

MARIST COLLEGE ROSALIE

A Catholic School for boys in the Marist tradition



WHATEVER YOU DO,
DO WHOLEHEARTEDLY AND WELL

DISCUSSION PAPER:

Working Towards A Viable Future For Marist College Rosalie

Compiled by Our *Rosa* Committee

A committee of the Marist College Rosalie P&F Association



Foreword

The following Discussion Paper is the prelude to what we believe is a bright future for the Marist College Rosalie. This document has been prepared by a group of committed parents, community members and staff of the College under the banner of "Our Rosa". Our Rosa was formed under the structure of the College's Parents & Friends Association.

This paper sets a modest objective to table the collective thoughts of Our Rosa in response to the proposed transition to closure of the school. Since the issue of closure was raised a short 11 weeks ago our community has pulled together to examine our needs, our school and its future. We approach this future with optimism and a clear belief that there is both a need and a purpose for the continuation of the College.

This paper is not a comprehensive business plan. The proposed Business Plan will be released toward the end of May. The reader will, however, see that this document contains many of the things you would expect to see in a business plan. For example, financial projections and commentary on the school's catchment demography.

This paper precedes the business plan as an opportunity for Our Rosa to put before the school and wider community a positive vision for the future and to show the frameworks and strategies that have successfully been put in place over the last 11 weeks.

We invite you to read this Discussion Paper with a critical eye and consider the points raised and the solid foundation underlying our approaches. We welcome any suggestions you may have for improvement and invite you to join with us as we move forward. Our Rosa believe this will be an exciting and wonderful time as we build and strengthen our school and approach a centenary of the Marist tradition in Queensland.

The Our Rosa Group
May 6 2006



From the Principal

Since the school community entered the consultation period which began on February 22nd 2006, many parents have come together in a concerted professional endeavour to formulate a viable vision for the future of Marist College Rosalie. From my perspective of four years as Principal at the College, this energetic, positively focused and coordinated group of parents has surprised me with the range of critical issues they have been able to identify and respond to. The parents quickly organised themselves into 9 different focus groups to create a business plan with substance. This group of parents is one of which any principal would be envious.

Marketing has always been a key issue in this matter and it was of great interest to me when the parents decided to divide the Marketing group of 15 parents into two (now making 10 focus groups). It is seen that immediate marketing is essential during the consultation period itself, while ongoing and long-term marketing strategies are also required to vision an extended term future. These strategies have already borne fruit over the last few weeks evidenced by replacement of lost students (at least partly attributable to the uncertainty of our future) by the equivalent number who have enrolled into Year 10 and Year 11. It is a true measure of the integrity and resilience of the College that it is still able to attract students in this unstable environment.

I encourage all members of the decision making bodies to consider this initial discussion paper as a means whereby the work of the parent body can inform you of what has been happening here at Marist College Rosalie since February 22nd. This background can further enhance more extensive deliberations when the final business case is submitted by the end of May.

Brother Peter Corr

Parents & Friends Association

A good school is measured by many factors but one of the most important is its students' *spirit*. The past and present students of Marist College Rosalie (or "Rosa") know what I mean by this comment. They are proud to be a Rosa boy and demonstrate that pride in the way they participate or did participate in their school life. Whether it is academia, competing for the school in sport or participating in community service activities, a Rosa boy does so in the finest Marist tradition.

The Parents & Friends Association aims to assist the principal and staff to advance the general welfare of the school and its students. The parental support through Our Rosa has demonstrated that there is great support in the community for the College. It has become obvious that the Our Rosa focus groups provide a terrific vehicle for parents to contribute to the school in areas that they naturally prefer to be involved in. The Parents & Friends Association consider that this is the way forward allowing parents and friends to actively participate in the growth and sustainability of the school.

The Association recognises the contribution Rosa has made for 77 years for the young men of Brisbane and it intends to ensure Rosa will continue to serve for at least another 77 years.

Jim Gurry

President

Marist College Rosalie Snapshot

Rosa Spirit

Since the beginning of the College, students, staff and members of the community have discussed and named a "Rosa Spirit". This spirit is difficult and complex to succinctly describe and is deeply emotive and elusive in nature. Nevertheless, it is ever-present, and something unique to the College. In part, it is the name of something intangible that bonds a community together.

In the words of students past and present, staff and family, here is the Rosa spirit:

- *"When we went to the College for our first meeting with Brother Peter my son and I were keenly aware that this was the right place for him to be."*
- *"My son enjoys the comradeship of the seniors as well as the leadership to the juniors. He has become a more independent, confident, articulate and well-mannered young man due to the College's ability to encourage each individual to strive to do the best they can."*
- *"The school ethos and attitude of the staff show day in and day out that what Rosa is doing is producing fine young men with a well-rounded and grounded education structured by the student's own unique abilities and interests."*
- *"We chose Rosa because it is a small school, it is a boutique school and Rosa looks and acts like an extended family."*
- *"The Marist tradition at Rosa provides a supportive, Christian environment in which a student can meet their potential in a variety of areas."*
- *"My son is more than just a student, he is a member of a larger Rosa family that looks after him and nourishes him and is developing him into the man that I always hoped he would become."*
- *"We are united in our rendition of the war cry which is delivered with pride, strength and community!"¹*

Personal and Spiritual Development

Support from all levels of Marist College Rosalie means that the students are armed with the ability to make choices. This support stems from the College's programs in pastoral care and literacy.

Social Justice is promoted and supported to ensure that the students have a clearer understanding of the Church's teachings. The challenge of raising Social Justice within the College community is ongoing and is implemented by the Campus Minister. Activities such as Project Compassion, Think Pink, the Red Cross Blood donation, the Barbeque with the Homeless, Amnesty International, Year 11 and Year 12 Community Service, amongst others, demonstrates the strong social conscience of the College's young men.

Retreats and Reflection days for the College are a time when students learn much about themselves, their community and the inter-relationships in a context that is Catholic in framework. Liturgies recognise the multi-cultural nature of the College and encourage both students and parents to celebrate the unique life of the College. Significantly, students from non-Catholic backgrounds feel included in these liturgies and the sense of being welcome and connected is achieved.



Academia

Marist College Rosalie engages its community in collaborative processes to provide students with a foundation for lifelong learning. The Marist tradition is the key framework used to provide a holistic education encompassing knowledge, understanding and tolerance.

The College has an excellent track record in academic achievement.

In 2005 the students achieved better than the state average.² 2005 also saw 95% of Year 12 students receive first round tertiary offers and overall achieve 100% tertiary or work placement of their choice.

