

31 January 2022



Dear Catholic School Principal

Since inception in 2013, Catholic School Parents Australia (CSPA) has been seeking from the Australian government, recognition as one of the national, peak parent bodies. Whilst this recognition was in many ways accepted by the government, CSPA has not been in receipt of the same funding as that received by other national parent bodies. However, late in 2021, the government advised that CSPA would receive funding to enable us to work with them in various ways.

The Australian government has asked CSPA to enter into an agreement to inform them of existing and emerging issues that are of concern to Catholic school families, especially those issues that impact their children's health, wellbeing and/or learning. In particular, they are keen to hear the perspectives of parents and carers from families of children with challenges around learning, and from families with children in remote school settings.

School changes resulting from the pandemic have placed formidable challenge on some school communities and this no doubt will dominate the perspectives of many. On behalf of families, CSPA would like to thank Catholic schools for their overall response to COVID during this ongoing period of teaching/learning and wellbeing challenge for staff, students and families. Many stories have been shared of how schools have positively responded during this time.

CSPA represents and advocates for all families with children and young people in Australia's 1762 Catholic schools. CSPA works through the State and Territory Catholic parent bodies, in collaboration and consultation with the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), and is recognised by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference through the Bishops Commission for Catholic Education.

As a member of the Catholic Schools Stakeholder Forum, CSPA meets regularly with leaders from the Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association (ACPPA), Catholic Secondary Principals Australia (CaSPA) and the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC). This forum brings key stakeholder perspectives to the table when discussing national issues concerning Catholic education.

Commencing Term 2 in 2022, CSPA would like to work more closely through their member affiliates to gather the opinions of parents/carers, as referred to above. It is planned to collect evidence through a range of processes including surveys, interviews and strategic reference groups using a range of platforms. In doing so, CSPA will be mindful of not overburdening parents/carers

with requests for feedback. A key undertaking will be to fine tune communication pathways and mechanisms to garner these perspectives efficiently and effectively. All reporting to government will be completely anonymized, and in time, shared with you.

Since 2017, and with some resourcing from the Australian government, CSPA has been proactive in working with Catholic school principals and parents to better understand how to have parents/carers working in partnership with school staff to benefit the health, wellbeing and learning of our children, your students. The website www.parentengagementcspa.edu.au outlines the work undertaken to date and it is planned that new video resources for parents/carers and teachers, which are currently under development, will be added to the website later this year.

Over the past 200 years, many millions of families have sought a Catholic education for their children, and in doing so, have played a key role in assisting Catholic schools to flourish. CSPA is keen to take up this new opportunity to provide authentic Catholic school parent/carer perspectives to the Australian government.

Please do not hesitate to contact Carmel Nash (carmel@cspq.catholic.edu.au / 0421 633 915), a member of the CSPA Executive and the parent representative on NCEC, or John O'Brien (john.obrien@cspa.catholic.edu.au / 0428 283 754), CSPA Executive Officer, if you would like to discuss any matters raised in this letter.

In closing, I would like to wish you well in your vital role as leader of your school community and we look forward to your support as we undertake this work.

Yours sincerely



Karl Rodrigues
Chair

Members of Catholic School Parents Australia

Catholic School Parents Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn.

Council of Catholic School Parents NSW.

Catholic School Parents Queensland.

Catholic School Parents South Australia.

Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents Council.

Catholic School Parents Victoria.

Catholic School Parents Western Australia.

[Northern Territory Catholic parent body when formed].