



Financial Information about Brisbane Catholic Education and our schools

These are some of the commonly asked questions about Brisbane Catholic Education and the Community of Catholic schools in the Brisbane

What is the role of Brisbane Catholic Education?

The Archbishop delegates to Brisbane Catholic Education as his agent the responsibility for provision of a range of educational services. This involves the administration of 133 Catholic schools in the Archdiocese.

How are these services funded?

Support services to those outside Catholic schools are funded directly by the Archdiocese. School funding comes from a mixture of government grants and fees and charges at the local level.

What types of schools comprise the “system”?

	Number	Students as at Feb 10
Primary Schools		
Archdiocesan	5	2070
Parish	97	39135
Total	102	41206
Secondary Schools		
Archdiocesan	17	10956
Parish	5	3358
Total	22	14314
P-12 Schools		
Archdiocesan	7	6846
Parish	2	1945
Total	9	8791
Total BCE Schools	133	64312

There are over 6,000 staff employed in schools and colleges within Brisbane Catholic Education schools.

Within the Archdiocese there are also 20 secondary colleges in Brisbane conducted by religious orders. These colleges are independent of Brisbane Catholic Education and cater for approximately 19,000 students.

Who has financial responsibility for the parish schools?

Parishes have overall financial responsibility for parish schools and colleges. In parish schools Brisbane Catholic Education is responsible for provision of:

- ~ teaching and ancillary staff;
- ~ central services (payroll, curriculum support, financial services, building and planning services, marketing, IT Services, support for special needs students, religious education consultancy and professional development).
- ~ a small amount of funding for “School Renewal” which includes both some resources for parish schools and provision for professional development of staff.

What financial responsibility does Brisbane Catholic Education have for Archdiocesan schools?

All Archdiocesan schools and colleges operate similarly to Parish schools although there is central accountability for budget and building approvals.

What contribution is made by local communities?

All schools in the local school communities use fees, levies and fund raising to pay for:

- ~ buildings and grounds
- ~ local government, electricity and other charges
- ~ teaching resources and materials
- ~ Archdiocesan Education Levy (explained below).

Within the resources available at a local level, schools may also choose to contribute (after payment of the Archdiocesan Education Levy) to the employment of extra "above schedule" staff, extra professional development costs for teachers, the purchase of equipment and other needs.

Some parishes also support the schools within their parish with a contribution from parish collections.

Brisbane Archdiocesan Colleges (BAC's) operate in a more centralised model of responsibility. These Archdiocesan Colleges also set levies for resource enhancement and material costs for subjects.

These are retained by the Colleges.

What are the sources of recurrent income for Brisbane Catholic Education?

	\$m	%
Commonwealth grants	347	72
State grants	107	22
Archdiocesan Education Levy	17	4
Other	8	2

Source: 2010 recurrent budget as at February 2010

Notes:

1. These figures do not include fees retained at parish level or income generated by parish or parent groups within the schools and colleges.

How does the Commonwealth government contribute to costs?

The major contribution from the Commonwealth is via recurrent per capita grants. These are based on the SES (Socio Economic Status) of a school or system.

The SES is the measure used by the Commonwealth in calculating recurrent grants for schools. Each school is classified according to the socio economic status of the parent body of the school as assessed by residential area and census statistics. The average SES nationally is 100. Catholic school systems are funded at SES 96 which is set at 56.2% of the average cost of providing education in a government school.

From 2005 the Commonwealth increased funding to Catholic systems by providing funding on behalf of all schools below SES 96 at their SES level. All funds for Queensland schools flow first to the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and are redistributed according to agreed formulae.

In 2009 the average per capita rates received by Brisbane Catholic Education are estimated to be:

Primary \$4,844 per student

Secondary \$6,749 per student

How is State government funding determined?

State government funding for all non-government schools is set at 21% of the cost of an agreed “basket” of costs associated with the education of a child in a government school. This funding is then divided on a per capita basis. 77.5% is allocated as a per student grant and the remaining 22.5% allocated on the basis of need assessed as a combination of SES and school resources, isolation, students with disabilities, ESL, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders enrolments.

In 2010 the average per capita rates received by Brisbane Catholic Education are estimated to be:

Primary	\$1,455 per student
Secondary	\$2,146 per student

Are Catholic schools adequately funded from government?

All major political parties support the right of choice of parents to choose schooling that meets the needs of their child and to receive government funding for that schooling. The parties differ on the way in which they allocate funding to individual schools and groups of schools.

Approximately 80% of funding for our Catholic schools comes from government. Schools, and in particular parents, need to be aware that good contact between the school community and local politicians regarding funding is essential, particularly at key periods such as election times.

There continues to be a gap between what governments spend on a State school child and a Catholic school child. On average, Catholic schools operate with government assistance of no more than:

Primary	75%	Secondary	77%
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Who lobbies government on behalf of Catholic schools?

All Catholic schools in Queensland are represented at State level through the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC). The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), based in Canberra, represents all Australian Catholic students at a national level.