Marist College Rosalie offers a diverse curriculum. Integration of Vocational Education/Training adds balance for those wishing to pursue opportunities outside of pure academia.

The College supports and nurtures the learner in an environment which develops a love of learning, a sense of belonging and the development of independent thinkers who will become well-balanced, confident young men.

Careers

The focus of guidance and counselling is about helping students to make choices that will assist their social and emotional well-being. These choices will place the students on a pathway to future 'earning or learning'.

Past students who have completed their secondary education at Marist College Rosalie have chosen diverse pathways. The College alumni includes leaders of government and a Rhodes scholar as well as successful business and tradesmen. Our proven track record ensures that students who enter the College will be provided with every opportunity to achieve success and progress on the pathway to a future of further study or work placement based on their individual choices and talents.

Sport

The College boasts success in the sporting arena at all levels. The College offers weekend sport and most importantly allows **all students** to participate. Many Marist College Rosalie students have been selected in representative sports.



Outstanding examples include:

- In 2005, a student was selected in the Australian Under 19 Rugby Union team that travelled to Dubai
- During term one in 2006, many teams competed successfully – some undefeated
- Seven students were selected to represent Met. North teams in Rugby Union, Australian Rules and Water Polo – including State level competitions

At the TAS 'Red' Swimming Carnival held at Chandler Aquatic Centre in Term One the College performed exceptionally well:

- Percentage trophy winners for the 4th year in a row
- 2nd place overall in the Boy's Aggregate
- Once again, the Under 14 students were Age Champions
- Our swimmers were placed 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in 39 out of 52 events

This is a snapshot of the quality of sportsmen the College nurtures. In all, sport at the College is very healthy and competitive. Sport at Marist College Rosalie is seen as a unifying and confidence building mechanism, allowing for participation at all levels of ability.

This is borne out by the students themselves:

- *"You always get a turn at everything and you don't get left out."*
- *"Everyone is friendly at the school and if you want to play a sport at this school you can do it."*
- *"...last year in swimming my PB in 50m freestyle was 54 seconds and since I've trained here it's near 37.5 seconds."*
- *"If you aren't the best at sport you don't get graded to play you just join in and have fun."*
- *"...I've also joined the swimming squad and improved my PB by 10 seconds."³*

Why Rosa?

There is a positive energy within the College that is personal and caring. As parents, we are able to recognise the College for what it really is rather than how it has been perceived.

Marist College Rosalie caters for the needs of many boys who can now achieve their full potential and personal growth in a smaller learning environment.

Being smaller (in size, not stature), the College offers our sons considerable benefits. As parents, we are passionate about the College and what it provides. According to research, conducted for Brisbane Catholic Education in a survey of Brisbane parents in March 2005, school size and student/staff ratios is one of the main factors in driving the choice of secondary schooling.⁴

- *“Out of all the schools I chose Rosalie because it was small ... I have not regretted that choice.”*
- *“It is very small so you get help when you need it.”*
- *“I like that Rosa is a small school and it’s easy to know everyone’s names.”*
- *“Rosa means a lot to me because it’s a small community... you get to know everyone.”*
- *“Marist Rosalie is the most unique school in Brisbane because of its size. You get excellent quality and further more, the hospitality and the spirituality of Rosa is absolutely amazing.”*
- *“Everyone at this school gets a good education as since it’s a smaller school we may be helped during classes as there is less of us to help or “answer to” and everyone at this school are happy and all of the staff here are very friendly, they’re kind, helpful”*
- *“Because it is a small school it means that we will all get along a lot more than what we would with a big school.”*
- *“...the thing that attracted my son's mother and me to Rosa, were the class sizes.”*
- *“Rosa is small, tolerant and comprehensive.”*
- *“My son would feel comfortable at Marist being a small school, which means small class sizes. Bring on 2007! My son can't wait to go to Rosa.”⁵*

The above comments highlight just some of the reasons why parents, staff, community and students (past present and future) are so passionate about the College and why they are so determined to keep it as a viable alternative education facility of first choice.

Marist College Rosalie is a perfect example of how a small college can create a supportive learning environment that gives its students a sense of connection. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated and is widely accepted that students perform better in such an environment.⁶

“Catholic Schools, like state schools, fulfil a public role, for their presence guarantees cultural and educational pluralism and, above all, the freedom and right of families to see that their children receive the sort of education they wish for them”⁷

Marist College Rosalie is in the unique position to be able to offer parents the choice to send their sons to a Catholic boys college with a total enrolment below 500 in Brisbane.

The Challenge

In developing a viable business plan for the College, Our Rosa recognised that it was important to understand the outcomes that are to be achieved. In order to enable the presentation of a comprehensive proposal, additional information was requested from Brisbane Catholic Education. To this end, the definition of a workable solution was provided by

Mr. David Hutton, Executive Director of Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane and Br. John Thompson, Marist Brothers Sydney Province Provincial.⁸

The definition is:

- a plan for the future of the school must remain faithful to the mission of the Catholic Church and the College to provide Catholic education to predominantly Catholic students, rather than simply keeping the College open as an educational facility
- a plan to grow enrolments at least within a reasonable timeframe to 350 students, with a short term plan to ensure that the College enrolments do not drop any further in 2007 thus further endangering the quality of the curriculum
- no further diminishment of curriculum offerings at the school
- the capacity to operate within the financial arrangements that will apply to all other secondary colleges in the Archdiocese from 2007
- a clear plan, beginning from 2007, to transition over the next few years to lessen reliance on extra staffing provided above schedule. This is funded by reliance on other schools in the Archdiocese

Our Rosa was heartened by this definition of a workable solution. These are measurable and achievable objectives. The Business Plan will address each of these issues in detail.

We believe that establishment of Performance Indicators will allow the Business Plan outcomes to be measured against the definition of a workable solution and contribute to the College's Strategic Renewal Reporting Framework.

College Financial Model

Marist College Rosalie is one member of a community of over 130 schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane that are administered financially by Brisbane Catholic Education. Approximately 80% of funding is derived from government and is allocated to Brisbane Catholic Education via recurrent per capita grants. The remainder of funds is derived from the school communities in the form of tuition fees and levies⁹.

The current financial management model for the College is illustrated in **Diagram 1** below. It is more in the nature of benefactor and dependent than the shared responsibility of partners. Brisbane Catholic Education derives most of its funding for enrolments from Federal and State government and the remainder through tuition fees collected and remitted by the College.

