

CSPQ Bi-Annual Conference Report

I attended the Catholic School Parents Queensland's ("CSPQ") Bi-annual State Conference held in Brisbane on 21 – 22 May 2022.

For those of you that don't know, CSPQ is our governing body for P&F organisations for Catholic School parents throughout Qld. They aim to be the voice for families within our Catholic schools, providing advocacy on key political issues and obtaining funding grants for the benefit of us, our schools and ultimately our children's learning and wellbeing.

I attended with 5 other Diocesan Reps from Cairns, each coming from different schools throughout our region (St. Theresa's, Newman College, MacKillop, St Gerards and St Michaels). In addition to Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Brisbane reps were also in attendance.

We commenced the afternoon session with a presentation from Michael Kearney, a consultant from Leopard Tree, on Parent Leadership. It was aimed at Parent Engagement being "Fit for Future", given all of the uncertainty and unprecedented times our school communities have gone through as a result of covid.

He invited us as P&F groups to consider having an agile response that is Ethical, Sustainable and with a good governance approach, which he referred to as the 'ESG model'.

He suggested we should start with a Mission/Value Statement – get to know our "Why".

1. Get the WHY right;
2. Know the HOW (collaboration, open and transparent, treat with respect and love); and
3. Then, and only then, do the WHAT (carefully) - i.e. what can we be doing to improve parent engagement.)

CSPQ advised of the multiple resources on their website regarding Parent Engagement: <https://www.parentengagementcspa.edu.au/>

Michael has been engaged by CSPQ to undertake a review of CSPQ membership and whether it is 'fit for future'.

CSPQ advised they are looking to review the 'model constitution', thinking of moving towards a 'Charter', but only after the review by Michael has been finalised.

There were group discussions around what is needed by parent bodies from CSPQ and some ideas that could be implemented to assist parents in working in the parent engagement space. Some ideas included short podcasts for information on their website, rather than reading through lots of material or developing an App where school P&Fs can share what they're doing with each other and CSPQ can provide information and resources through it as well.

On Sunday, they held their General Meeting and elected a new independent Chair, Rossi Mangano, who is originally from Cairns, but is now based in Brisbane.

A number of us who attended on the weekend had a better understanding of how CSPQ works and how we, as Family Connect, fit into it and this is despite a number of us being Diocesan Reps or on P&Fs for some time! So, if anyone is interested or has any other questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

I came away thinking we're very lucky at St Mary's Catholic College to have in Wayne and the leadership team the commitment to assisting us as Family Connect with parent engagement activities throughout the school.

Kind regards

Marina Dunstan
Diocesan Representative