



CONSTITUTION  
*of the*  
COUNCIL OF  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
PARENTS

November 2014

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## **PART I - PREAMBLE**

*When the Council of Catholic School Parents received recognition from the NSW Bishops in 1995 that they were the official voice of Catholic school parents in NSW/ACT, it marked the beginning of a new era of Church, family and school partnership. In so doing, it breathed life into the fundamental beliefs of: parents as the primary and principal educators of their children (Gravissimum Educationis); the collaborative relationship between parents and the school in educating children (Canon 796) along with the mutual role of school and parents in the Christian formation of children. (Pope Paul II, 2003).*

*Since that time there is a growing body of evidence that substantiates the importance of the role of the parent in school improvement, student achievement and wellbeing (Bryk, 2010, Aracy 2012). It is well-known that parental expectations; interest in schooling and attitude to schooling are key factors in a child's enjoyment and success at school. Emblematic of this, is the change in language from parent involvement to parent engagement.*

*The Council of Catholic School Parents has in its constitution and structure, a mechanism for responding and contributing to the continually evolving landscape of parent engagement, education policy and social cohesion.*

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

1. The love of Christ is central to our lives and our purpose.
2. Parents are the primary and natural educators of their children.
3. Parents have a right to choose a Catholic education for their children.
4. Catholic schools are instruments of the Church and are integral to the formation and development of children in faith, life and culture.
5. Catholic schools are a community where students, teachers and parents, school leaders and support staff, religious and clergy, work together for the common good.
6. Informed and empowered parents are effective advocates for the interests of students in Catholic schools.
7. Partnerships between students, parents, carers and families, and the broader community bring mutual benefits and maximise student engagement and achievement.

### **PURPOSE**

The principal purpose of the Council is to provide leadership, advocacy and support to parents of children in Catholic schools and Catholic school parent associations which is made manifest by

1. providing a state level forum where parents can consider, discuss and deliberate on issues that affect students and families in Catholic schools in NSW and ACT;
2. seeking to represent the interests of parents of all students in Catholic schools to state government, statutory and education authorities;
3. promoting and strengthening participation of all parents in Catholic schools in partnership with Bishops, Catholic education agencies and other organisations;
4. promoting and fostering links between family, school, Church and the community;
5. supporting the development and sustainability of parent organisations in the dioceses.

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## PART II - REGULATIONS

### 1. NAME AND STRUCTURE

- 1.1 The name of the Association is "Council of Catholic School Parents".
- 1.2 The Council of Catholic School Parents exists in Canon Law as a private association within the Church (CIC 299, §1).
- 1.3 The body operates under NSW legislation through a body corporate incorporated under the Roman Catholic Church Communities' Lands Act 1942 No 23.
- 1.4 The Constitution of the Council has been reviewed by the meetings of the Bishops of the Province on 8 March 1995 and 9 November 2000 (CIC 299, §3).

### 2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Where used in this Constitution the following expressions shall have the meanings hereby assigned to them:
  - (a) "Catholic Education" means the process of education that aims at the formation of the whole person in accordance with the beliefs, teachings, traditions and practices of the Catholic Church;
  - (b) "Catholic School Parent Organisation" means that organisation which is recognised by the school authorities as the official body representing all parents of the particular Catholic school community;
  - (c) "Chairperson" means the Chairperson of the Council of Catholic School Parents;
  - (d) "CIC" means the Code of Canon Law promulgated by Pope John Paul II on January 25, 1983;
  - (e) "Committee" means the Committee of the Council of Catholic School Parents;
  - (f) "Congregational School" means a school that is owned and governed by a Religious Congregation, also known as Independent Catholic School;
  - (g) "Congregational School Group" means the grouping of Congregational schools who have paid the current annual membership fee;
  - (h) "Consensus" decision-making arises out of shared responsibility and vision, mutual trust and recognition. It brings wider resources to the decision process with the whole group working toward a decision which may not be the one everyone wishes for but is one that everyone can accept, including those who disagree.
  - (i) "Corporations Law" means the Corporations Act 2001 of the Commonwealth, the Corporations (New South Wales) Act 1990 and any other enactment which applies to the Corporations Law to another State or Territory of the Commonwealth;
  - (j) "Deputy Chairperson" means the Deputy Chairperson of the Council of Catholic School Parents;