Brisbane Catholic Education:

- sets tuition fees
- determines staffing in line with its principles and processes
- pays College staff and meets their entitlements
- transfers funds to the College for fixed costs and General School Operations and meets certain capital maintenance expenditures, and
- retains funds for spending on administration and centrally provided services as well as contributions for the benefit of the community of schools

Staff salaries, allowances and other employment entitlements are set in an industrial agreement to which the Archdiocese of Brisbane is a party¹⁰.

The income of the College is limited mainly to payments by the families of the College for the subject/activity levy, building levy (25%) and Brisbane Catholic Education transfers.

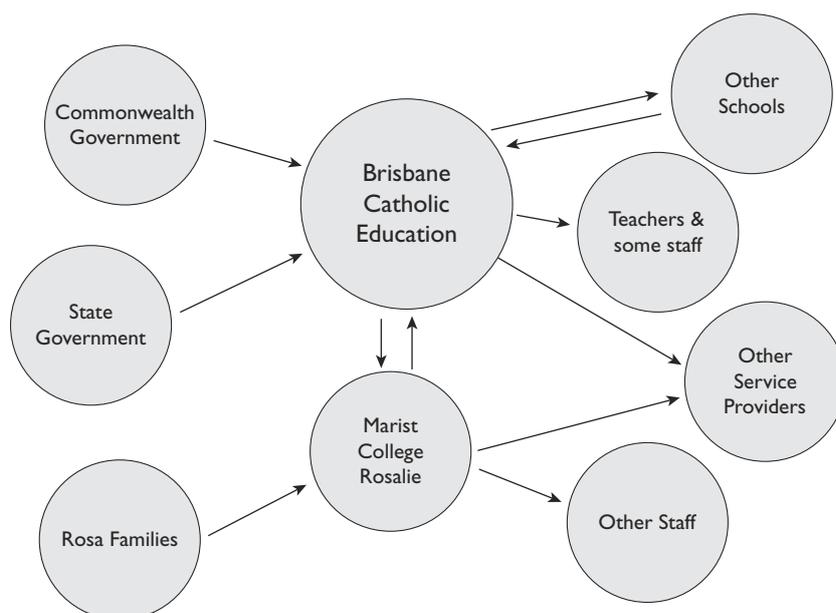


Diagram 1: Current Financial Management Model

This model does not give a transparent view of the financial state of the College and accordingly it is difficult to identify and respond to the financial risks faced by the College.

The College has no control or information regarding a large portion of the funds that are required to operate the College.

The model does not empower the College with the business drivers to make correct financial decisions. In the absence of these business drivers, the College is driven more by its need to fulfil curriculum outcomes.

If the College is to be judged against financial outcomes, this should be recognised and the financial model structured along those lines.

The College Balance Sheet at December 2005 discloses net non-current assets of \$9.3 million for land, buildings and improvements. There are no mortgages charged over these assets.

The College 2006 Operating Budget forecasts that expenditure will be met essentially from income (a 'balanced budget').

Brisbane Catholic Education predicts a deficit in the order of \$850,000 for enrolments of 204 students – though the College presently has 211 enrolments. Our consolidated 2006 forecast indicates a deficit from College operations of almost \$580,000.

The Brisbane Catholic Education forecast is not approached until amounts due to Brisbane Catholic Education of almost \$230,000 are added.

Conventional financial management suggests that all streams of expenditure incurred in relation to operations are at least met by the combined income. In other words, an entity's financial operations should at least break even.

It is, however, not unusual that a member of the community of schools administered by Brisbane Catholic Education operates with a deficit. Approximately half of the schools administered by Brisbane Catholic Education would not be viable on a "stand alone" basis¹¹.

Brisbane Catholic Education has highlighted that the problem at hand is the increasing size of the deficit attributable to College operations.

Focusing resources to improve financial viability

The College, with the support of its community at large, must take on a mature role in relation to the financial management of its operations. It must be fully alert to the key variables affecting its financial viability including funding by government and the costs of staffing and related on-costs.

While Brisbane Catholic Education has ultimate control, the College must be viewed as a single business unit as illustrated in **Diagram 2**. In this model, the College would operate akin to a business, without compromising the mission of the Catholic Church and the College, to provide Catholic education to predominantly Catholic students.

The College should not view or use Brisbane Catholic Education as a benefactor, but rather as a service provider entitled to payment for services. Brisbane Catholic Education and Marist Brothers have historically given support to Marist College Rosalie. This support has enabled the College to remain a leader in education and pastoral care for Catholic students in Brisbane and to become a viable business unit.

This perspective could be championed by the proposed Rosa Community Council which is defined on pages 21 and 22 of this report.

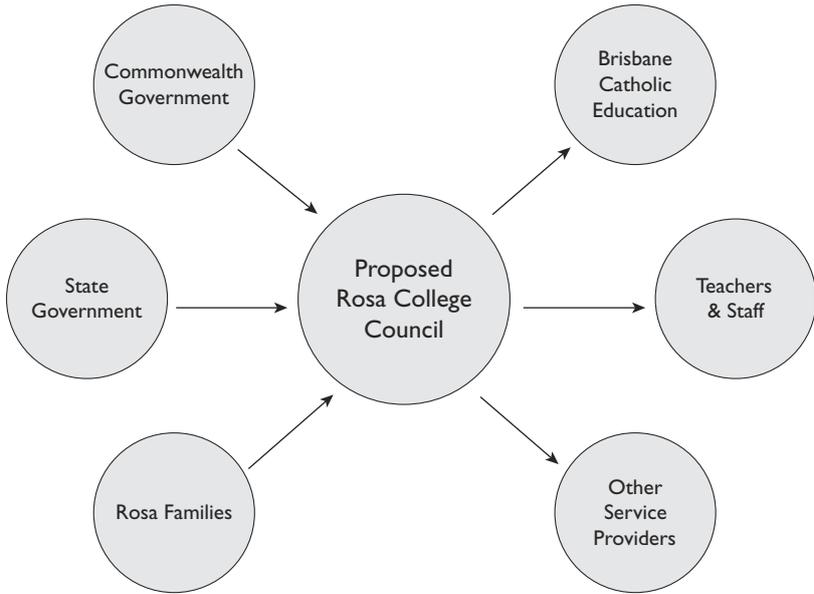


Diagram 2: Single Business Unit Financial Management Model

The key income driver for College operations is *enrolments*. The College can substantially influence its financial viability by focusing its administrative and community resources to secure more enrolments. The proposed Rosa Community Council should also champion development and implementation of effective marketing strategies. Marketing and Finance sub-committees of the proposed Rosa Community Council, comprising community members with the appropriate formal disciplines and/or experience, should be established.

How many enrolments to break even?

