover costs of building and other infrastructure. These concerns affect both parents of secondary students in provision of facilities etc and parents of primary school students where school numbers have been reduced and fee costs for parents may be higher to service loans etc that have been taken out with expectations of steady student numbers.

We also have concerns that areas of teacher shortage in specialist subjects e.g. Maths and Science will be further compounded by this move unless significant work is done to address this and attract more teachers to these subjects.

The social implications for small rural and remote communities is also a concern. Some Catholic Schools in rural and remote areas may face closure with loss of students and this would take away parental choice which has existed for many years.

### **Establishing an independent education authority to set and monitor common standards**

We strongly support the QCEC rejection of this proposal. Other than the issues mentioned we believe that the opportunity for parent representation would be significantly reduced if these bodies were to be amalgamated. We value the opportunity to participate at such a high level and history would show that the parent voice of both government and non-government parents is always one of the first to be ignored in circumstances such as this. We strongly support retention of all three bodies as independent bodies.

**CARMEL NASH**  
**ACTING EXECUTIVE OFFICER**