

## PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JUBILEE SCHOOL COUNCIL 2010



### Parish Context

The seven parishes of Rosalie, Red Hill, Petrie Terrace, Newmarket, Herston, Ashgrove and Bardon were combined on the first Sunday of Advent 2006 to form the Jubilee Parish. Fr Peter Brannelly was appointed as the first Parish Priest. The parish continues to thrive within a diverse inner city community. There are seven worship centres and three primary schools within the parish. The parish operates a broad range of pastoral programs and has located within it, the Lavalla Centre as well as MacKillop Place, Canali House, Emmaus and Bioethics Centre. The parish supports a range of outreach and pastoral programs through their Parish Centre in Given Terrace. A Jubilee Parish Pastoral Council as well as a Jubilee Parish Finance Council supports Fr Peter in leadership within the parish. Presently the parish is reviewing all governance, communication and support structures within the community with a view to establishing clear and effective ways of working together.

### Schools Context

Three very unique Catholic schools operate within the parish. A considered and strategic alliance between the schools began to develop in 2007, which has led to the current situation where there is a strong connected relationship across the schools. This relationship, led by the Principals and Parish Priest connects at multiple levels and is made evident with staff, students and parents. Regular communication and cooperation across the schools is a key feature of their current relationship and cooperation exists in regard to multiple facets of school life. Each school has developed a unique charism, mission, vision and identity and maintains these steadfastly whilst able to connect into the overall vision of the Jubilee parish. St Finbarr's developed as a Sisters of Charity School, St Joseph's as a Franciscan community and St Ambrose's began under the charism of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. Each school has developed independent ways of working under carefully considered strategic plans though share these plans across the parish and across the schools collective. Whilst the three schools will continue to engage in renewal, self improvement and strategic planning processes that are unique to their communities, some aspects of shared visioning and strategic planning and policy formation will be 'viewed and prepared' through the 'lens' of the Jubilee Parish. A Jubilee Schools Council may provide the mechanism to formalise many processes currently in place as well as enhance and innovate on current practice.

Fr Peter has expressed clearly that in regards to Catholic education, *the Jubilee Parish exists to support the Mission of the schools to evangelise, educate and provide a foundation of living faith.*

### Current Structures

The Jubilee Parish has both a Pastoral Council and a Finance Council. The Parish Strategic Planning Processes have articulated an intention to develop a 'councils model'. In considering these structures it has been identified that whilst the schools connect to the parish structures (Pastoral

and finance Councils), presenting annual budgets and financial plans to the parish, the parish connections with the schools remains an area of priority.

St Finbarr's community has a School Board though this group has not met formally since 2009 and declining numbers of interested parents to support a pastoral model of school board, is a current reality within that community. A large 'turnover' of parents sees this Board at a point of 'natural transition'. St Joseph's has a small board, which meets on a 'needs only basis' though at times more recently has struggled to fully embrace the Pastoral model. St Ambrose's has no current School Board structure however has engaged in active alternative structures, including a Future's Planning Team, Building and Finance committee as well as a School Policy and Uniform Planning Teams. No formal structure exists within St Ambrose to generate, support and consult in regard to policy. Each school has a suite of formal policies though shares some common practices in regards to policy formation and implementation, particularly in the area of fees, enrolments and sacramental preparation. Each school has active and engaged Parents and Friends Associations which support the school pastorally and financially. Fr Peter convenes annually an opportunity for the three Parents & Friends Executive Committees, Principals and APRE's to meet to share, celebrate and review goals and achievements.

### **Background**

Each school has in the past few years seen a leadership change, with three new principals appointed in three years. From the inception of the Jubilee Catholic Parish, a conscious decision was made to develop and support the unique identity of each of the parish schools. As a Jubilee Parish the Parish priest and Principals meet weekly before school. Through these regular meetings conversations began to emerge which led the team to consider a 'joint school board'. This consideration has now evolved with the proposal that a School Council, rather than a 'Board' be considered as a formal structure to support the pastoral, policy and strategic directions of the Jubilee schools. In no way in this proposal attempting to develop a sameness nor a melding of the three communities, rather it seeks to promote and add value to their unique and individual charisms and characteristics. *The proposed structure would however seek to draw together commonalities and provides a single structure for the engagement of the Parish Priest and wider community in the lives of their parish schools.*

### **Proposal Summary**

The proposal to establish the 'Jubilee Schools Council' is in essence, a 'new model for a new reality' within this parish and a way forward to see more effective pastoral and strategic leadership which sees three unique schools in one parish streamline their operations in some key areas. The establishment of a Jubilee Schools Council is in many ways seen as a natural evolution of the connectiveness of the three schools which began in the amalgamation processes in late 2007.