A Cost Volume Profit sensitivity analysis is an accepted accountancy approach for calculating the break-even point at present values and understanding how profit will change with a change in the volume of sales. This is provided in **Table 1** to help us understand how an increasing volume of enrolments affects the financial results of the College's operations. The Cost Volume Profit analysis is based on the 2006 consolidated budget, so all income and expenditure items are shown at 2006 rates. Additional teaching resources are factored in to cover additional classes arising from the increased number of enrolments. The changed funding arrangements announced by Brisbane Catholic Education to commence from 2007 have been incorporated into the scenarios. Provision is made for capital maintenance expenditure (\$100,000).

Under the changed funding arrangements, the College would retain tuition fees for its purposes and Brisbane Catholic Education would no longer transfer funds for Fixed Costs or General School Operations or meet recurrent capital maintenance expenditure. Also, the College must commence payment of the Archdiocesan Education Levy in 2007. From a consolidated perspective the essential difference is payment of the Archdiocesan Education Levy.

The Cost Volume Profit sensitivity analysis demonstrates that in the first scenario enrolments of 283 would enable the College to break even in relation to its own operations. However, an amount of \$361,000 (including Archdiocesan Education Levy) would still be outstanding to Brisbane Catholic Education. All amounts due to Brisbane Catholic Education would be met in the second scenario with enrolments of 334. An overall surplus exceeding \$50,000 would be achieved by enrolments of 350 in the third scenario.

The Finance Focus Group believes that a ***realistic target range within 3 years is 300 to 350 enrolments.***

Summary

- With the introduction of the proposed Rosa Community Council, Marist College Rosalie can operate in a different way to ensure that it is not reliant upon extraordinary funding from Brisbane Catholic Education
- As a stand-alone financial entity, the College would break-even with a population of 283 students
- When the Brisbane Catholic Education overhead costs components, plus the new Archdiocesan Education Levy (for the provision of new schools), are applied the break-even number increases to 334 students.

Table 1: Cost Volume Profit Analysis based on 2006 Consolidated Budget

Income attributable to College operations	Volume Behaviour	2006 Consolidated Forecast			CVP Analysis		
		College	BCE	Consol'd	1st scenario (283 enrolments)	2nd scenario (334 enrolments)	3rd scenario (350 enrolments)
Fees - students	Variable		\$264,681	\$264,681	\$354,998	\$418,973	\$439,044
Fees - overseas students	Variable	\$36,458		\$36,458	\$48,899	\$57,711	\$60,475
Other student charges (levies, College bus)	Variable	\$320,800		\$320,800	\$430,267	\$507,807	\$532,133
Other private income (interest, enrolment appl'ns)	Fixed	\$31,300		\$31,300	\$31,300	\$31,300	\$31,300
State Government recurrent grants	Variable		\$403,010	\$403,010	\$540,530	\$637,940	\$668,500
Commonwealth Government recurrent grants	Variable		\$1,179,256	\$1,179,256	\$1,581,656	\$1,866,689	\$1,956,112
Total transfers from BCE	Mixed	\$247,400	-\$247,400	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Building Fund Levy (capital)	Variable	\$81,014		\$81,014	\$108,659	\$128,240	\$134,384
Donations (capital - Parents & Friends Committee)	Variable	\$10,808		\$10,808	\$14,496	\$17,108	\$17,928
Total Income attributable to College operations		\$727,780	\$1,599,546	\$2,327,326	\$3,110,805	\$3,665,768	\$3,839,875
Expenditure attributable to College operations							
Salaries - teaching staff	Mixed		\$1,566,600	\$1,566,600	\$1,687,625	\$1,788,479	\$1,869,162
Salaries - all other staff	Mixed	\$96,333	\$294,100	\$390,433	\$390,433	\$390,433	\$390,433
Staffing on costs	Mixed		\$260,300	\$260,300	\$280,409	\$297,167	\$310,573
Tuition (teaching resources, excursions & camps)	Variable	\$152,429		\$152,429	\$204,443	\$241,286	\$252,844
Administration (printing, phone, advertising, marketing)	Mixed	\$76,875		\$76,875	\$76,875	\$76,875	\$76,875
Sundry admin. (prof. dev't, staff & student welfare, vehicles)	Fixed	\$68,400		\$68,400	\$68,400	\$68,400	\$68,400
Other expenditure (electricity, council charges, cleaning)	Fixed	\$102,669		\$102,669	\$102,669	\$102,669	\$102,669
Buildings, grounds & equip't (operations & maintenance)	Fixed	\$47,500		\$47,500	\$47,500	\$47,500	\$47,500
Interest and principal repayments (capital and bridging loans)	Fixed	\$46,020		\$46,020	\$46,020	\$46,020	\$46,020
Operating lease expenses	Fixed	\$6,852		\$6,852	\$6,852	\$6,852	\$6,852
Land, buildings and improvements (capital)	Fixed		\$100,200	\$100,200	\$100,200	\$100,200	\$100,200
Furniture and equipment (capital)	Variable	\$35,300		\$35,300	\$47,345	\$55,878	\$58,555
Accruals for future capital expenditure	Fixed	\$52,040		\$52,040	\$52,040	\$52,040	\$52,040
Total Expenditure attributable to College operations		\$684,418	\$2,221,200	\$2,905,618	\$3,110,811	\$3,273,798	\$3,382,123
Surplus/Deficit attributable to College operations		\$43,362	-\$621,654	-\$578,292	-\$6	\$391,970	\$457,752
Contributions to BCE and community of schools							
System costs and other transfers	Fixed			\$166,700	\$166,700	\$166,700	\$166,700
Building Fund Levy (75% of collections from Rosa families)	Variable			\$60,761	\$81,494	\$96,180	\$100,788
Archdiocesan Education Levy for Catholic Futures Fund	Variable			\$0	\$109,596	\$129,347	\$135,543
Archdiocesan Special Levy to supplement Futures Fund	Variable			\$0	\$2,930	\$0	\$0
Total contributions to BCE and community of schools				\$227,461	\$360,720	\$392,227	\$403,031
Overall Surplus/Deficit attributable to College operations and contributions to BCE and community of schools				-\$805,752	-\$360,727	-\$257	\$54,721

CVP Methodology

Variable items change in direct proportion to change in the volume of enrolments

Fixed items are independent of change in the volume of enrolments

Mixed items behave as a combination of variable and fixed

No provision is made for depreciation of non-current physical assets

Total enrolments	211	283	334	350
Total families	199	266	314	329
Total teaching staff	23.3	25.1	26.6	27.8

Demographics

Background Data

In the 2005 Interim Report “Review of Marist College Rosalie”, conclusions were reached regarding the demographic nature of the enrolment area for Marist College Rosalie. This report drew on data compiled in 2001. The report states:

