



# Annual Report

2020



**Brisbane  
Catholic  
Education**

teaching • challenging • transforming



## Table of contents

<b>Foreword</b> .....	1
<b>Our organisation</b> .....	2
About us .....	3
Governance .....	4
<b>Performance overview</b> .....	6
Strong Catholic identity.....	6
Excellent learning and teaching .....	8
Building a sustainable future .....	10
<b>Celebrations and awards</b> .....	12
Celebrations .....	12
Awards.....	12
<b>Finance report</b> .....	14
<b>Brisbane Catholic Education Strategic Plan 2021–2025: Future Learning Communities</b> .....	15

**Cover image: Let Your Light Shine by Angela Heilig**

Commissioned in 2020 to celebrate 70 years of Catholic Education in the Presentation and Franciscan Traditions at Our Lady of the Angels' Catholic Primary School, Wavell Heights.

Reproduced with permission of the School Principal for Brisbane Catholic Education, 2021.

## Foreword



### **Building future learning communities**

Welcome to the Brisbane Catholic Education Annual Report 2020.

As we started 2020, I spoke with our staff and school leaders about disruption. I must admit I was talking about it from the perspective of new technologies, adaptation, and resilience as we undergo changes as educators and as an organisation. Little did I know the level of disruption that was about to unfold. Our 2020 story is like no other in the history of Brisbane Catholic Education. In a year, where we should have had multiple events to celebrate 175 years of Catholic education in Queensland, we found ourselves pivoting into unknown territory as we responded to the COVID19 pandemic. At the start of the year the idea of schools without students was a foreign concept, but like so many things in 2020, it became our new normal with the lockdown in Term Two.

However, out of adversity arises innovation and I am enormously proud of how our staff, schools and students rose to the challenge of a new model of learning. I have always known that our partnership with our families and community is central to our success and that was proven as we worked side-by-side to deliver learning at home. I am incredibly grateful for the courage, passion, and commitment our teachers, school leaders, students and their families have shown throughout this incredible year.

But 2020 was about more than a response to the pandemic. It was also our final year for the 2017-2020 strategic plan, and we laid the foundations for the next 2021-2025 Future Learning Communities strategic plan. Looking back over our strategic priorities we have achieved much under our goals to strengthen our Catholic identity; support excellent learning and teaching; and build a sustainable future for Brisbane Catholic Education schools. This success has enabled us to develop the strategic architecture for the next five years and continue our mission to teach, challenge and transform the 74,000+ students in our 144 schools.

From St Ann's School at Redbank Plains which opened this year to St Joseph's School at Kangaroo Point which celebrated its 150th anniversary – every school is part of our rich history. Brisbane Catholic Education is proud to support these schools so they can deliver educational excellence in a supportive, safe, and faith-filled community.

It is with pride I present the Brisbane Catholic Education 2020 annual report.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pam Betts".

**Pam Betts**  
Executive Director,  
Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane

## Our organisation

### Fast Facts Snapshot

#### Our Schools



**144**  
Schools

**107**  
Primary

**26**  
Secondary

**11**  
P-12

#### Our Students

Student enrolments over the past 5 years

2020 **74,579**

2019 **72,569**

2018 **71,655**

2017 **71,776**

2016 **71,482**

- **12.4%** of students in the Archdiocese of Brisbane attend a Brisbane Catholic Education school
- **60.5%** of students identify as Catholic
- **33** different religious faiths amongst students
- **9.7%** of students have a language background other than English
- **2.8%** of students identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- **15.4%** of students have a disability\*

#### Our Employees



- **11,646** employees (headcount)
- **95.6%** of employees are school based
- **4.4%** of employees are office based
- **59.5%** of employees are teachers
- **107** employees per 1000 students (All BCE)\*\*
- **127** graduate teachers commenced their career in our schools in 2020
- **95.3%** staff retention rate
- **74.1%** of staff in schools identify as Catholic
- **36** different religious faiths amongst staff

\*This figure includes students reported under the Education Adjustment Program (EAP) and the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability. Previous annual reports only reported on the percentage of EAP students. \*\*This number is significantly higher than that reported in the 2019 annual report due to a previous calculation error.

