

**FRANK RUSH AND THE DEVELOPMENT
OF A CATHOLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM
IN THE DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON 1961-1973**

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The vision, energy and commitment of Bishop Francis Rush and a few key advisors created Queensland's first diocesan Catholic Education system in advance of the granting of state funding. This paper briefly examines how this major achievement was made, provides some reflections upon what made it possible and what some of its consequences have been, and makes some suggestions about how it reflected and stimulated the emergence of a paradigm of church that is more diocesan than parochial.

Introduction

This paper came out of a 16-week project in 2005 to write a history of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Rockhampton. Of necessity the efforts were superficial; but one of the highlights of the material available in the Diocesan Archives was that which provided a wonderful record of the establishment of a Catholic Education system by Bishop Frank Rush. The paper is largely based on original documents held in the Rockhampton Diocesan Archives and on contemporary issues of the Diocesan monthly publication, *The Review*.

Personal Profile

I am the product of English Catholic schooling and was never taught by a religious sister or brother. My ancestors were Lancashire recusants and Blessed George Haydock, executed

at Tyburn in 1587, is the brother of an ancestor. My secondary education was with the Marist Fathers and I was 12 years old when the Second Vatican Council opened. My tertiary study was in Modern History at the University of Oxford and my career has been as a secondary school teacher and educational administrator within Catholic Education. I spent 24 years in Rockhampton diocese from 1983 and studied Educational Leadership through the Australian Catholic University. I am an enthusiastic amateur historian and writer in a totally unrelated area of interest. Unlike almost everyone else in this room, I did not know Frank Rush personally. Indeed I may have met him once only.

A Couple of Myths

My early reading on the history of Catholic Education in Australia tended to reinforce a couple of myths. The first was that Catholic Education Offices were formed because of the introduction of government funding. Susan Tobin's bicentennial history of 1988 states in relation to this:

... for the first time financial aid, other than the scholarship, was available to schools ... The entire fabric of Catholic education needed to be re-organised and rationalised. This was done through the establishment of Catholic Education Offices...

The story in Rockhampton shows that the establishment of a Catholic Education Office predated government funding. In fact it could be argued that the establishment of a Catholic Education Office in the Rockhampton Diocese helped to prepare the way that led to government funding for Catholic schools. A second myth was that the presence of lay teachers

was unusual in twentieth century Catholic primary schools until government funding began. In fact already 9% of teachers in Rockhampton diocesan Catholic primary schools were lay in 1959 and about 20% in 1966.

The Historical Background

The origins of the Diocese of Rockhampton lie in the establishment of the Diocese of Brisbane in 1859. The development of central and north Queensland led to the foundation of the Diocese of Rockhampton in 1882, lying between Calliope and the Cardwell Range. In turn, the Diocese of Townsville was separated in 1930, with Bundaberg and Blackall being transferred to the Rockhampton Diocese at the same time. The Diocese of Rockhampton has been fortunate in its bishops, all of them great supporters of education.

The establishment of parish schools was stimulated by the First Plenary Council of Australian Bishops in 1885 which declared that every parish should have a parish primary schools to which Catholic parents should be obliged to send their children. This challenge was taken up with vigour in the Diocese of Rockhampton, and only the parishes of Aramac, Capella and Finch Hatton were lacking a catholic school by 1961.

Three close contemporaries were leaders of stature who exemplified the efforts made to establish Catholic schools in the Diocese. Monsignor Joseph Mulcahy (1874-1940) was Parish Priest of Mackay from 1912 to 1940. In this period he opened three convent schools, a Brothers' school and a Convent High School in the parish.

Mother Ursula Kennedy pbvm (1876-1960) arrived in Longreach in 1900 as part of the pioneering group of Queensland Presentation Sisters. She was first elected Superior in 1912 and died in office 1960, being a key leader in the congregation for all that time. In this period the Presentation Sisters in Queensland opened 21 primary and 3 high schools in the three dioceses of Rockhampton, Brisbane and Toowoomba.