“The demographics of the enrolment area from which Marist Rosalie draws its students is not likely to change over the next 10 to 20 years”.¹²

Data from the Planning Information and Forecasting Unit of the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport & Recreation (PIFU), drawn from information published in July 2004, indicates that there will be significant growth in South East Queensland over the next 10 to 20 years. Statistics from PIFU also show a forecast increase of 11.7% in the number of males aged between 13 and 17 years between 2001 and 2021 in a selection of Brisbane suburbs from which Marist Rosalie students were enrolled in the period between 2002 and 2005.¹³

“Population growth in Queensland over the last three years was the largest ever recorded for any consecutive three year period.”¹⁴

This information is also contained in The Queensland Government’s South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005 – 2026 (SEQRP), released in April 2005. This document states that *“the population in the Western Brisbane Corridor is forecast to increase from 135,500 to 318,000 – an increase of 134%”*.¹⁵

These population estimates are expected to show a further increase following the release of the results of the August 2006 Census.

A further comment, written in the 2005 Report, “Review of Marist College Rosalie”, highlighted enrolment levels and catchment areas based on the demographic information reviewed:

“If a strategy is taken to capture more of the existing population and increase enrolment numbers, it has to be realised these will be sourced from a catchment which is essentially stable and not growing. Hence, they must be attracted at the expense of other schools in the catchment.”¹⁶

Our Rosa has concluded that the College’s catchment area is part of a key developing region which has been accorded priority for social and economic infrastructure funding by the Queensland Government. As shown in **Table 2** below, the population of 13 to 17 year old males in the catchment area over the next 20 years is actually growing and is forecast to increase by 12% from 25,720 in 2001 to 28,797 in 2021. This overall positive demographic situation throws new light on the previous comments that new enrolments for Marist College Rosalie *“must be attracted at the expense of other schools in the catchment”*.

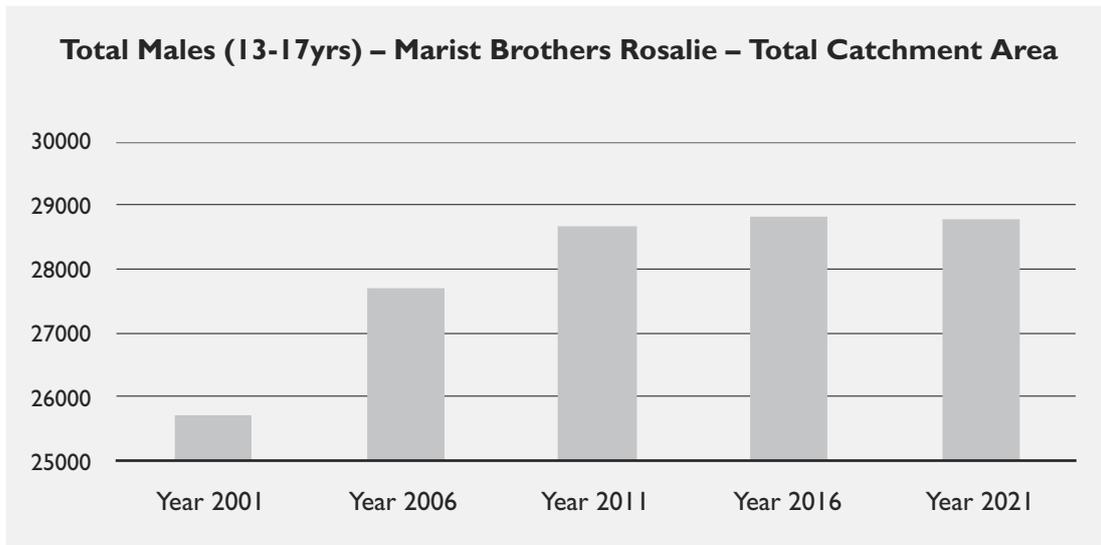


Table 2: Projected Population Growth for Males 13 – 17 Years

The Our Rosa Focus group charged with reviewing this section used criteria based on current student travel arrangements to identify the demographic area that we have called the catchment area.

Summary of Key Points

- The AEC report prepared for Brisbane Catholic Education contained data drawn from 2001. The Our Rosa Focus Group used more recent data compiled in July 2004. It is our belief that the conclusions reached in the interim report (which was based on 2001 data) should be reviewed in light of more recent data.
- The 2004 data indicates that the number of 13 – 17 year males in the catchment area for the Marist College Rosalie is to increase significantly in the coming years.

Marketing

Why schools must adopt an effective marketing approach

Whether the school be Catholic or non-Catholic, gone are the days when a child automatically went to the nearest school. School marketing and promotion has now provided parents with access to a wider choice of schools for their children. Parents are better informed and able to choose the school that best meets their child's and family's needs. Further impacting on the competition to attract and retain students is the changing demography and ease of mobility across the urban environment. Not only do parents have alternative choices but increased transport options have removed the geographical boundaries that once protected a school's catchment area.

The issues that currently face Marist College Rosalie are not unique. Ted Myers, Head of Communications at Sydney's Catholic Education Office, has documented over 30 case studies of Catholic schools throughout NSW and QLD that faced one or more similar issues to that of the College, including instances where there was a dramatic fall in enrolments that threatened the future viability of the school. The essence of Myers' research was to demonstrate how these schools were able to overcome those obstacles by adopting a strategic marketing approach.

"Not only have enrolments grown in each case, but also confidence levels of teachers, students and parents have grown, school-parish-home relationships have strengthened and in most cases, academic and co-curricular outcomes have improved".¹⁷

It is no longer sustainable for a school to simply focus on its internal management and operations. Schools must actively market and promote themselves to their customer base which is two-fold:

1. internal (existing customers) – parents, students, staff, teachers
2. external – the local community and potential students and their parents

These internal and external markets are strongly connected. An increase in school esteem contributes to the development of a strong brand and school identity and in turn, how the school is perceived in the community. A positive community perception of the school assists in increasing enrolments, contributing to the long-term viability of the school.¹⁸

To a greater extent, it is now thought that it is simply not enough to market to target segments. Rather, it is necessary to build long-term relationships with individual customers recognising their potential to become a life-long partner of the school where they can continually advise, influence and contribute to the sustainability of the institution.¹⁹

How do we market Marist College Rosalie in a more effective manner?

It is clear that current resources to effectively market the College are insufficient. Given the resource constraints, the efforts of the College's marketing department are to be commended but school marketing is no longer just about placing advertisements and producing school promotional material. School marketing is about understanding what both your internal and external customers want and then devising strategies to reach and satisfy those customers.

