Mr Byrne was speaking to clarify the Catholic sector position after recent reports in the media that have included lists of schools and amounts of funding they could potentially lose if current funding arrangements are not maintained.

“The Catholic sector already operates as the lowest resourced schooling sector in Australia and any potential loss of funding is extremely concerning,” Mr Byrne said.

“What is critical into the future is that the overall amount of funding delivered to the Catholic sector does not decrease in real terms, regardless of the model used to deliver those funds.”

Mr Byrne said the financial information published on the My School website in March this year shows that average Catholic school net recurrent income per student is $10,000, compared with average government school income per student of $11,100.

“What is critical into the future is that the overall amount of funding delivered to the Catholic sector does not decrease in real terms, regardless of the model used to deliver those funds.”

Mr Byrne said the financial information published on the My School website in March this year shows that average Catholic school net recurrent income per student is $10,000, compared with average government school income per student of $11,100.

“This is even taking into account average parent and community contributions to Catholic schools of $3,200 per student,” he said.

“In effect, Australia’s 1,700 Catholic schools that educate 704,000 or 1 in 5 children, operate at an average resourcing level that is around 11% lower than State schools.

Mr Byrne said Catholic schools strive to cater for the needs of all students and families, and welcome students from diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds, including from some of the most disadvantaged communities in Australia.

“However, while they operate efficiently and effectively, this commitment has meant that Catholic schools are relatively under-resourced,” he said.

“The Catholic sector is keen to see vibrant schools in all sectors working for better learning outcomes for all young people, and a better future for all families and for Australia.

“We believe the Gonski review provides an opportunity for governments and Catholic education to work together to improve equity in Australian schooling by building together on the strong performance of Catholic schools,” Mr Byrne said.

The full Catholic sector submission to the Gonski Review can be found on the QCEC website at www.qcec.catholic.edu.au.
Catholic Sector Welcomes Decision on Year 7 Move

QCEC Executive Director Mike Byrne welcomed the recent announcement by the Premier that Year 7 will become part of secondary school in Queensland from 2015.

“This move will be educationally beneficial for our children and needs to be made if Queensland is to maintain a world class education system,” he said.

“The move will more closely align Queensland school structures with the Australian curriculum and better enable teachers to deliver the specialist programs required by students of this age.

“Since the introduction of the Prep Year students moving into Year 7 will be a year older and ready to be challenged by the greater options and specialist teachers that the secondary school setting provides.

“I believe parents will also welcome the announcement as it now gives them a firm timeframe for clarifying secondary school options for their children.”

Mr Byrne said the transition would be a major undertaking both educationally and in terms of staffing and facilities for Catholic schools.

“Projections indicate that more than 10,000 additional students will need to be accommodated at the State’s 85 Catholic secondary colleges from 2015,” he said.

The QCEC meets monthly in Brisbane however commits to meet and visit regional schools in one of the five Queensland dioceses annually.

Environmental Sustainability Statement Launched

The QCEC’s position statement on environmental sustainability, Education for Sustainable Futures in Catholic Schools in Queensland was officially launched prior to the Commission meeting at Xavier College, Hervey Bay by Fraser Coast Mayor Mick Kruger.

The position statement advocates that Catholic schooling authorities should establish or enhance long-term goals of educating for a sustainable future and place stewardship of the environment at the forefront of their activities.
Catholic sector on target to reach 'One to One' computer ratio

The Queensland Catholic education sector is on target to achieve a 1:1 computer to student ratio across Years 9-12 by the end of this year. QCEC Executive Officer ICT Liam Garvey, says 22,000 computers have been rolled out in the State’s 94 Catholic secondary schools under the Federal government’s National Secondary School Computer Fund (NSSCF) meaning all Round 1 and 2 targets have been met within the required time frames.

“A further 12,000 computers will be purchased by the end of this year bringing the total deployed to 34,000 and effectively achieving the program aim of a 1:1 model for all Year 9-12 students in Queensland Catholic schools,” he said.

