

## Concerned Catholics Tasmania

28 June 2023



Dear CCT members and supporters

Over the last month or so, CCT has been engaging in correspondence with our Archbishop raising the deep concerns we have, and which others share, about the leadership of Catholic education in Tasmania. They are based on multiple complaints and anxieties that Catholics and other stakeholders across the state have shared with us. These include parishioners, parents, grand-parents, TCEO staff, Catholic Education Tasmania (CET) staff in schools, and Union officials. You are probably aware of media coverage of this issue. For example, see <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-06-28/tas-catholic-religious-education-review/102524776>

Concerns we have raised with the Archbishop include morale within CET, the Draft Senior Secondary Religious Education Curriculum for Years 11 and 12, the executive director's leadership and a toxic TCEO workplace culture.

Our Archbishop's response (22 June 2023) was to express his confidence in Dr Gaskin's leadership and detail his successes. The Archbishop indicated that he had not had any comments about low morale until our letters. He assured us that the Archdiocese takes its obligations regarding staff health and wellbeing seriously and would refer the matters raised by us to the TCEO and ask that each one be considered, investigated and that a response backed by evidence be provided to him. He committed to updating us in due course.

In our letter (26 June 2023) to the Archbishop we did acknowledge that there had been achievements within CET during Dr Gerard Gaskin's time in office and that CET staff should be commended for their contribution to those achievements.

However, we suggest that it is not acceptable to ignore the structures and processes that may have been in place to reach these achievements. We can see already that there is not an effective complaints process if the Archbishop has not been made aware of the many problems to which we have been alerted from many sources.

We pointed out that the risk of the proposed internal review is that, if senior management has played any part in bringing about or countenancing elements in the CET culture that are the subject of complaint and grievance, then those matters may never come to light.

We believe that, if our Archdiocese takes staff health and wellbeing seriously, then what CCT has asked for should occur. That is, an independent consultant should be engaged to carry out a survey which is both confidential and comprehensive, to identify the nature of the current culture in CET. The consultant's report should outline the extent of problems and make recommendations to address any concerns.

If there is an internal review, we argue that the Archbishop will not receive the information he will need to make good decisions.

As the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has so clearly demonstrated, the days of the Roman Catholic Church investigating itself should be well and truly over. It was said of Cardinal Freeman that he got the mushroom treatment: "kept in the dark and fed manure."

As Canon Law clearly expresses, the faithful " have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful." (Canon 212.3)

Whilst CCT has been doing this, there is no reason why individuals could not also write to the Archbishop at [archbishop.assistant@aoh.org](mailto:archbishop.assistant@aoh.org) if they have an experience they wish to share.

We continue to seek a meeting with Archbishop Julian and hope he will accede to our request in the very near future. Please keep him, all who work in Catholic education, and our committee in your prayers.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Chen', written in a cursive style.

Sue Chen

Chair Concerned Catholics Tasmania