As mentioned earlier by Brother Peter, the parent marketing focus group is examining the College's marketing plan. Given the immediate need to respond to the uncertainties that have arisen from the announcement about the College's future, the group quickly recognised the need to divide into:

- a promotions group – to attack some short-term goals and rebuild the morale of the College community, and
- a strategic group – to focus on the long-term approach

Short-term promotional activity

Our Rosa's short-term objectives are aligned to support the College's current marketing activity to attract enrolments for 2007. The following summary and **Diagram 3** represents the focus group's strategy and short-term activities that has been integrated into the College's existing efforts to promote the College Open Day to a wider audience as a way to increase awareness of the College and the benefits thereof:

- A promotional campaign to target 17 parishes, 39 catholic primary and 49 state primary schools (within an identified catchment area) is underway to raise awareness of the College Open Day on Sunday 21st May.
- Every parent and College Old Boy has received Open Day flyers to distribute within the wider community
- A print advertising campaign has commenced promoting the Open Day and unique features of the College
- Community radio stations have been engaged to promote the Open Day

Over the next three months, each of the target schools will also be visited by a College liaison officer (parent and Old Boy volunteers) to raise awareness of and promote the College. The longer term objective of these visits is to establish enduring relationships with the target schools that have the potential to become significant feeder schools to the College.

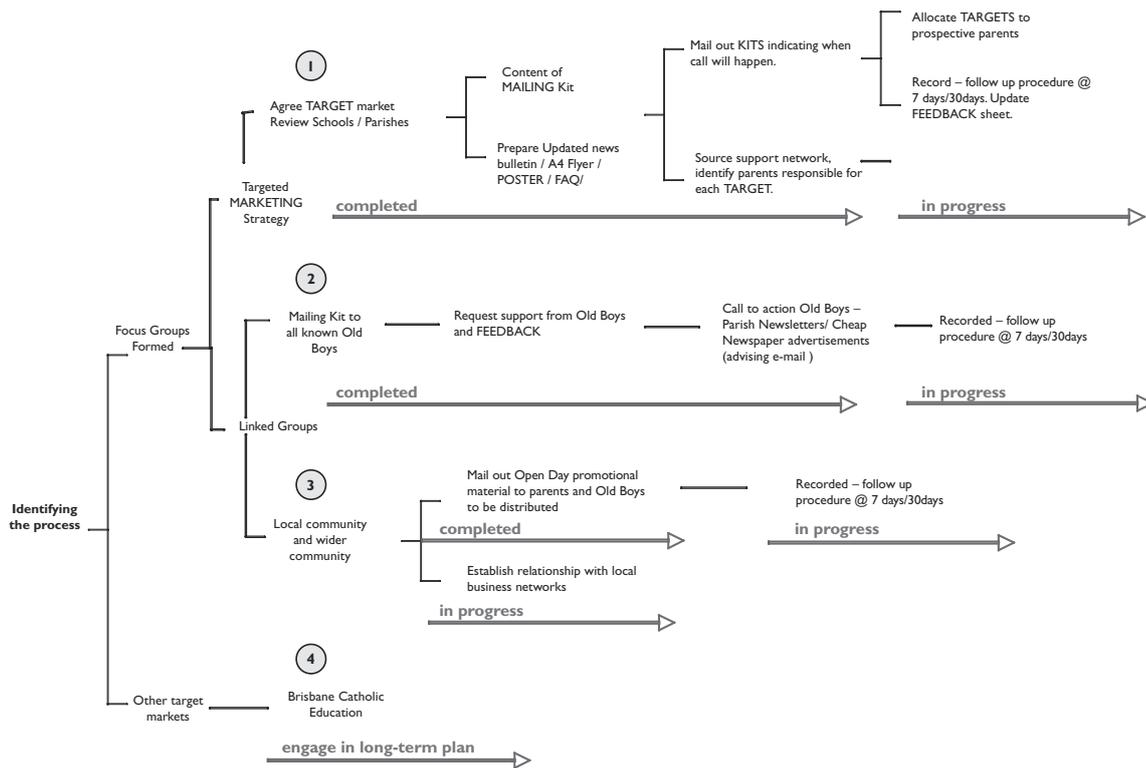


Diagram 3: Short Term Process for Increasing Awareness of Marist College Rosalie

Developing a longer term approach

It is acknowledged that to develop a well considered and appropriately researched strategic marketing plan will take 3 to 6 months.

The group’s approach to develop the plan is to expand upon the current research available to:

- identify and/or validate the unique features that differentiate the College from its competitors
- position the College within target markets, and
- develop effective communication and promotional tools to reach both its internal and external customers

The existing research undertaken by the AEC Group on behalf of Brisbane Catholic Education and the College’s own marketing function is currently being reviewed and validated.

As highlighted earlier in this document, a survey of the school community is currently underway to define the ‘Rosa Spirit’ – an important component of the school’s identity. Further research with the current students, teachers and parents is proposed to:

- determine why current parents chose the College
- test their current image of the College – for example, student behaviour and appearance, facilities and resources and communication

This data will further refine the College SWOT analysis, but more importantly will help to determine the College’s unique identity and to develop the positioning statement to be communicated through promotional opportunities.

According to research, a positive image of a school begins with its internal customers. Strategies to further boost morale and self esteem of the College community are currently being implemented. The committee aims to engage the whole community as word-of-mouth marketing advocates for the College. Some of the activities to date include:

- College working bees
- End of cricket season community BBQ
- End of term thank you to teachers (afternoon tea)
- Upcoming School Trivia night

Diagram 4 on the following page proposes five key stages for the development and implementation of an effective marketing approach for the College.