Parents, as voters, hold the greatest sway with government. In conjunction with the QCEC the Archdiocesan and State Federation of Parents and Friends Associations have been very influential in shaping government response to Catholic school requests for a reasonable share of funding.

How are fees established in Catholic schools?

The Catholic Education Council of the Archdiocese sets minimum recommended fees and charges on an annual basis. These minimum recommended fees are used as a guide by schools in the establishment of their own fees and levies which are set each year in consultation with the local school community. In 2010, the recommended fee levels are:

Primary	Primary (Prep - Yr 7)	\$832 per student
		\$1,168 for two children
		\$1,428 per family of 3 or more students
	Building fund contribution \$420 per primary school family	
Secondary	Junior Secondary	\$1,756 per student
	Senior Secondary	\$2,928 per family (2 students or more)
		An additional fee of \$136 is charged for each child in senior secondary
	Building fund contribution \$540 per secondary school family	

What is Archdiocesan Education Levy?

The Archdiocesan Education Levy is a proportion of fees collected by all schools which is forwarded to the central administration to assist in making up the shortfall between government grants and the total cost of running our schools.

In the primary sector it is estimated that the income from Archdiocesan Education Levy funds approximately 100 full time teaching positions across all schools. A maximum of 15% of income from the levy may be transferred to the Catholic Futures Fund.

What is the Catholic Futures Fund?

The Catholic Futures Fund has been established to fund future school development throughout the Archdiocese. It services loans drawn down for the purchase of land in areas identified in Brisbane Catholic Education's demographic projections as requiring strategic school development. In addition to income from the levy there is provision, subject to annual approval from the Council of Priests and Catholic Education Council, for a family levy to be implemented across all schools to assist the fund. In 2010 this levy is \$3 per family per term (\$12 per family, per year).

How much funding is spent on central operations?

A maximum amount of 6% of total income for all schools, including school fees, can be spent on administration and centrally provided support services to schools. The figure of 6% was set following a review by an independent consultant in 1992. In any given year Brisbane Catholic Education Centre spends less than the 6% maximum allowable.

Does Brisbane Catholic Education always have a balanced budget?

Brisbane Catholic Education plans and presents a balanced budget each year. In some years any surplus accumulated by prudent budgeting in previous years is required to balance the budget.

What is the level of cash reserves allowable?

Brisbane Catholic Education Council has adopted a policy guideline which directs that the minimum level of general cash reserves must be the equivalent of 3 weeks salary costs across all schools. A level of 0.5% of recurrent expenditure is allowed above this minimum. All other cash reserves may only be reserved for identified and costed future contingencies eg. renewal of the LinCs (Linked Catholic Schools) ICT network in the future.

What accountability does Brisbane Catholic Education have for funding?

Both Brisbane Catholic Education and individual schools are accountable to the Commonwealth and State governments for all income and expenditure (not just government grants). An audit statement must be provided by a qualified accountant on behalf of each school and the system.

The "system" budget is submitted for approval to the Catholic Education Council and then to the Archbishop and the Archdiocesan Finance Board. The annual results are audited by Price Waterhouse Coopers and also forwarded by the Council to the Archbishop. The Council has for many years published a summary of its audited accounts as part of its annual report which is mailed to all parish priests, school principals and Parents & Friends groups.

What advantage is there in a centralised system?

The majority of students in Catholic schools throughout Australia attend schools administered by Diocesan offices of Catholic Education. These offices exist to provide a method of cross subsidisation and support among the member schools. Small schools, beginning schools and schools with declining enrolments are all examples of member schools which may need support in order to be able to provide services. Approximately half of the 132 schools within Brisbane Catholic Education would not be viable on a "stand alone" basis. They are subsidised by the remainder of our school communities. In essence, around half our schools do not generate enough income from government grants and Archdiocesan Education Levy to be able to survive on their own. Of course, principles of equity and justice need to be observed in this cross subsidisation. This is regularly monitored and formulae for distribution of staff and funding reviewed on a regular basis. A community of schools, because of its size, may also be able to deliver some services to its schools and students more effectively e.g. one central pay office, special need student support, services and other centralised consultancy services.

How are upgrading of schools and building of new schools funded?

For all schools the responsibility for Capital development lies locally. Brisbane Catholic Education Council recommends that each school establish a building fund to finance development and maintenance. Staff of the Brisbane Catholic Education Centre provide advice and assistance with development and maintenance issues to all schools.

Capital developments over \$50,000 must have approval of the Archbishop on the recommendation of the Planning Advisory Committee.

Is there government funding available for capital works?

For major projects, both parishes and Brisbane Catholic Education apply annually for State/Commonwealth support. These applications are processed through the Queensland Catholic Education Commission Capital Grants Committee. The Capital Grants Committee has representatives from each of the Queensland Dioceses and the congregational schools. Their task is to allocate available funds among annual applications from schools throughout Queensland.

All applicants to the Capital Grants Committee are required to provide a contribution to each project, usually by taking out a loan with the Archdiocesan Development Fund. This contribution and the size of the grant are assessed on the financial capacity of the applicant.