## About us

Brisbane Catholic Education contributes to the development of young people through education, including their formation in Christian life. We provide high quality teaching and learning for more than 74,000 young people enrolled in our schools and colleges and employ more than 11,000 staff, most of whom work in schools. Our boundaries stretch from Queensland's southern border, west to Gatton and Gayndah and north to Childers and Hervey Bay.

Our system structure — clusters of schools supported by an office — is one of our greatest strengths as it enables collaborative practices. By working together for our mission, we share knowledge, leverage our expertise, and promote efficiencies. Catholic teachings are embedded across our system.

**Mission:** Our mission is **to teach, challenge and transform** through our service, support and leadership for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

**Vision:** We are a faith-filled learning community creating a better future.

### Values:

**Excellence** – inspired by our Catholic tradition, strive for excellence.

**Integrity** – as witnesses to the Good News of Jesus Christ, act ethically.

**Justice** – as people of faith, foster respectful relationships, advocating for and empathising for those at the margins.

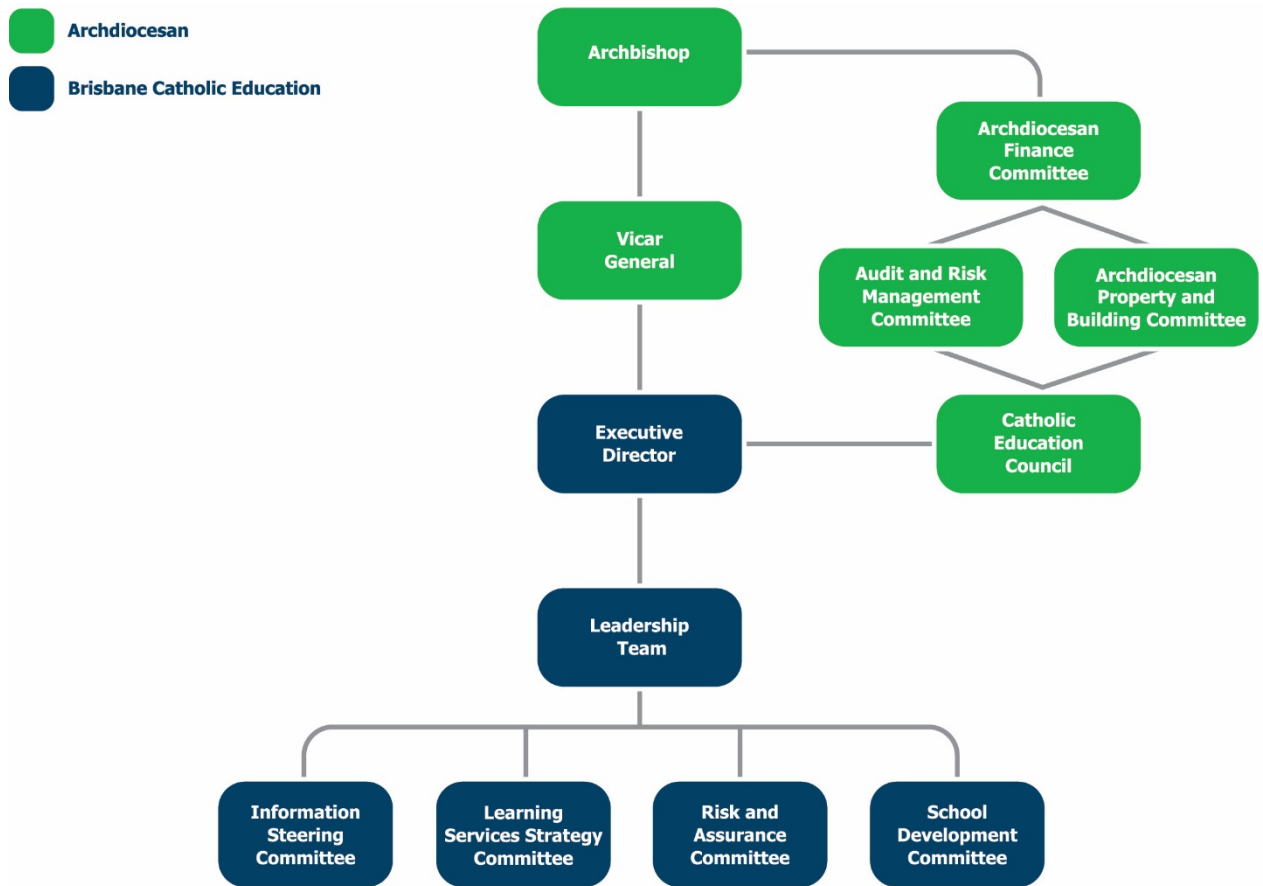
**Hope** – empowered by the Spirit, embrace the future with confidence.