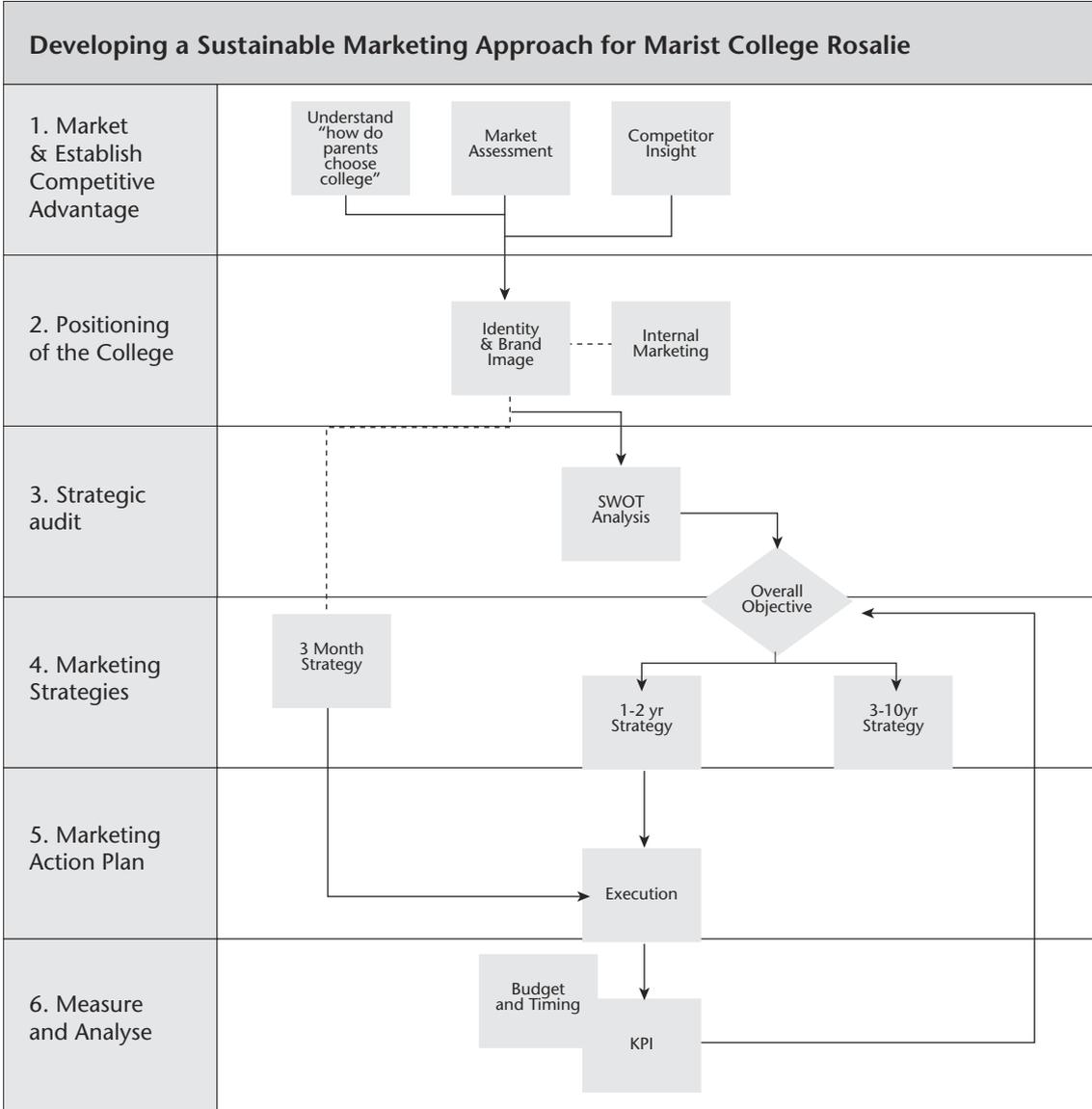


Diagram 4: Sustainable Marketing Flowchart



Facilities

Current Situation

Marist College Rosalie presents as a well-maintained secondary college which is centrally located and readily accessible by public transport. The College provides a balance of facilities to meet the academic, sporting, cultural and pastoral needs of its students.

Over the past 5 years, the College has benefited from a substantial investment in its infrastructure which has resulted in the following improvements:

- IT networked and refurbished General Learning Areas
- Well equipped science laboratories
- Drama room
- Music room
- Refurbished swimming pool
- Resurfaced tennis courts

In addition, the College also provides a covered multi-purpose facility, well resourced library and woodwork and metalwork workshops. The College has quality playing fields and open space at Fig Tree Pocket.

While ongoing improvements to these facilities can be undertaken, the current standard of the grounds and facilities is good and provides a strong basis for growth of the college without the requirement for any major capital investment in the short term.

Opportunities

The infrastructure of the College has been assessed as being of a 'good' standard however the opportunity now exists to develop a Long Term Plan for the College which will ensure that it continues to meet the changing needs of students. This Plan will guide the future development of the college over the next 10 years and will also identify funding strategies to facilitate these developments.

In the interim, there are opportunities to both improve the facilities and improve the recognition of the College in the wider community. These opportunities are to:

- Increase community use of facilities to raise awareness and generate income
- Build partnerships with Brisbane City Council for development of publicly accessible open space at LaValla Fields, Fig Tree Pocket
- Explore funding opportunities including Block Grants, Gambling Machine Community Benefit Fund, Security Improvement Program, Minor Facilities Program, Brisbane City Council Community Grants, Water Grants, Arts Queensland Grants etc to facilitate the enhancement of facilities
- Use of community art (murals, mosaics, sculptures) to enhance facilities and enhance image by promoting multiculturalism, peace, harmony and unity (Making Places Project)
- Investigate establishment of an outdoor education program at LaValla
- Access Community Jobs Plan (CJP) and other similar programs to undertake various improvements
- Establishment of Shared Use of Facilities Program with other schools to reduce duplication and access joint funding opportunities
- Investigate IT Partnership Program with Microsoft

The Future

The aim is for the College to be recognised nationally for innovation, creativity and excellence in the provision of secondary college facilities.

The College community will strive to provide, develop and maintain the facilities of Marist College Rosalie to support the best educational outcomes in all areas – academic, sporting, cultural and pastoral.

To achieve this the College must set the following goals:

1. Ensure that the presentation of the College's facilities promotes a positive image of a quality, welcoming, inclusive and vibrant college community; and
2. Establish a Long Term Plan for the future development of the College's facilities in response to the current and future changing needs of students.

Parental Involvement in Marist College Rosalie – The Future

*“The climate and role of the educating community is constituted by the interaction and collaboration of its various components: students, parents, principals, teachers and non-teaching staff. **Parents have a particularly important role to play in the educating community since it is to them that primary and natural responsibility for their children’s education belongs.** It is necessary to foster initiatives...which provide the right sort of concrete support which the family needs and which involves it in the Catholic school’s educational project.”²⁰*

More than ever in the history of education in this country there is a need for strong parental involvement in our schools. The Catholic community recognises the changing face of leadership within their schools and has responded with innovations such as the introduction of School Boards in some circumstances and the establishment of Education Offices to support the operation and administration of parish school and secondary colleges. However, the role of the local Parents & Friends Associations has remained virtually unchanged since their establishment in the 1960s and is currently failing to engage parents in the education of their children.

