National School Chaplaincy Program

What is the National School Chaplaincy Program?
The National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) will operate in the 2015 - 2018. The selection process in Queensland will be reviewed in 2015 by the Department of Education, Training and Employment, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland to consider mechanisms for application and allocation of funding 2016 to 2018.

The Program provides funding for the provision of chaplaincy services in schools, to support the emotional wellbeing of students by providing:

(a) pastoral care services; and
(b) strategies that support the emotional wellbeing of the broader school community.

Student welfare services are not funded under this program, although for 2015 only the Queensland Government will cover the shortfall in funding necessary to support student welfare workers employed through the previous National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program.

The National School Chaplaincy Program is a voluntary Program; schools will be able to select a chaplain of any faith; chaplains will not be permitted to proselytise; must comply with State laws and policies in relation to child protection matters; and chaplains must respect, accept and be sensitive to other people’s views and values.

A chaplain is an individual who:

1. is recognised by the school community and the appropriate governing authority for the school as having the skills and experience to deliver school chaplaincy to the school community; and
2. is recognised through formal ordination, commissioning, recognised religious qualifications or endorsement by a recognised or accepted religious institution; and
3. meets the NSCP’s minimum qualification requirements.

NSCP’s minimum qualification requirements are either: a Certificate IV in Youth Work; or a Certificate IV in Pastoral Care; or an equivalent qualification (as determined by the States); and this Certificate or equivalent qualification must include competencies in ‘mental health’ and ‘making appropriate referrals’.

Pastoral care is the practice of looking after the personal needs of students, not just their academic needs, through the provision of general spiritual and personal advice.

What does the National School Chaplaincy Program mean for Catholic education?
QCEC supports the objectives of the National School Chaplaincy Program. QCEC believes the form of ministry provided needs to be broadly defined and recognises that Australians care for each other, not just in times of crisis, but in the everyday struggles of life, particularly for youth.

Links
Australian Government: National Schools Chaplaincy Program