

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW RELIGIOUS EDUCATION RESOURCE RESPONDS TO CHANGING CONTEXT

The National Catholic Education Commission has published a resource to support the teaching of religious education in Catholic Schools in response to the changing social, church and educational landscapes.

Endorsed by the Bishops Commission for Catholic Education and prepared by Catholic educators across the country, the *Framing Paper: Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools*, aims to support individual dioceses to reflect on and evaluate their religious education curriculum and teaching practice.

The NCEC's acting executive director Ray Collins said the resource reflects the changing context of Australian society, the role of the church and educational developments.

"The framing paper recognises that there is increasing pluralisation and secularisation in today's society and even a growing hostility towards religion. It also acknowledges the fact that many students and their families have little connection with their local church other than through their school, and many come from diverse multi-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds," Mr Collins said.

"The purpose of this paper is to provide support to dioceses in the development and teaching of religious education within those changing contexts to ensure our students develop the knowledge and understanding of Christianity in light of Jesus and the Gospel, and its unfolding story and diversity within contemporary Australian and global society," he said.

The framing paper highlights the need for religious education in a modern context to expand "students' spiritual awareness and religious identity, fostering their capacities and skills of discerning, interpreting, thinking critically, seeking truth and making meaning".

The paper also highlights the need for teachers of religious education to have a deep subject and pedagogical understanding, as well as being authentic witnesses to the faith.

"Religious Education is rich and authentic when the teacher witnesses to a living faith that invites students to discipleship and mission. This witness is supported and enhanced through teacher faith formation that is systematic, collaborative, graduated and ongoing," the paper reads.

Mr Collins said the framing paper affirms the current work in dioceses and schools while providing a stimulus for ongoing improvement.

"There is significant commitment to renewing religious education across Australia and this resource tries to build on the work of recent decades to support continuous improvement in the development and teaching of quality religious education in this country," he said.

Framing Paper: Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools was prepared by the NCEC's Faith Formation and Religious Education Standing Committee and is available via www.ncec.catholic.edu.au