At Marist College Rosalie, the Parents & Friends Association, has suffered from low attendance at its meetings and the associated problems of leaving the job to the same few, as is the case of schools across the Archdiocese. Prior to 2006, participation was at a minimum and it appears clear that the current model is neither conducive nor responsive to the demands and responsibilities of the 21st century parent.

However, as a direct response to the College’s current situation, the parent body has transformed into a structure that will be our model for the future. Almost immediately, focus groups of concerned parents were formed and a communication network established. A website for the Rosa community was created and email became the standard tool for correspondence. What we have established and propose as the model for the future is almost identical to that recommended by the Federation of Parents & Friends Associations of Catholic Schools in Queensland in its August 2003 discussion paper.²¹

Establishment of a Rosa Community Council

Our recommendation to address parental involvement has two aspects. The first is to generate a sense of *shared ownership* in our College by involving the parents; and the extended Rosa community in school planning and in assisting to set the direction for the College. The second is to revitalise parental and the extended Rosa community’s *commitment* to participate in this shared ownership by fulfilling the requirements, accepting the responsibilities, and undertaking the tasks that shared ownership entails.

Two key objectives in order to achieve our goal

- The establishment of a College Board and a Finance sub-committee to support the leadership of our college
- The amalgamation of the existing Our Rosa Focus Groups and the Parents & Friends Association in order to restructure and “re-culture” parental involvement and that of the extended Rosa community in our school

The methods of achieving our goal

- To employ the assistance of Brisbane Catholic Education in establishing a College Board (adopting the pastoral model which Brisbane Catholic Education promotes)
- To replace the existing structural model of the Parents & Friends Association. With the guidance of the Federation of Parents and Friends Associations of Catholic Schools of Queensland, it is planned to adopt a more functional model – a model similar to the suggested *Parent Community Council*. This model will harness the broad spectrum of skills, talents and personal attributes of our Rosa parents and extended Rosa community. It will better addresses noted systemic problems encountered by all Parents & Friends Associations, such as the challenge to keep the P & F and the various sub-committees coordinated and motivated, thus avoiding “burnout” of parents and staff
- Furthermore, our design is to set-up and nurture strong channels of communication, consultation, collaboration, co-responsibility and to develop a sense of interdependence between the College Board and the Rosa Community Council in order to give birth to a new, dynamic Marist College Rosalie where Gospel values and best educational practice thrive in a continuum of progress.



Summary

Our Rosa believes you will be encouraged by this Discussion Paper and that you will feel the sense of hope that we have for the future. In 11 short weeks our community has come together and developed a framework to understand Marist College Rosalie and the challenges it is facing. We are convinced that there is a positive future. Over the coming weeks our Open Day on Sunday, 21st May will be the first major focus of our activities. Your participation in preparing for this day by spreading the news and by attending this event is most welcome. In the weeks that follow, the College will present a Business Plan. This plan will outline the future for our College and the Rosa community in more detail. Brisbane Catholic Education and the Marist Brothers will be presented with the Business Plan and be invited to join with us in a collaborative partnership in the years ahead to work from the solid platform that they have provided to Marist College Rosalie so far.

We hope and pray that this invitation will be accepted and that the recommendation to his Grace, Archbishop John Bathersby is that Marist Rosalie does have a future in providing high quality, all boy Catholic education in an environment of fewer than 500 students to the Catholic community of Brisbane.

Focus Groups

Ten **Focus Groups** have been formed to allow us to develop the way forward for Marist College Rosalie. The Focus Groups were formed at the public meeting held on Thursday 9th March, 2006 at the College. Each group has a coordinator and their contact details are listed below.

Focus Groups	Coordinator	Phone Contact	Email Address
Promotional Marketing	Joe Sullivan	0418 716 242	jsu93758@bigpond.net.au
Strategic Marketing	Louise Hart	0423 830 611	louisehart@optusnet.com.au
Business Plan	Damian Azzopardi	0438 060 796	Damian.azzopardi@bigpond.com
Facilities / Improvements	Nigel Brown	0411 869 104	nigelbrown@logan.qld.gov.au
Finance	Damien Staunton	0421 640 695	cdmn_staunton@optusnet.com.au
Student Retention	John Strickland	0409 814 532	jstrickland@bmcl.com.au
Old Boys	Chris Begley	0422 971 677	chris.j.begley@transport.qld.gov.au
Communication	Sylvia Sanjurjo	0409 391 966	ourrosa@bigpond.net.au
Enrolment / Interviews	Ros Edols	0432 900 917	rosedols@internode.on.net
Fundraising / Events	Mark Braybrook	0417 076 954	mdb@gil.com.au
Focus Group Chair	Oscar Sanjurjo	0408602303	ourrosa@bigpond.net.au

The Focus Groups are inclusive. Your suggestions and involvement are welcome.

Please contact the appropriate Focus Group Coordinator.

References

- ¹ Rosa Parent & Student survey 2006
- ² The Courier Mail : The School Report; Monday 3rd April 2006
- ³ Rosa Parent & Student survey 2006
- ⁴ AECgroup: Marist College Rosalie Market Research
- ⁵ Rosa Parent & Student survey 2006
- ⁶ Lawrence et al: Dollars & Sense: The Cost Effectiveness of Small Schools, 2002
- ⁷ Modification and Closure of Systemic Schools Policy (February 2005)
- ⁸ David Hutton: Letter A25.0071.001/DJH:des
- ⁹ Financial Information about Brisbane Catholic Education and our schools - 1st page – see <http://www.bne.catholic.edu.au/pub/docs/financialinformation2005.pdf>
- ¹⁰ The Diocesan Catholic Education Employing Authorities in Queensland Certified Agreement 2003 (CA894 of 2003)
- ¹¹ BCE Financial Information paper - 4th page
- ¹² Interim Report to Leadership Team of Brisbane Catholic Education and Provincial Council, Marist Brothers Sydney Province.
- ¹³ PIFU report: Population Growth – highlights & trends, May 2005
- ¹⁴ PIFU report: Population Growth – highlights & trends, May 2005
- ¹⁵ Queensland Government SEQ Regional Plan, 2005 – 2026.
- ¹⁶ Interim Report to Leadership Team of Brisbane Catholic Education and Provincial Council, Marist Brothers Sydney Province
- ¹⁷ Ted Myers: *Marketing for School Effectiveness – ASPA Conference, 2003*
- ¹⁸ Ted Myers: *Super Marketing your School, 1996*
- ¹⁹ Ted Myers: *Marketing for better schools, 2003*
- ²⁰ The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 1998.
- ²¹ Queensland Parents and Friends: Parent Leadership in the Catholic School of the 21st Century, August 2003