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- (k) "Diocesan Parent Organisation" means that organisation in any Arch/Diocese that has been established to represent all parents of students in Catholic Schools in the Arch/Diocese, and is acknowledged as such by the Diocesan Bishop;
  - (l) "Financial Year" means the year commencing on the first day of February in each year and terminating on the last day of January of the following year;
  - (m) "Member" means the Diocesan Parent Organisations and the Congregational School Group; and other such members deemed by the Council;
  - (n) "Parents" mean natural, adoptive or foster parents, guardians and caregivers of students (past and present) attending Catholic Schools in the Province;
  - (o) "Province" means the Province of Sydney established and erected in accordance with Canon Law, CIC 431, §1, comprising the Archdiocese of Sydney and the other Dioceses and including the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn;
  - (p) "Representative" means the person who is authorised to act as the representative of a member in accordance with Article 4;
  - (q) "School" refers to schools and Colleges engaged in Primary and Secondary education;
  - (r) "State" means the State of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

### **3. ROLE OF THE COUNCIL**

It is the role of the Council to:

- 3.1 represent the views of members to the Bishops and the NSW Catholic Education Commission.
  - 3.2 represent views to State-level committees and inquiries on education.
  - 3.3 make submissions to governments on issues pertinent to Catholic Schools.
  - 3.4 respond to governments and other bodies seeking views of Catholic school parents.
  - 3.5 monitor and evaluate policies of governments and other groups for impact on Catholic schools.
  - 3.6 act with Bishops and NSW Catholic Education Commission to influence governments regarding funding of Catholic schools.
  - 3.7 enter into appropriate arrangements with government, statutory authorities or educational bodies in the promotion of the interests of Catholic school parents.
  - 3.8 foster positive and fruitful relationships with other organisations in education in the attainment of its purposes.
  - 3.9 promote the CCSP through the use of Catholic media outlets, general media and other networking instruments as they emerge.
  - 3.10 provide a state-wide communication network to disseminate and exchange information among parents and parent organisations.
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#### **4. MEMBERSHIP**

- 4.1 Membership of the Council of Catholic School Parents is comprised of the eleven dioceses and one additional representative for the Congregational School Group, all of equal standing and right along with other bodies granted membership status from time to time by resolution of a two thirds majority of Council present at the meeting.
- 4.2 Where there is a diocesan parent organisation recognised by the diocesan Bishop and Director, that body is the member of the CCSP.
- 4.3 Where there is no parent body in existence or in the process of being set up, then a representative and alternate representative shall be appointed by the Bishop or Director of the Diocese and those persons shall have the same rights and standing as other members.
- 4.4 The Congregational School Group is constituted of those Congregational schools that have paid their membership fee on behalf of parents see (definition at 2.1 [g]). The Group shall be represented on Council by a nominee with a right to vote.

#### **5. REGISTER OF MEMBERS**

- 5.1 The Council shall keep a Register of Members in which shall be recorded the full name of each member, the date of commencement of membership, and a record of annual membership fees paid.

#### **6. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE**

- 6.1 The annual membership fee and the time and manner of its payment shall be reviewed annually at the annual general meeting.

#### **7. AUTHORISATION OF MEMBERS' REPRESENTATIVES**

- 7.1 Each member shall authorise a representative and alternate representative. The representative so authorised shall be entitled to exercise all the powers on behalf of the member that they represent.
- 7.2 The authorisation of each representative and alternate representative is to be given in writing and forwarded to the Council prior to the annual general meeting and presented to the annual general meeting.
- 7.3 There shall be only one authorised representative with voting rights from each member body acting for that member. An alternate representative from each member body may attend meetings and in the absence of the representative shall act for that member.
- 7.4 The alternate representative for the Chairperson's member association/diocese shall be entitled to vote for that member.
- 7.5 Tenure of representatives is determined in the case of members by their appointee and in the case of others by the Council of Catholic School Parents as required.
- 7.6 A representative may at any time resign as a representative by notice in writing to that effect and forwarded to the Council.