Mother Mary de Sales Costello rsm (1874-1969) was professed as a Rockhampton Sister of Mercy in 1894 and was first elected Superior in 1921. She retired in 1962 and in these years, the sisters opened 15 primary and 3 high schools.

Between them, the Presentation and Rockhampton Mercy congregations opened an average of a new school almost every year over more than 40 years.

Catholic Schooling Crisis in the Diocese, 1961

In 1961, the Sisters of St Joseph conducted six convent schools in the Diocese of Rockhampton. The Sisters of Mercy (Rockhampton and Brisbane Congregations) conducted 20 convent schools, four high schools (one order-owned), and one orphanage school. The Presentation Sisters conducted eight convent schools and two high schools (one order-owned). The Christian Brothers conducted five schools including one order-owned boarding school.

Although the work of the previous century had established a flourishing network of schools in the diocese, it was clear that a crisis of sustainability was approaching. There was

a rapid growth in the size of the school-aged population and increasing demands for quality education as the ‘baby boomers’ moved through schools. The demand for Senior schooling was increasing and this was one aspect of the increasing complexity and costs of running schools, reflected in the increasing allocations of expenditure being made by the State government to its schools.

The abolition of the State Scholarship from the end of 1962 and the raising of the leaving age to 15, with all children in Year 8 to go on to High School and new curriculum to be implemented, was a huge challenge. Major capital costs would be required to accommodate extra students in Primary and High Schools, and bank loans were difficult to obtain because of credit restrictions.

Already some class sizes were as large as 70 in some primary schools and the existing flow of vocations would allow little, if any, increase in religious teacher numbers, with the requirements and costs for teacher training of members of religious congregations becoming more difficult to meet. Rural population trends had left some small country convent schools struggling with pupil numbers in some cases below those that justified a community of sisters.

The need for more lay teachers was recognised but only richer parishes had the money to pay them, even at rates far below the state system. Teacher shortages meant the employment of non-Catholic teachers and unqualified teachers in many cases. Lay teachers already numbered 9% by 1959.

The difficulty in providing sufficient numbers and quality of Catholic schools meant that greater numbers of Catholic children were attending State Schools. The needs of these children for Religious Education could not be ignored.

Statistics collected at the end of 1959 had shown that the average class size in diocesan primary schools was 37, but 20% of classes had more than 60 pupils to a teacher. The scale of the future challenge could be seen in the fact that in Year 8 there were 549 pupils, but in Year 1 there were 985. This clearly indicated that a doubling of capacity was needed, and yet existing capacity could only manage an extra 18%.

Frank Rush became the Bishop of Rockhampton at a point when the church was faced with the possibility of the collapse of the school system in terms of finance, staffing, and confidence.

The Triumvirate of the 60s

Rush with two close contemporaries, Cecil Ballard and Dudley Denny, took on the challenge with gusto.

Frank Rush, the seventh Bishop of Rockhampton had been born in Townsville in 1916 when it was still part of the diocese. He had undertaken priestly studies in Rome and had been ordained to the priesthood in 1939. His wartime work at the cathedral parish in Townsville, crowded with Australian and American servicemen, had a great influence on him. Parish Priest of Ingham since 1957, he was ordained in St Joseph's Cathedral, Rockhampton, in February 1961. With the winds of change blowing, Rush came to Rockhampton when Pope John XXIII had already announced the calling of

an Ecumenical Council. From 1962 to 1965 he participated in the sessions of Vatican II for 8 to 12 weeks in the latter months of each year.

Rush proved to be radical in his approach to participation in decision-making in the church. At his ordination he said to the people, *'You are the Church and the growth and wellbeing of the Church are your responsibility.'*

He worked to establish interlocking representative councils, committees and boards from local to diocesan level that would enable all Catholics to have input to the groups that provided him with advice, or 'channels of communication' as he preferred to call them. He described his role.

