Catholic schooling in rural and remote areas in Queensland

A policy statement of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission

1. Policy Statement

Catholic schooling authorities in Queensland will support and promote the provision of quality Catholic schooling for students whose families live in rural and remote areas.

2. Rationale

_The Catholic school participates in the evangelizing mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out... It is a true and proper ecclesial entity by reason of its educational activity, in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony ... By reason of its identity, therefore, the Catholic school is a place of ecclesial experience, which is moulded in the Christian community... In a very special way the Catholic school affords the opportunity to meet young people in an environment which favours their Christian formation._ (The Catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium, #11-12)

Furthermore, “The Holy See’s teaching on Catholic schools” (p. vii) says: _Catholic schools proceed ex corde Ecclesiae, from the very heart of the Church ...(and) must be integrated into the organic pastoral program of the parish, the diocese, and the universal Church._

2.1 The Queensland Catholic Education Commission understands that the evangelising mission of the Church in rural and remote areas is supported through Catholic schooling. In some rural and remote areas the Catholic school is the Church’s presence. As true and proper ecclesial entities these Catholic schools become critical to the local Catholic community life. Schools often host a variety of social, cultural and sporting events and also provide various facilities for use by the broader community.

2.2 Traditionally schools in rural and remote areas were supported by religious orders. Today diocesan authorities continue the commitment to provision of Catholic schooling with teaching being carried on by dedicated lay staff.

2.3 Families living in rural and remote areas have a right to choose an appropriate education for their children. Educational services are costly and access to Catholic education is limited by geographical location. Children are often required to travel long distances or live away from home. Therefore, rural students need to be provided with quality residential education/boarding facilities appropriate to their needs.
3. Consequences

Catholic schooling authorities in Queensland will support and promote the provision of quality Catholic schooling in rural and remote areas through such things as:

3.1 the continuation of viable and equitable ways of providing Catholic schooling through agreed group funding arrangements;
3.2 the provision and allocation of resources to address the specific needs of Catholic schooling;
3.3 the recruitment, induction, orientation and the retention of quality staff for schools;
3.4 keeping current an appropriate incentive scheme which supports staff through a collaborative planning and decision making process;
3.5 providing viable and equitable access to professional development for staff;
3.6 providing quality residential education facilities;
3.7 community engagement and consultation.

4. References


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