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## **8. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

- 8.1 An annual general meeting of the Council shall be held in each calendar year.
- 8.2 The annual general meeting shall be held at such time and place as the Council determines.
- 8.3 The business that is transacted at an annual general meeting shall include:
- (i) annual report of the Chairperson;
  - (ii) annual financial report;
  - (iii) decisions concerning the annual membership fee;
  - (iv) election of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and the Committee;
  - (v) appointment of the Auditor;
  - (vi) amendments to the Constitution;
  - (vii) set the date of the next annual general meeting twelve months hence.

## **9. ORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

- 9.1 The Council, in addition to the annual general meeting, shall meet at least three (3) times each calendar year at a time and place determined by the Council.
- 9.2 The Committee may at any time convene additional ordinary meetings of the Council.

## **10. PROCEEDINGS AT ALL MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

- 10.1 No business shall be transacted at any meeting of the Council unless a quorum representing a two thirds majority of members is present at the time when the meeting proceeds to business. The Council may meet in person, by telephone or electronic means of conferring.
- 10.2 If within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting a quorum is not present the meeting shall stand adjourned to the same day in the next week at the same time and place or to such other day and such other time and place as the Chairperson/Deputy Chairperson may determine and if at the adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour from the appointed time the meeting is dissolved.
- 10.3 The Chairperson shall preside at the annual general meeting and all ordinary meetings of the Council or in the absence of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson shall chair the meeting. In the absence of both, the representative the Chairperson has delegated shall chair the meeting.
- 10.4 Decision-making shall be by consensus but should an impasse occur a vote of members present will be taken and shall be decided by a show of hands.
- 10.5 Each representative (in accordance with Article 4) present at the meeting of the Council excluding the Chairperson and Past Chair are entitled to a vote. In the event of an equality of votes on any question, the Chairperson has the casting vote.

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- 10.6 Without prejudice to Article 19 no resolution shall be deemed to have been passed unless there is a minimum of two thirds of the members' present votes in favour of the resolution.
- 10.7 The Council is to ensure an accurate record is kept of the proceedings of its annual general meeting and all ordinary general meetings.
- 10.8 Minutes of the resolutions and proceedings of all meetings of the Council are to be made together with a record of the name of persons present at the meetings.
- 10.9 Copies of the minutes shall be forwarded to those entitled to receive them within twenty - one (21) days of the meetings.

## **11. OBSERVERS AT MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

- 11.1 Subject to the conditions determined by the Council or the Committee, the Council shall welcome to its meetings parents of Catholic School Parent Organisations in the Province.

## **12. CHAIRPERSON AND DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON**

- 12.1 The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are to be elected by the members at the annual general meeting either from its representatives or Council may elect an independent Chairperson subject to a resolution of Council with two thirds of members present entitled to vote in favour of such appointment.
- 12.2 The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are to be elected from among the representatives at the annual general meeting and shall hold office from the first day of February following the annual general meeting at which s/he is elected until the last day of January twelve months after taking office.
- 12.3 Whenever a casual vacancy occurs in the office of Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson shall assume this vacancy. The Council shall appoint one of the representatives to fill the vacancy of Deputy Chairperson if required.
- 12.4 No one shall serve more than three (3) consecutive terms as Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson. Provision can be made for an additional fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) term by resolution of the Council.
- 12.5 The duties of the Chairperson include:
- (i) convening and chairing the meetings of the Council;
  - (ii) delegating a representative to chair the meetings in his/her absence and the absence of the Deputy Chairperson;
  - (iii) representing the Council at meetings with government officials and other agents as required from time to time;
  - (iv) being an ex-officio member of the sub-committees of the Council;
  - (v) being responsible for the publication of all statements on behalf of the Council;
  - (vi) presenting the annual report.
- 12.6 The duties of the Deputy Chairperson shall include:
- (i) chairing the meeting in the absence of the Chairperson;
  - (ii) being an ex-officio member of the sub committees of the Council.