A Bishop who is happily in the middle of, and not on the top of, such a web of channels of communication as I have envisaged often finds that his major role in the exercise is reduced to being the watchdog of the grass-roots institutions, constantly ensuring that the rights of all the people are safeguarded and their opinions heard.

It is clear that he took the role of "watchdog" seriously, intervening if he suspected that any process or motive lacked integrity. He was also very conscious of the role of episcopal authority in legitimising the structures and process he instituted, and in (usually) giving approval to the recommendations brought before him.

Dr Cecil Launcelot Ballard, a moral theologian and canon lawyer, was a grandson of Robert Ballard, an English-born pioneer Australian railway construction engineer who came

to Rockhampton in 1873 to superintend the building of the Central Railway on from Westwood. Cecil Ballard was born in Rockhampton in 1916. In 1948 he was in the first group of priests ordained from the Banyo seminary, which had been set up by the Queensland bishops and had taken its first students in 1941. He was then sent to Rome to take a Doctorate in Canon Law, and on returning in 1952 he became a member of the seminary staff. Two years later, at the age of 38, he suffered a serious stroke, which left him partially physically incapacitated. He had to learn to write again and was unable to manage stairs. Now living with his mother, he returned to the seminary staff a year after the stroke.

A contemporary of Frank Rush, Ballard was acting as a Brisbane agent for the new bishop on a number of matters during early 1961, and providing Canon Law advice. At the end of May he suggested (as it appears the bishop had been hoping) his return to work in the diocese. Following a meeting of the Queensland bishops in October, Ballard was formally appointed as Diocesan Canonist and Director of Catholic Church Supplies in Rockhampton, at that time a potentially lucrative diocesan business supplying church requisites, vestments, furniture, books and devotional items. He soon had the job of Business Manager of *The Review* added to the list, taking up residence with his mother in February 1962.

Ballard was a very capable man, with a good business mind and a flair for organisation. He also had a zest for life along with a sweet tooth. His mobility hampered but his spirit undiminished, his contribution to the development of a diocesan education system was not only to be a tremendous

achievement, but one of state and national significance.

Dudley Denny, the third member of the triumvirate, was a layman from a Mackay business house, Fields, with the reputation of being an “astute financier”. Initially his position as Diocesan Accountant was seen as that of a part-time financial advisor working from Mackay, but it became a full-time position based in Rockhampton in 1965.

First Steps

Rush appointed Denny as Diocesan Accountant in 1961. Recognising the centrality of the “State Aid” to the future of Catholic Education, he encouraged the establishment of a Diocesan Committee of Parents & Friends in 1962, stating that

if the Education problem is ever going to be solved it is going to be as the result not of Episcopal pronouncements, but of the work of a convinced and articulate laity presenting a case formulated by the Hierarchy.

In 1963 he appointed Dr Ballard as Diocesan Director of Catholic Education and established a Diocesan Council of Education. The membership of the Council comprised the deans, the Diocesan Director & the Inspector of Religious Education, representatives of the religious orders and the Diocesan P&F, together with laymen with expertise in statistics, town growth, finance, education methods and real estate.

Rush called on the P&F Associations, the Director of Catholic Education and the Education Council to provide the ‘adequate machinery through which the bishop will govern,

adapt and expand the Catholic system of education in his diocese'. He saw the terms of reference of the Council as *'as wide as education itself'* and he expected its decisions to be made on *'facts, not guesswork'*. Its primary aim was to ensure that there should be adequate education for every Catholic child in the diocese,

a complete Catholic formation to every child, in school buildings that will be worthy of their high purpose'. Rush was clear that 'there should never be a day when there would not be a place for every Catholic child in a Catholic school.

and he urged the Council that 'we are not going to be satisfied with just lagging along'.