Mr Garvey said that “a significant proportion of the $28m available for on-costs associated with the effective deployment of the computers had also been used to support the rollout.

“By the end of this year, the Australian government will have provided in excess of $65m for computers and on-costs with some additional money earmarked for contributing towards the maintenance of computers once the 1:1 target is achieved.

“Queensland Catholic school authorities recognise the benefits that teaching and learning through technology brings for students.

“The NSSCF program has allowed Catholic schools to move forward more quickly and effectively in this area than they otherwise would have been able to,” Mr Garvey said.

Safer Schools 2011 - Student Protection Training

Over 75 staff representing Catholic schools and authorities across the state came together for a student protection in-service training day, Safer Schools 2011 in May.

The day was highlighted by keynote addresses on ‘The Interface between Catholic Schools and Department of Communities (Child Safety)’ and ‘Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence (QSAAV) and The Declaration Against Bullying and Violence’.

Executive Secretary to the Commission, Mike Wilkinson, said the day provided both valuable insights into child safety best practice as well as an opportunity to build on good relationships with Department officials and police.

“Having the opportunity to engage directly with these ‘outside’ agencies not only brings a broader perspective to the issues for our staff but also helps build relationships that will benefit both the agencies, the schools and ultimately the children in our care,” he said.

Digital Education Revolution Forum

More than 50 representatives of Queensland Catholic school authorities took part in an annual Digital Education Revolution Forum organised by QCEC in late March. The forum focussed heavily on innovative uses of technology to support teachers and students as co-creators of educational experiences.
"Kids Connect' With Catholic Education Week

"Kids Connect" is a technology-based learning conference run 'by kids for kids' and will, for the first time, be held during Catholic Education Week this year to help highlight the theme for celebrations Excelling in Education – heart, mind and spirit.

Catholic Education Week will be a sponsor of the event that will be attended by around 150 Year 5-7 students from Catholic schools at Brisbane’s New Farm Powerhouse on 27 and 28 July.

The conference is an initiative of Information Communication Learning Technology Activator Paul Shaw who works across three Brisbane Catholic Education schools and was first run in 2004.

Kids Connect focuses on students working together to develop an event for other students at which they are challenged to explore the use of technology in a supportive and dynamic environment with a valid educational purpose.

“The core outcome of the conference is that students and teachers, in conjunction with expert facilitators, have the chance to use technology and software to create a presentation based around the theme of the conference,” Mr Shaw said.

The conference will be organised for the second year in a row by Year 7 students at St Thomas’s School, Camp Hill with their teacher Anna Wavell-Smith.

QCEC Executive Director Mike Byrne visited the organising class recently to present a sponsorship cheque for $2000.

“I am pleased that the Catholic Education Week planning committee has forged this partnership with Kids Connect in a year where Catholic education celebrates and showcases Excelling in education – heart, mind and spirit.

“Events such as this highlight the commitment of the Catholic sector in Queensland to innovation and leadership in education,” Mr Byrne said.

Mr Byrne said the sponsorship of Kids Connect had helped break new ground with teachers and students from regional dioceses invited to participate for the first time.

“At this stage I understand that teachers from the Diocese of Rockhampton as well as teachers and students from the Toowoomba Diocese will participate.”

The Kids Connect website www.kids-connect.net provides details of the conference and has information about the sessions that will be available.

QCEC Executive Director Mike Byrne signs off on a sponsorship arrangement with Kids Connect public relations team member Gabrielle Dallas representing the St Thomas’s Camp Hill organising class. Also in the photo are St Thomas’s Year 7 teacher Anna Wavell-Smith, Kids Connect initiator Paul Shaw and Catholic Education Week planning committee representative Jane Connolly.

From the Editor

Many thanks to all who contributed to this edition of "With Vision and Spirit".

Please forward any suggestions and/or feedback to:

Gerard Delaney
gerardd@qcec.catholic.edu.au

Queensland Catholic Education Commission
GPO Box 2441 Brisbane 4001
Ph: (07) 3336 9350  Fax: (07) 3229 0907

www.qcec.catholic.edu.au