



*We proclaim a crucified Christ*

1Cor1.23

20 December 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I take this opportunity to provide an update prior to Christmas on the progress of the School Governance Steering Committee.

As this work is undertaken, we must ensure that the rich legacy of Catholic education entrusted to us is protected, and that our mission is the primary focus of our work. One of the fruits of the work of the Church in Australia has been the contribution of parish schools in Catholic parishes across the land, sharing the Gospel and educating our children. Countless Australians have been formed and prepared for their vocation in a Catholic school, and it is important that we ensure the local Catholic school is a safe learning environment for everyone. I hope that all of us can be good stewards of this mission with which we are entrusted.

Various changes in recent years means that some approaches to this work must change. With legislative and compliance requirements rapidly becoming more complex for our schools, an unincorporated, sole-person governance model is increasingly unviable. A new governance model is needed, one that eases the administrative burden on our schools and parishes.

As announced earlier this year, a School Governance Steering Committee will guide our process towards a new governance model, to be in effect by 1 January 2021.

I am pleased that the Committee met yesterday, Thursday 19 December 2019, and they will need your prayers and support in the year ahead. The final membership, including the appointment of an independent chair, is as follows:

- Mr Gerard Dalbosco (Managing Partner, EY, Melbourne), **Chair**
- Tracy Connors (Catholic School Parents Victoria), parent representative
- Fr Michael Gallacher (Parish Priest, Glen Iris), clergy representative
- Jim Miles (Acting Executive Director, Catholic Education Melbourne)
- Anna Rados (Acting Assistant Director, Enterprise Services, Catholic Education Melbourne)
- Fr Mark Reynolds (Parish Priest, Surrey Hills Wattle Park), clergy representative
- Julie Ryan (Marist Schools Australia, Regional Director), Catholic Religious Institute and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons Victorian Schools Ltd representative
- Paul Sharkey (Director, Catholic Leadership and Governance, Catholic Education Melbourne)
- Christina Utri (Principal, Catholic Regional College, St Albans), secondary school representative

**Most Rev Peter A Comensoli**  
Archbishop of Melbourne



St Patrick's Centre, PO Box 146, East Melbourne VIC 8002 Australia  
Tel: +61 3 9926 5612 Email: [archbishop@cam.org.au](mailto:archbishop@cam.org.au)



## Archbishop of Melbourne

- Paul Velten (Acting Executive Director, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne)
- Victoria Wissell (Principal, St Brigid's School, Healesville), primary school representative
- Nigel Zimmermann (Principal Advisor to the Archbishop, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne)

Submissions, hopes and concerns will continue to be warmly received by the Committee at: [governance@cem.edu.au](mailto:governance@cem.edu.au). Regular communication updates will be sent to clergy, principals and others, beginning in February.

As changes come about from 1 January 2021, it will mean all of us making adjustments so that any changes can be successful, carrying out the commitment given by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) to implement a recommendation for parish priests to no longer be the employers of principals and teachers in Catholic schools (a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse). Similarly, we are ensuring that we respond to the requirements of the Betrayal of Trust recommendation, whereby organisations receiving funding for services to children must be incorporated and insured.

While the external requirements need to be recognised and adhered to, the key driver for reform remains faithfulness to God's mission, with the school as an educational expression of that mission within the parish.

In the [Patrick Oration](#) earlier this year I spoke of the mission priorities that will shape our steps ahead as we break new ground and plant seeds of faith, hope and love. As the governance arrangements are established, I wish to ensure that they are shaped by the following priorities for mission in the Archdiocese: local communities, families, youth and young adults, and the poor and broken. I invite you to participate in the shaping of the new governance arrangements by participating in the consultation process.

Please support the Committee with your thoughtful advice and prayer.

With every grace and blessing, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli  
Archbishop of Melbourne