In August 1963, a Diocesan Development Fund was established to pool parish and diocesan financial resources. Based on already existing models in Melbourne, Hobart and Wagga Wagga, the Fund was not to be limited to the provision of school buildings. Traditional parochial interest might be disturbed, but Rush was clear about the way of the future.

The challenge to all people today is to think and act beyond parish interest. The wider interests are the only ones worthy of a forward-looking people...It is not to say that the parish ceases to be important or loses any of its importance. The point is that the parish activity itself will be the more effective to the extent that it fits harmoniously into the broader pattern.

The Central Education Fund

In July 1965, details were obtained of Wagga's Central Education Fund system for the payment of stipends, salaries

and for a lay teacher-training scheme. Ballard's immediate reaction was prescient: 'It would seem that a great deal of authority would have to be vested in the Diocesan Director of Education or a Board'

In September, the bishop (in Rome) referred the question of a central fund for convent schools to a Special Deans' Committee to be serviced by the Diocesan Director of Education and Diocesan Accountant. This revealed that 16 parishes were paying for the employment of 27 lay teachers in convent schools while another 18 parishes had all religious staff and were not making any contribution to lay teacher costs. There were four parishes with no convent school. Convent school fees had hardly risen since 1946 while the basic wage had risen from \$10.50 to \$31.40 a week.

The proposals of the Committee were discussed in February 1966 by priests, religious orders and selected laity. They were accepted by the Education Council and approved by the bishop. In March, the scheme was announced in parishes. In the following week, briefings to sisters in each parish followed by scripted parish meetings led by lay people. In April, the finalised proposal was approved by the bishop and in May was implemented including the employment of eight additional lay teachers.

The Central Education Fund had the role of paying parish primary school wages and stipends, income being from school fees and parish subsidies. The scheme did not apply to the Brothers' Schools.

A standard school fee of 65c per week or \$27 per year was set, with the third and subsequent children free. No child was to be denied a Catholic education because of the inability of the parents to pay fees. School fees were to be remitted by the school to the parish priest of the parish that each child resided in, irrespective of the school attended. The parish priest would pay the Education Fund the school fees for all the parish's children attending a convent school, a diocesan total of approximately \$122,000 representing about 4520 fee paying children. Early reports were that the scheme was very successful, with fee payment rates close to 80%.

In addition to any shortfall in fees, each parish, including those with no convent school, would pay an assessed amount as a subsidy to the Fund, totalling \$44,000 or about 26% of the Fund's income. The assessments were based on parish population and means and were personally reviewed and adjusted by the bishop.

A stipend of \$800 per year was to be paid to the religious congregations for each full-time teaching sister, including music teachers, an increase of about 25% on that received from the parishes previously. The total amount paid was reduced by the amount received in music fees. The number of sisters receiving a stipend was approximately 160, at a net cost of \$86,000. The 35 lay teachers to be employed would receive a salary comparable to that offered by the State, an average increase of about a third. Salaries would average around \$1,970, totalling about \$69,000 or 45% of teacher costs.

Requests for additional lay teachers would be made by the parish priest to the Director of Education. Lay teachers would be employed by the diocese on the recommendation of the parish priest, and future appointments would be qualified teachers and Catholics if at all possible.

The parishes would continue to be responsible for rates, insurance, repairs, maintenance, equipment, and furniture for schools and convents as well as for school electricity costs, and were also responsible for all construction costs for new or extended facilities. Special financial arrangements were to be put in place for convents with primary boarders, where the sisters had traditionally provided the facilities, and the boarding revenue paid to them. In addition, parishes were to provide a school library allowance of between \$20 and \$50 each year.

A part-time Central Education Fund Accountant, Peter Punzell, was appointed. Returns from each Principal were sent to the Accountant to enable each parish's liability to be calculated. Each parish priest received a reckoning of the amounts due in fees and parish subsidy, and a Banker's Order for signature so that remittances would be made in a timely fashion. Special stationery and detailed instructions for the administration of the scheme were developed by the Director of Catholic Education and issued to each school.