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### **13. COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL**

- 13.1 There shall be a Committee of the Council which shall consist of:
- (i) the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson ex-officio;
  - (ii) the Immediate Past Chairperson ex-officio for one year after the end of their term as Chairperson;
  - (iii) four (4) representatives elected at the annual general meeting.
- 13.2 Those elected to the Committee shall hold office from the day of their election to the day of the next election.
- 13.3 Whenever a casual vacancy occurs on the Committee, the Council shall appoint one of the representatives to fill the vacancy.
- 13.4 The duties of the Committee shall include:
- (i) planning and implementing the business of the Council;
  - (ii) acting on the Council's behalf between meetings of the Council;
  - (iii) being involved in the appointment of an Executive Director whose role it is to oversee the operation of the Secretariat;
  - (iv) providing for the safe custody of books, documents, instruments of title and securities of the Council.
- 13.5 The Committee shall meet at times and places determined by the Chairperson.

### **14. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES**

- 14.1 The Council may, as circumstances demand, appoint a Standing Committee or Standing Committees from amongst its number or persons co-opted by it and may prescribe the functions of any Standing Committee or Standing Committees. The Chair of such committees, or a nominee of the Standing Committee shall attend meetings of the Council with equal standing and right in the Council.
- 14.2 The Council may, as circumstances demand, appoint a sub-committee or sub-committees from amongst its number or persons co-opted by it and may prescribe the functions of any sub-committee or sub-committees.

### **15. INCOME AND PROPERTY**

- 15.1 The income and property shall be applied solely towards the attainment of the purposes and the fulfilment of the aims of the Council and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of profit to any member or representative provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the payment in good faith of remuneration to any officers or employees of the Council or to any member or representative or to any other person in return for any service actually rendered to the Council.

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## **16. ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT**

- 16.1 The Council shall ensure that there are kept proper accounts and records of the transactions and affairs, including property credits and liabilities, of the Council and any such other records as sufficiently explain its financial operations and financial position.
- 16.2 A general meeting shall appoint an auditor who is a registered company auditor within the meaning of the Corporations Law.
- 16.3 Once in each financial year the accounts of the Council shall be examined by an auditor independent of the CCSP.
- 16.4 The auditor shall certify as to the truth and fairness of the accounts and shall report thereon to the Council.

## **17. BY-LAWS**

- 17.1 The Council shall have the power to make, repeal and amend, from time to time, any by-laws for the proper management of the Council.

## **18. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

- 18.1 The annual general meeting by a two thirds majority vote of representatives present and voting may determine such amendments to this Constitution as are deemed necessary, provided that at least sixty (60) days notice has been given of any proposed amendment.

## **19. DISSOLUTION**

- 19.1 The representatives may dissolve the Council provided that a resolution has been passed by a two-thirds majority vote of representatives present and voting at a general meeting convened solely for this purpose, and provided that sixty (60) days notice has been given of the proposed resolution.
- 19.2 If the Council is dissolved decisions concerning its goods and rights and its liabilities are to be made, with due regard for the wishes of the founders or benefactors and for acquired rights, by the representatives in consultation with the Bishops of the Province, provided that after the satisfaction of all its liabilities any remaining funds are to be used for Catholic Education in the Province.

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The meeting of the Bishops of the Province of Sydney in accordance with Canon Law, CIC 299, §3 reviewed this Constitution of the 'Council of Catholic School Parents' and thereby the 'Council of Catholic School Parents' is recognised in the Church. The meeting of the Bishops of the Province of Sydney in accordance with Canon Law, CIC 300 hereby gives its consent to the 'Council of Catholic School Parents' to use the word "catholic" in its title.

