Meeting the schooling needs of Queensland’s growing population will be a major challenge for the State of Queensland over the next two decades and beyond.

The Catholic sector seeks to work in partnership with the State government and other schooling providers to proactively address this challenge.

Thank you for being here tonight, and I now invite QCEC Executive Director Mike Byrne to outline the key issues.

Mike Byrne - Introduction/Outline of Issue

Slide 1

Queensland’s population is projected to grow by around 2 million people across the two decades 2011-2031.

Slide 2

Figures provided through the Queensland Schools Planning Commission predict that enrolments in all Queensland schools will increase by about 260,000 students or 35% to reach almost 1 million (997,754) by 2031.

Slide 3

More than 100 new schools will need to be built around the State to meet this demand, presenting an enormous challenge, but also an opportunity for Government and for State, Catholic and Independent schooling sectors to work in partnership.

The Planning Commission has identified 17 particularly high growth areas across the State where numbers of school-age children are predicted to grow at or above the State average rate of 1.5% per year. These are:
There are currently 296 Catholic schools educating 143,000 or almost 1 in 5 Queensland students.

The Catholic sector does not seek to grow its share of enrolments, but maintain the capacity to provide a Catholic education for a similar proportion of families currently seeking it.

Based on current market share, demand for enrolment in Queensland Catholic schools is projected to increase by 52,000 students between 2011 and 2031.

On top of expansion of existing schools, it is estimated that at least 40 Catholic schools will need to be developed by 2031 to meet this demand.

Catholic education authorities currently have plans to build 27 new schools, prioritising high growth areas of the State.

This shortfall situation clearly creates a huge challenge.

I now invite Pam Betts to speak to you about some of the work already happening within the Catholic sector to meet the schooling needs of Queensland into the future.

Pam Betts is a member of the QCEC and is the Executive Director of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, with responsibility for Catholic schools from Childers in the north, west to Kingaroy, and south to the border.
Thanks Mike

Slide 1

To deliver school infrastructure in communities across Queensland, the Catholic sector seeks to continue to build on its strong partnership with the State government.

Slide 2

Examples:

Assisi College, Upper Coomera is a master planned P-12 College catering for more than 1,300 students in a high growth corridor.

The College was conceived, planned and fully constructed in a ten year period from 2002 at a total cost of almost $33m.

- State Government: $20 million ($19,965,792)
- Australian Government: $7.8 million ($7,764,639)
- School Funded: $5.1 million ($5,078,412)

Slide 3

Stage 1 of St Brigid’s School, Emerald opened this year with around 85 students.

St Brigid’s is master planned to be a 3 stream school with capacity to grow to 500 students.

- Catholic community purchased land
- Stage 1 total cost $6.6 million ($6,602,382)
- State Government Funding $6.1 million ($6,119,035) *(Building our Future Schools Fund)*

Slide 4

While the Catholic community contributes significant funding making new Catholic schools like Assissi and St Brigid’s very cost-effective for taxpayers, they cannot be developed without State government support.

Slide 5

The Catholic sector also continues to look for efficiencies and explore innovative solutions in developing new schools such as:

- Building strong partnerships with local contractors
- Inner city high-rise
- Split timetables and shared ovals
- Power-saving and environmentally sustainable features

Slide 6

Key areas for ongoing partnership development with State government include:

- Sourcing and purchasing suitable land. The work of the Schools Planning Commission to develop detailed demand mapping has greatly assisted us
Local government infrastructure costs can be prohibitive. We believe legislative progress is being made to achieve fair outcomes for education providers.

State Government grants such as Building our Future Schools Fund are vital and should be guaranteed and increased into the future to match growing demand.

Slide 7

- There is a great deal of work happening, but a big challenge ahead.

Thank you

Mike Byrne

Thank you Pam.

I would now like to invite Minister John Paul Langbroek to say a few words

Mike Byrne concludes

Thank you Minister and thank you Pam.

It is certainly a big challenge that we all are facing.

We welcome the initiatives of the Newman government, in particular the Schools Planning Commission and the ‘Building our Future Schools’ fund, which have greatly assisted us, and we look forward to these continuing into the future.

Above all we welcome the Minister and State Government’s willingness to work in partnership with us, as evidenced by your presence here and words tonight. Thank you Minister.

I also thank all Members of Parliament for being here. Your interest in this issue and support within your local electorates is vital.

I encourage you now to seek out our Catholic sector leaders and representatives to discuss these issues in more detail, and especially any issues that might be relevant to your own electorates.

Could Diocesan representatives and QCEC New Schools Committee members please raise your hands?

Once again, thank you everyone for coming tonight.

I invite you to stay on to discuss these issues and enjoy the hospitality.

Good evening.