This current draft proposal is to establish a formal parish structure named the Jubilee Schools Council. The council would be a representative group of school staff, parents and parishioners who meet regularly with clear and articulated goals and operational processes.

The proposal to establish a Jubilee Schools Council links to current broader parish renewal which is seeking to name and organise the structures of leadership and pastoral support mechanisms which

work together across the whole parish. It is the desire of Fr Peter and the Parish Council to develop a whole parish model of operation which names the individual school leadership structures/committees and also seeks to recognise whole of parish structures. The current reality of one priest seeking to be a strong presence across the three schools requires that smart and achievable ways of working together be established. The Jubilee Schools Council may be able to ensure this is the case into the future.

## **JUBILEE SCHOOLS COUNCIL**

### **Trial Team**

Presently the proposal is to engage stakeholders in a 'process of formation' and that these early stages focus on further consideration of purpose and ways of working. Terms of reference would be required for a formation group or 'trial team' to be established and begin the journey with prayerful wisdom towards a working model. It is proposed that once clear purposes and ways of working are discerned and a working trial begun, that a process of review be undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness and learning's from the trial. This review might be considered after a twelve month period. Some draft work has begun on elements of the formation process and some proposals are detailed below.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The Jubilee Schools Council would work as an advisory group to the Parish Priest and the School Principals working within a model of Shared Wisdom to support in the following areas:

- Strategic Renewal
- Building & maintenance of school
- Communication
- Resourcing
- Policy Development in agreed areas
- Faith Community formation and
- Financial Stewardship [alignment]

### **Aims**

The overarching aim of the Jubilee Schools Council would be to provide support to the schools to achieve their articulated vision and mission statements. In doing this the Jubilee Schools Council would provide a forum for school leadership to develop the very best operational practices and policies, accountabilities and strategies to enhance the learning of all students within the Catholic schools of the Jubilee Parish. Role descriptions, ways of working, lines of authority and responsibility would need to be spelt out as the group. The role of the group will be to discern through a shared wisdom model.

### **Tasks & Responsibilities**

It is envisaged that the key tasks of the Jubilee Schools Council would involve supporting the principals in particular areas. The principals of the schools through the Area Supervisor and the staff of BCE would work together to spell out specific tasks and responsibilities under a terms of reference, once approval was in place for the project to proceed.

Consultation processes would be held in each community to review drafts of policies and protocols to ensure the unique character of each community was not diminished and that consultation was open and effective. The existing principal and priest briefing meetings currently held before school on a weekly basis would continue and it would be imperative that these meetings be critical in forming agendas for the Jubilee Schools Council and progressing outcomes of the term meetings.

### **Membership Proposal**

- Each school is represented by Principal plus 1 staff, 2 parents and parishioner
- Establish inaugural committee by invitation to apply through school and parish newsletter and on school Websites.
- Each member of the Jubilee School Council must keep confidentiality at all times.
- Other can be invited to be along when there are items of special interest.
- Schedule meetings 4 times per year with additional needs based as required.

### **Operational Considerations**

- Develop a 'way of working' (Constitution/mandate/terms of reference) to support and provide clear direction to the Council
- Consider a plan for sustainability during the life of the first Council
- Create a core team at each school level and with each member having a strong connection to Parish and a commitment to the Vision & Mission to Catholic Education in their Daily actions.
- Integrate prayer and reflection be central to the working of the group
- Conduct programs of Induction
- Consult and communicate with broader communities the key characteristics and outcomes of the Jubilee Schools Council
- Implement rotating chair, minutes secretary

### **Statement of Religious Character**

A core task of the inaugural Jubilee Schools Council would be to encourage each of the three schools to develop statements of religious character and have these known and understood by all members of the Jubilee Schools Council.

### **Reporting & Accountability:**

The Jubilee Schools Council will report to school communities through parish and school websites and newsletters.

### **Local Implications:**

St Ambrose's - A community education process begin to ensure that there was a clear understanding within the community of the new structure and its role and purpose. Where existing committee s/teams are in place there might be some specific communications to ensure they were aware of how the current structures might complement and connect with the Jubilee Schools Council.

St Finbarr's – The existing structures would be retired and a community education process begin to ensure that there was a clear understanding within the community of the new structure and its role and purpose. Where existing committee s/teams are in place there might be some specific communications to ensure they were aware of how the current structures might complement and connect with the Jubilee Schools Council.

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**Action Plan:**

1. Meet with/ Contact the Executive Director to seek his input and wisdom into the proposal
2. Seek the input of the Parish Pastoral Council
3. Communicate to school community through community education process
4. Commence trial