## Governance

Good governance ensures we have effective and transparent processes in place for making decisions, are accountable, and meeting our civil, legal and canonical obligations. Our governance structures — including policies, processes, systems and structures — enable us to meet our responsibility for the administration and management of all Archdiocesan and parish schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Brisbane Catholic Education’s governance committees assisted the organisation to discharge its responsibilities through transparent decision making, and contributed to efficient and effective governance.



### Catholic Education Council

Under the leadership of Chair Mrs Jenny Parker, the Catholic Education Council acted as an advisory body to the Archbishop and Brisbane Catholic Education, and:

- provided advice on the responsibilities, policies and priorities of Brisbane Catholic Education
- monitored policy implementation in schools for which Brisbane Catholic Education is responsible and where appropriate, policy regarding religious education in Religious Institute schools
- provided oversight to policies, procedures and systems to safeguard assets, ensure accuracy and reliability of records and ensure adherence to Archdiocesan policies.

## Executive Team

The Executive Team consists of the senior executives of the organisation.



**Miss Pam Betts**  
Executive Director



**Dr Douglas Ashleigh**  
Learning Services  
Executive



**Mr Patrick O'Sullivan**  
Corporate Services  
Executive



**Ms Balveen Ajimal**  
Strategy and Performance  
Executive

During 2020, the team set the strategic direction for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane and provided support to the Executive Director in relation to delegated governance responsibilities.

## Leadership Team

The Leadership Team consists of the section/functional heads of the organisation. It provided support to the Executive Team throughout 2020, with a focus on ensuring responsible stewardship, and effective governance, systems and processes at an operational level.

## Internal governance committees

To coordinate key governance matters, the following internal governance committees operated in 2020:

- Information Steering Committee: ensured an enterprise approach to ICT strategy and investment that supports delivery of Brisbane Catholic Education's strategic objectives.
- Learning Services Strategy Committee: ensured an enterprise-wide and integrated approach to the development, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the program of work arising from the Brisbane Catholic Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020 priorities for Strong Catholic Identity and Excellent Learning and Teaching.
- Risk and Assurance Committee: provided oversight, coordination and evaluation of matters relating to enterprise-wide risk management, compliance and internal assurance.
- School Development Committee: provided proactive, responsive and strategic advice for property provision, acquisition, construction and attribute change for proposed new and existing schools.

## Performance overview

This annual report provides information about Brisbane Catholic Education's progress and achievements for 2020 against the Brisbane Catholic Education Strategic Plan 2017–2020. This is the final annual report on the Strategic Plan 2017–2020. During 2020, following extensive consultation and engagement, the Brisbane Catholic Education Strategic Plan 2021–2025: Future Learning Communities was finalised. This plan sets our direction for the next five years, and will form the basis of future annual reports. The Strategic Plan 2021–2025 can be viewed at the end of this report.