State Per Capita Funding

The necessity of a breakthrough in the 'State Aid' issue was recognised by the State Government. During their negotiations with Catholic representatives, the hard data produced by Denny on behalf of the Diocese was very significant in

providing advice on which a government decision was made. The government announced in October 1968 a primary per capita grant of \$25, the highest in Australia, meaning a total of approximately \$140,000 for Diocesan convent schools.

The next question was how to ensure that these hard-won funds would be used well. Deanery meetings of priests discussed their preferences and by 11 November a proposal from the Deans' Special Committee was with the bishop with the recommendation that it be put to parish meetings over the next month for feedback and finalisation in mid December.

The proposals that were accepted included remitting the State grant to the Central Education Fund, reducing weekly school fees from 65c to 50c, reducing Parish subsidies by 25%, increasing the sisters' stipends by \$100 to \$900, increasing lay salaries by 25%, implementing long service leave as it became due, introducing a staff superannuation scheme, and establishing a teacher training scheme.

Commonwealth Per Capita Funding

The advent of Commonwealth per capita funding in 1970 took advantage of the work already done in relation to State funding. The proposals made to the bishop were prepared by the Education Council itself, rather than a Special Deans' Committee. The new funding meant that parish subsidies to the Central Education Fund could be abolished, stipends increased by \$100 to \$1000, lay salaries increased to 85% of the State scale (although not specifically tied to the State Award) and seniority for pay purposes counted from the start of teaching, not from the commencement of service in

a Catholic school. The costs of lay teachers replacing sick sisters would be refunded and a family fee remission scheme would be developed to operate across all Catholic schools, so that fees would be paid for no more than two children

It subsequently proved impossible to develop a family discount scheme across all schools (nor to develop an overall system for primary and secondary finance as had been suggested by the Education Council). However, in 1971 an endowment scheme was introduced for Catholic families whereby a cash grant would be available for families with children attending a Brothers' school and/or Convent High School, if they had at least four children at school in total, or at least three children attending in secondary.

Financial Enhancements

- Further funding enhancements allowed further improvements.
- In 1971, stipends were increased to \$1300 and the Education Fund made a contribution towards resources for the new Social Studies syllabus.
- In 1972, teacher salaries were increased to 85% of the State award and a contribution was made by the Education Fund towards reading resources.

- In 1973, funding was made available for secretarial support in schools, with four full-time and 12 part time secretaries appointed, while a contribution was also made towards cleaning costs. A contribution to parishes of \$5 per pupil for recurrent costs was introduced. Stipends were increased to \$1375 and teacher salaries were increased to 90% of the State award. A scholarship scheme for lay teacher trainees was introduced.

Other Developments

Other developments were further indications of a progressive approach to Catholic Education in the diocese. Standardised holidays, textbooks, uniform and report cards were introduced for parish schools. Training was offered to State School catechists in 1964. A new convent high school opened in North Rockhampton in 1964 and new co-instructional Secondary Colleges came into existence in Gladstone in 1966-7. The Marist Brothers came to the diocese in 1967 and uniform diocesan building standards were introduced in 1969. The Convent High School in Mackay was relocated in 1969 and a Diocesan Education Advisor was appointed in 1970. The Marist Sisters come to the diocese 1971 and Religious Education resourcing and in-service 1971 began in the same year. Regional Secondary Boards of Financial Management were set up in 1971 and curriculum in-service days for staff were introduced in 1972. By 1971, \$2,650,000 in DDF loans had been made available for school buildings.

The Promotion of Catholic Education

After attending a conference in Sydney in June 1965, Ballard came to realise more fully the significance of positive publicity for Catholic schools 'so the Catholic laity will

realise what efforts are being made, which in turn should give them confidence in our schools and their administration'. He began to ensure extensive coverage in *The Review* for Catholic schools, providing information on their quality, viability and achievements, and showing how the changes had brought about enormous improvements. A number of special features, and even special issues of the diocesan journal provided detailed statistics and other information. Information about class sizes, examination results, and the qualifications of secondary school teachers were among the many subjects dealt with.

The Scale of Change

In *The Review* Dr Ballard pointed out some of the key achievements of the development of a Diocesan education system. School fees were among the lowest in Australia, schools were staffed on needs, not according to parish means, and there was room for all Catholic children in Catholic schools. These achievements were the cause of justifiable pride, with quality, equity and affordability having been delivered through adopting a system approach. From our perspective, it can only be marvelled at that such major and far-reaching changes could have been carried out so quickly, so efficiently, and with so little apparent difficulty.

Evaluating the Contribution of Frank Rush

As Bishop of Rockhampton, Frank Rush took a prophetic role in the development of Catholic education in Australia. He emphasised the partnership that was required between home, parish and school. He saw that the school had to have greater significance within that partnership because of the extent to which the church was now called to look outwards

as a result of the Second Vatican Council. He looked to the role schools could play in ensuring that young Catholics could contribute the good of society through the Christian virtues. He emphasised that parents should be concerned about all aspects of school life, including ethos, staffing, curriculum, facilities, extra-curricular activities and school improvement, and saw the P&F Association as a vital way in which their contribution could be made. An extremely intelligent and pastorally minded man, he tried to ensure that processes and structures for participation and administration were in place, while striving to respect the needs and concerns of parish clergy and religious congregations.

Frank Rush's impact on Catholic education within the Diocese of Rockhampton was quite enormous. It is hard to imagine how any diocese in the country could have better dealt with the challenges of the twelve years of enormous change that he presided over.

Leadership Reflections

Authority and credibility were strong forces for success in this story. Bishop Rush was able to deploy the traditional pre-Vatican II episcopal authority in a way that brought about results. The use of centralised expertise and the application of sound organisational techniques were noticeable, not least the involvement of key stakeholders throughout. The bishop's personal leadership was vital to success. It is noteworthy that in centres away from Rockhampton attempts to devolve local arrangements to groups headed by the deans were largely unsuccessful.

The development of a clear sense of direction and defined principles of operation were other key ingredients. This was exemplified by the words of the bishop on setting up the Diocesan Council of Education. Its purpose was:

to develop the unity and co-ordination between Bishop, Priests, the Schools, Parents' & Friends' Association, Diocesan Council of Education and the Diocesan Education Office, to work together as the Family of God for the people of God.

As Dr Ballard stated, 'There is nothing as practical as good theory'.

Rush himself and his chosen helpers were highly educated and capable leaders. With the clerical state not seen as a necessary pre-condition or qualification for key financial and administrative roles within the diocese, laity and clergy worked together productively.

The process of informing the key players in the process of change was one marked by the provision of information, not just publicity. The role of all involved was respected by providing reasonably full information about the state of affairs, and clear reporting of the achievement of progress was provided as a way of maintaining ownership and commitment among stakeholders.

There is no doubt that the change to a diocesan education system was a crisis, and possibly it was only made possible because of this fact. But it was a proactive, planned and measured, if rapid, response. Interestingly, in spite of rhetoric to the contrary, it only really applied to the parish convent

schools. The secondary and Brothers' schools saw no need to become 'systematised' to any real extent, and it seems there was little will to force this on them. As noted above, it was the insistence of the bishop that any decisions must be made on the basis of 'facts not guesses'. This thoroughly modern approach to decision-making, still not necessarily always practised in ecclesiastical circles, demonstrated that the bishop was prepared to acknowledge and utilise the expertise of the laity and not allow special or local interests to stand in the way of rational decision-making.

However, Rush did come to realise that the decision-making structure he had instituted had shortcomings in relation to his view of Church. Was the Education Council to be an expert body or a representative body? By 1971, he was expressing real concern that it did not have a member representing working class families.