The emergence of COVID-19 in early 2020 provided many challenges throughout the year. To ensure the continued delivery of learning and teaching we established the Brisbane Catholic Education COVID-19 Emergency Response Team, worked closely with the Queensland Catholic Education Council, and used innovative approaches to deliver learning at home, professional development, and formation activities. Despite having to reassess our priorities, we were able to continue our progress against the Strategic Plan 2017–20 and its three themes of: Strong Catholic identity, Excellent learning and teaching, and Building a sustainable future.



### Strong Catholic identity

#### Mission

In early 2020, Brisbane Catholic Education students participated in the national Plenary Council's Listening and Discernment process through the Student Plenary Assembly 2020. The Assembly was one of the most significant gatherings of young people for the Listening and Discernment phase, with submissions from the event sent to the Plenary Council Writing Committees for consideration.

The new role of Spiritual Direction and Mission Lead was created to help the office and schools enhance and deepen their spirituality as faith filled learning communities creating a better future.

A new, rebranded Catholic Identity site was launched. This external facing site is a central repository of professional development information and teaching resources for our employees, as well as those in other Catholic schools.

Unfortunately, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the planned Brisbane Catholic Education led 2020 Gather Conference was cancelled. This event aimed to share emerging ideas and practice around contemporary Catholic Identity, and celebrate 175 years of Catholic education in Queensland and 200 years of Catholic education in Australia.



## Formation

Although formation events were impacted by COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, by reducing participant numbers for face-to-face events and/or using online technology, staff, students and families were able to take part in events throughout the year. Highlights included:

- The Religious Education Accreditation Program was offered online for the first time, making it more accessible for staff. Through this program, teachers who do not hold academic qualifications in religious education or theology become qualified to teach religion in a Catholic school.
- Delivery of the formation and prayer resource Living Faith moved to online, allowing more school staff to participate, despite the restrictions.
- There was an increase in formation opportunities for office staff, including regular morning prayer and a monthly mass led by Father Anthony Mellor. New formation programs 'Be' and 'Call to Hope' were introduced with the aim of reconnecting staff with themselves and God.
- Mini virtual spiritual formation programs were offered to Assistant Principals Religious Education and Campus ministers.
- Spiritual and theological formation was delivered as a key component of the Early Career Teacher program.

## Learning and teaching

Our Catholic perspective permeates every aspect of school life, including the curriculum. Teachers continued to access professional development to ensure they have the knowledge and confidence to articulate a Catholic perspective in their teaching. This included self-directed online learning, and units delivered by Australian Catholic University.

Religion, Meaning and Life, an alternative non-accredited course for Year 11 and 12 students, began its trial. This innovative, student-centred program developed in collaboration with Australian Catholic University aims to enable students to engage in a variety of religious experiences and service-learning opportunities.

## Culture

As part of celebrating 175 years of Catholic education we created a virtual choir. This project brought together the collective voices, energy and joy of the Brisbane Catholic Education community through the singing of "We Are", a song composed by Brisbane Catholic Education employees.

Over 70 schools continued to engage enthusiastically with the Catholic Dialogue Schools project. Schools explored a contemporary, evidence-based approach to nurturing identity and inviting communities into a relationship with Jesus and the Catholic faith. We commenced analysing and deepening our understanding of the data from the Catholic Dialogue Schools project.



## Excellent learning and teaching

### Learning from home

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, education providers across the globe embraced alternate education provision through online delivery, and Brisbane Catholic Education was no different. Significant planning and preparations were undertaken during Term 1, with teachers recording lessons, participating in focused Microsoft Teams training, and collaborative planning. Term 2, 2020 saw the majority of Brisbane Catholic Education students learning from home, however schools remained open for vulnerable children and children of essential workers.

To ensure a holistic learning from home experience, teachers, students and parents had access to a range of resources and guidance materials. In addition to embracing new ways of delivery of the curriculum, school leaders continued to manage student protection risks, and provide a range of supports to students and families.