Frank Rush recognised that the political situation at the time meant that the laity, and in particular parents, had a key role to play in challenging and overthrowing the old battle lines of the State Aid issue. The active involvement of the laity in developing a diocesan system of education equipped them very fully to take up the cudgels in the political sphere on behalf of the Church, in a way that was informed, judicious and disciplined.

The role and response of the clergy is an interesting one. Although Ballard can be seen as somewhat of an outsider, he was clearly strongly supported by the bishop who also clearly expected, and seems to have enjoyed, the support of the deans. Surely not every parish priest relished the 'loss of

independence' implicit in the changes that were brought in, but the importance of the parish and the parish priest were constantly emphasised publicly at diocesan level.

The four female religious congregations in the diocese generally supported the changes because they provided hope and opportunities for improvement. They were given a seat at the table of formal diocesan decision-making. At a time when human and material resources were becoming impossibly stretched, the changes provided more staff and higher stipends for the sisters. The Christian Brothers would have welcomed the strengthening of the parish convent schools that fed their colleges but the changes to the *status quo* did not really affect them otherwise as they maintained their financial independence.

The changes began bringing about enormous advances in the status and remuneration of lay staff. They began to move from little more than the status of 'paid volunteers' to being recognised as fully-fledged employed professionals, and their numbers increased, as did their Catholicity. The move to proper remuneration meant that employment practices could become much more discriminating than had been the case previously.

The speed of decision-making and implementation is a source of some wonderment. Of course it was a simpler age, but the decisions and the associated administrative machinery were complex and their potential implications were immense. It is almost inconceivable that such changes could be made at such a speed today.

I believe that they were possible because of the authority of the bishop, the strength and ability of his key advisors, the survival of a relatively strong Catholic sub-culture and the sheer urgency of the problem, at a time when the Church was at a turning point in its history. All this change was still able to involve a degree of broad participation through detailed preparation and good communication.

The issue of gender is an interesting one to consider. The changes largely affected a poorly remunerated female teaching force and a predominantly female school population (at least in the larger centres where Christian Brothers Colleges educated the boys beyond the infant classes). By contrast the Brothers received higher stipends and the school fees they charged were higher. These contrasts merely reflected prevailing (although increasingly challenged) social attitudes of the time. The decisions were largely taken and implemented by men although the influence of the very capable and strong leaders of the female religious congregations could not possibly be overlooked.

It is very interesting also to see the power of other dominant paradigms. The language of clerical leadership and the subservient role of lay advisors come through very strongly. The unquestioned assumption of the superiority of single-sex education beyond the infant classes is clear. The centrality of the role of the parish and the parish priest is constantly re-emphasised. Frank Rush's episcopal authority might be seen in hindsight as visionary, collaborative and enabling, but it is clear that in the mind of his people, the weight of traditional unquestioning loyalty and obedience was very significant. Timing is everything and in Rockhampton it

might be imagined that, as bishop, Frank Rush enjoyed the best of both worlds.

That having been said, the influence of the Second Vatican Council is writ large. It is very clear that Rush was significantly influenced by new thinking and exposure to his peers that the Council provided at its annual sessions. His whole intent and direction in working with the laity shows his openness to *aggiornamento*. Lastly, and not least, the critical responsibility and role of the bishop as leader of the local church is seen vigorously and purposefully alive in his educational work.

Some Consequences

The work done initially ensured a way forward for hard-pressed Catholic schools in the Diocese of Rockhampton that became the dawning of a new and more prosperous phase. However, seven small parish schools closed between 1965 and 1972: Emu Park (1965), Tambo (1966), Habana (1968), St Therese's, Rockhampton (1970), Isisford (1971), Theodore (1971) and Farleigh (1972), because of the inability of religious orders to staff them and an inability to conceive how they could be wholly lay-staffed and led.

Although the bishop accepted that these school closures were unavoidable, they were a severe blow to his desire to provide much more justice and equity in the provision of education. However, without the changes, more schools would probably have had to close. Generally speaking, smaller and poorer communities were put on a much more equal footing with wealthier city parishes than had been the case previously. At the same time, school fees for families were maintained at

very affordable levels while some degree of justice in terms of the remuneration of lay staff was achieved.

The proactive and systematic approach to the education issue adopted at the diocesan level led to the development of systems that were rational, workable and sensible. This placed the diocese in a very advantageous situation to make immediate effective use of new resources in the shape of government funding as soon as it arrived, in contrast to the situation that occurred in most other places.

All these changes no doubt led to a significant shift in the balance of power between parish and parish priest on the one hand and diocese and bishop on the other. It is clear that because these changes to Catholic schooling were made early and decisively in the Diocese of Rockhampton, they created 'clear air' and assisted in clarifying roles and responsibilities in a way that did not always occur elsewhere. I believe that this has contributed favourably to the healthy development of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Rockhampton

The early involvement of the Catholic Education Office in the staffing of Catholic primary schools meant that staffing was seen from the perspective of the good of all schools rather than the competing needs of each individual school. As a country diocese, the establishment and acceptance of a flexible teacher transfer system in the Rockhampton Diocese has been very successful in maintaining the health and vitality of country schools, while injecting a level of professional growth and progression into the lives of teachers. This approach is the envy of other dioceses and is now probably unattainable elsewhere.

It is interesting to speculate the extent to which the move to diocesan responsibility for the health of parish primary schools in some way had an effect on the attitude of religious. Once the diocese had stepped in, then perhaps the pressure on religious and their congregations was guaranteed the future of Catholic parish schools was lifted, and consequently contributed in some way to the decisions that religious took about their vocations and that congregations took about their priorities.

Enduring Issues

This story enables us to identify and put into perspective a number of issues that have endured since the 1960s. These include:

- The proper extent of the influence of the teachings of Second Vatican Council on the way the Church thinks and operates.
- The vital importance of formation and leadership succession in the Church's ministry.
- The question of parish-school relationships.
- The ongoing questioning of the value and purpose of Catholic schools.
- The effects, both positive and negative, of government funding.
- The quality and sustainability of the provision of Catholic education in remote and rural areas.
- Questions of the Common Good within Catholic Education, and particularly how this might relate to the relative position of primary and secondary schools.

- The issue of governance in Catholic Education involving three pillars: clerical, educational and parental.

Reflecting And Stimulating The Emergence Of A New Paradigm

We can also see how this story both reflected and stimulated the emergence of a paradigm of church that elevates the local (diocesan) church in contrast to parish identity and influence.

Some aspects of this include:

- The move of the diocesan church into gaps created by the increasing challenges to parish.
- The emergence of specialised centralised diocesan structures and agencies in response to the financial, practical, organisational, and legal dynamics within which the church has to function.
- The application of professional administrative skills as a key part of church administration and governance.
- Pastoral action increasingly based on a diocesan agency model rather than a parochial model.
- Lay expertise and involvement being increasingly present and indeed essential and in a whole range of practical matters at diocesan level.
- The marginalisation of religious congregations within church structures as they have contracted in size

Conclusion

Significant organisational change to Catholic schooling in the Diocese of Rockhampton, was carried out under Bishop Frank Rush from 1961 to 1973. This began as a result of the leadership of the bishop and some key advisors, and it enabled and was hastened by the impact of the restoration of State and Federal government funding to Catholic schools. I have tried to set this story within a wider story, particularly that of a changing church. We know that the story of Catholic Education in Australia can be seen as a unique and heroic one. Maybe its continuing significance will be further highlighted as future historians take up a number of the significant issues for church that emerge from a study of Catholic educational leadership during the 1960s.

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