While there were many challenges presented during the learning from home period, it also presented opportunities to adopt new ways of delivering the curriculum, some of which will have continuing benefits for Brisbane Catholic Education.

### Progress and achievement

In 2020, Brisbane Catholic Education senior students, with their peers from across Queensland, became the first cohort to graduate with the new Queensland Certificate of Education. Many students also received an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), which replaced the Overall Position system as a measure for direct entry into a university course. Key achievements included:

- 93.0% of Brisbane Catholic Education students completed school with a Queensland Certificate of Education or Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement. This was a decrease from 2019's result of 95.6%.
- 93.5% of Brisbane Catholic Education's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students received a Queensland Certificate of Education, up from 91.9% in 2019.
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) continued to be a significant aspect of senior learning in Brisbane Catholic Education schools with 4,375 VET Certificates awarded to 2,047 of the 3,461 students who completed Year 12. Of these, 41.4% (1,432) students attained a VET Certificate III or higher.





Our learning and teaching strategy, Excellent Learning and Teaching: Moving Forward continued to unite all schools and the office with a shared purpose and a common language; improve data literacy; and progress the embedding of the Brisbane Catholic Education Model of Pedagogy, and effective and expected practices. Under the strategy:

- Schools continued to participate in Brisbane Catholic Education literacy and numeracy monitoring tools. These tools are used to collect student learning data to help teachers to evaluate students' progress and plan for targeted teaching.
- Although impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, teachers continued to participate in a range of professional learning activities to build their capacity to embed and sustain effective practices in teaching of reading and writing.
- As part of the NuMa (Numeracy and Mathematics) Strategy, collaborative capacity building strategies and other job-embedded and school-based professional learning was delivered to address needs of teachers and primary learning leaders. Some schools also employed diagnostic tools to determine the understandings of their students and make professional decisions about planning and teaching mathematics.


Prior to the decision by Education Council on 20 March to cancel NAPLAN for 2020, Brisbane Catholic Education schools participated in a range of professional learning activities, including refresher and national protocol training run by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, and readiness training to transition to NAPLAN Online. Preparation continued for NAPLAN 2021 including the development of readiness resources to support transition to NAPLAN Online.

### **Engagement and wellbeing**

Brisbane Catholic Education continued to create quality learning opportunities for all students and to grow engagement and wellbeing. During the alternate education provision, our schools and their staff continued to monitor the learning, engagement and wellbeing of students. The simple process used to monitor student wellbeing was LAMBS, that is: Learning – Attendance – Mental health and wellbeing – Behaviour – Safety.

The second annual (COVID-safe) Festival of Ideas took place in The Edge at the State Library in October. Run for students, by students, the Festival of Ideas provided a platform for students in Years 7-12 to discuss five of the key student-identified issues that impact on young people's educational experience: student voice, learning, belonging, mental health, and safety. The event empowered students, giving them the opportunity to help shape a safe, more inclusive and student-focused education system within Brisbane Catholic Education for all students. Students voted for mental health to be the student voice focus in 2021.





Our schools continued to establish partnerships with families to improve the engagement, progress, achievement and wellbeing of each student. To support schools, a new Family Engagement Guideline, which describes practical steps to assist forge strong and positive family-school partnerships, was published.

In 2020, Brisbane Catholic Education continued partnerships with organisations to support student mental health and wellbeing initiatives:

- SchoolTV, an online wellbeing platform, was rolled out across the Brisbane Catholic Education community. This provides schools and parents with free, independent and fact-based information on developing safe, happy and resilient young people.
- We partnered with the BeYou (Beyond Blue) state team to provide evidence based online professional learning focused on growing mentally healthy communities, with teachers able to gain accreditation for completion of the modules.

Schools were supported to improve and embed their Student Behaviour Support plans. Learning resources and professional development was provided in relation to positive behaviour for learning and building teacher capacity to respond to student bullying.

### **Building a sustainable future**

#### **Supporting the Brisbane Catholic Education community**

The wellbeing of the Brisbane Catholic Education community was a focus during 2020, as we worked together to manage the significant and unplanned impacts COVID-19 had on our usual daily lives—at home and at work. Whilst there were many factors beyond our control, we took steps to protect and enhance the mental health and wellbeing of our students and staff. Resources, including guides which collated helpful information, were developed for staff. These helped leaders look after their own wellbeing so that they could do the important job of leading and supporting others, and encouraged all staff to take active steps to manage stress levels, maintain positive social interactions and ask for help when needed.

We introduced a number of measures to financially support families in our schools during 2020. We prioritised support for those families who had been impacted by the economic consequences of COVID-19 so they could continue to participate and benefit from the continuity of education, pastoral care and community support which our schools provide. Our key measures included:

- Offering a 10% reduction in Term 2 school tuition fees, with parents who needed additional financial support encouraged to apply for a fee concession.
- Increasing provision for fee concessions, with a simplified process implemented.
- Crediting unspent levies (e.g. a levy for an excursion that did not proceed) against outstanding tuition fees.

#### **People and capability**

It was the final year of the Brisbane Catholic Education Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2017-2020, and although several activities were postponed due to COVID-19, a number of initiatives were progressed including:

- The Brisbane Catholic Education Reconciliation Action Plan was officially launched at the February 2020 Brisbane Catholic Education Office staff day. As part of the Reconciliation Action Plan, we focused on developing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment Strategy. This work is ongoing.
- Implementation of a new flexible working arrangements policy for office staff to assist in making it easier for staff to integrate work, life and family responsibilities.

As a result of the strategy there has an increased focus on improving workforce diversity and inclusion, in particular:

- Key barriers of women progressing into principalship have been identified and a program created to help female employees overcome these.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are increasingly being incorporated in BCE's structures and systems.

Developing early career teachers — teachers in their first 400 days of teaching — to become confident and competent members of their school communities continued to be a focus in 2020. This cohort of teachers received individualised school-level support, targeted professional learning and Christ-centred formation experiences, despite the disruption of COVID-19.

Implementation of a new model of workplace health and safety resourcing for schools was finalised during 2020. The new model provides school centric advice and support wherein each workplace health and safety team member partners with their portfolio of schools to achieve improvements in the management of workplace health and safety risks. To further support the health of staff, a new injury hotline service was launched. InjuryAssist provides staff with free, immediate treatment advice following an injury, to ensure that the right support is provided at the right time.

### **Stewardship of resources with transparency, accountability and compliance**

In 2020, Archbishop Mark Coleridge blessed and officially opened St Ann's School, Redbank Plains, which welcomed approximately 98 students into Prep to Year 3. When it reaches full size, the school will be a four-stream school catering for 780 students and employing around 50 teachers and support staff.



We established the Internal Capital Assistance Program to provide coordinated and planned support for five high priority school facility projects. The program assists those schools whose Block Grant Authority financial obligation is unaffordable, or with critical infrastructure works that they cannot fund themselves.

Our central parent communication tool — the parent portal — was updated to better meet parents' needs. As well as giving it a new look and providing a better user-experience for parents using a mobile device, functionality was improved including the process for the notifying of school absentees.

A new model for managing school performance and compliance was developed, the termly HealthCheck, for implementation in 2021. The HealthCheck will drive both school and enterprise strategy, performance and compliance improvement, with aggregated quarterly reporting.

We continued work to upgrade our finance system, with the design phase completed at the end of 2020. When implemented in 2022, the new Cloud-based platform will improve data-driven decision making, and enhance financial reporting and ensure greater transparency.

Legal Counsel has continued to develop and refine contractual precedent materials containing fair and reasonable terms and conditions which are protective of BCE's interests. Legal Counsel supports both office and schools in negotiating contractual arrangements with external parties.

## Celebrations and awards

### Celebrations



#### **70-year anniversary for Our Lady of the Angels, Wavell Heights**

The Our Lady of the Angels' School community celebrated 70 years of Catholic education in Wavell Heights. Music and art took centre stage with the school premiering the video of their song "One Heart – One Song", written in collaboration with Queensland singer/songwriter, Josh Arnold.

#### **The Gratitude Initiative**

The Gratitude Initiative was born out of the cancellation of our annual Excellence Awards. Given the extraordinary challenges faced by educators, an act of gratitude was extended to all employees in 2020. The move to supporting students as they learned from home during Term 2 was challenging and deserved to be rewarded. Schools and office teams hosted functions to thank staff for their exceptional work during the disruption of COVID-19.

#### **Year 12 graduates celebrate with medallion**

Brisbane Catholic Education presented more than 3,000 Year 12 students with a special 2020 medallion exclusively created to mark an extraordinary year of disruption to their final year of schooling. Each medallion was inscribed with a Gospel quote, words of acknowledgment and images reflecting our shared faith.

### Awards

#### **Child Protection Week award**

Brisbane Catholic Education's Student Voice initiative was recognised at the Queensland Child Protection Week Awards, with the Youth Participation Award. The award recognises Queenslanders who work with vulnerable and at-risk children across Queensland, through the theme *Putting Children First*. The Student Voice initiative aims to give our primary and secondary students an opportunity to co-create safer and more inclusive school communities and empower students to engage in conversations about safety in their school.



#### **Spirit of Catholic Education Award**

The Spirit of Catholic Education Awards are state-wide awards that recognise outstanding contributions by individuals within the Catholic education community and are presented annually as part of Catholic Education Week celebrations. Paul Barrett, a teacher at St Augustine's Parish Primary School, Currumbin Waters was recognised for his work in helping families affected by the 2019-20 bushfires with a prestigious Archdiocese of Brisbane Spirit of Catholic Education Award. Paul's 'Positive pictures for bushfire victims' program resulted in hundreds of letters of encouragement and colourful pictures of positivity being drawn at St Augustine's and sent south to Catholic schools for distribution to families.



**Award for St Mary's College teacher**

Amy Kiss, a Year 11-12 physics and inclusive education teacher at St Mary's College, Maryborough topped an online Top Teacher poll run by the Fraser Coast Chronicle. The community award recognised the positive impact Ms Kiss is having on her students and their families.



**Caltex award winner**

Hannah White from St Benedict's College, Mango Hill received the Caltex Best All Rounder Award and was recognised for being an exemplary student across all areas and showed confident leadership and discipline in her academic pursuit along with her personal conduct. The Year 12 graduate was presented the award for achievement in: academia, attitude, personal conduct, leadership, service, sport and the arts.

## Finance report

### Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 December 2020

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
<b>Revenue from Operating Activities</b>		
Government Recurrent Grants	925,786	860,297
School Fees and Levies	230,371	233,098
Interest Received	7,432	9,920
Other Revenue	18,407	16,920
	<b>1,181,996</b>	1,120,235
<b>Expenses from Operating Activities</b>		
Staffing Costs	871,812	822,934
QCEC and NCEC Levies	2,648	3,239
Depreciation Expense	70,116	66,343
Interest Expense	13,615	12,832
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets	8,070	5,606
Other Expenses	204,996	214,330
	<b>1,171,257</b>	1,125,284
<b>Operating Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>10,739</b>	<b>(5,049)</b>
<b>Revenue from Non-operating Activities</b>		
Government Capital Grants	43,434	17,530
<b>Non-operating Surplus</b>	<b>43,434</b>	17,530
<b>Total Comprehensive Income</b>	<b>54,173</b>	12,481

In accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, government capital grants are recorded as Income. The capital grant income is utilised solely for capital projects and does not in any way fund the ongoing operations of the Agency.



# Brisbane Catholic Education Strategic Plan 2021–2025: Future Learning Communities





BANXXXXXXXX