

School Advisory Councils

Religious Institute and
Ministerial Public Juridic Person Schools



MELBOURNE
ARCHDIOCESE
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Different governance arrangements, shared mission

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) began its governance responsibilities for parish and diocesan schools in the Archdiocese on 1 January 2021 when 290 schools transferred to MACS.

Factors leading to the change

A number of factors have led to the change in governance arrangements. These include recommendations that have been made from a Royal Commission and a Parliamentary Inquiry to ensure all schools were governed by an incorporated body. Just as importantly, the new governance arrangements safeguard and strengthen the catholicity of our schools into the future.

Other Catholic schools in the Archdiocese not governed by MACS

The governance arrangements for the [39 schools](#) in the Archdiocese that are congregational (religious institutes) and ministerial public juridic person (MPJP) schools have not changed, as their governance meets the incorporation requirement. They are governed by a range of congregations and MACS continues to work in partnership with, and offer services and support to, other Catholic schools in the Archdiocese that are not governed by MACS, as it did previously as Catholic Education Melbourne.

Religious institute and ministerial public juridic person schools

A public juridic person (PJP) is the Church's equivalent of a civil corporation. There are various types of PJP, and they each have a legal status with rights and responsibilities that are specified in canon law or in the foundation documents associated with the PJP's establishment. A diocese is a PJP with the bishop as its sole legal representative. Similarly, a parish is a PJP with the parish priest as the sole legal representative.

Congregations or religious institutes (RIs) are also PJPs and each of them has statutes that specify the governance arrangements of the institute. A number of RIs have created an MPJP to take over the governance of their schools – to sustain their charism and mission, and provide good governance for the stewardship of their resources, mitigating the declining resources within the RI to govern and operate schools. Examples of MPJPs are Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) and Kildare Ministries which are distinct from, though connected with, their founding RIs the Christian Brothers and the Brigidine Sisters respectively.

An MPJP is an entity that is separate from the RI and created to undertake a particular ministry. The authorising RI typically retains reserve powers for its MPJP, but these reserve powers do not impede the MPJP's capacity to govern and manage the schools for which it is responsible. In short, an MPJP is 'a legal entity under canon law that allows the Church's ministries to function in the name of the Catholic Church' – Catholic Religious Institute and Ministerial Public Juridic Person Victorian Schools Limited ([CRMV](#)).

Continued support

A strong commitment to a unified approach to Catholic education has been evident in Victoria between the four dioceses, and between the dioceses and the RI/MPJP schools that operate in them. This unified approach is a sign of Catholic communion and it delivers beneficial outcomes for all schools, as unity is not only a hallmark of a healthy Church, it is a critical factor in effective negotiation with governments.



For this reason, MACS affirmed its commitment to a strong engagement with RIs/MPJPs as the new governance arrangements came into effect on 1 January 2021. The collaborative spirit continues as MACS provides support in a range of areas to all Catholic dioceses and schools, including RI/MPJP schools, in Victoria. Key among these is servicing finance and other compliance and reporting matters for various regulators, along with statewide services in Employee Relations and Information Technology. Other areas of support include, but are not restricted to, school review, educational and wellbeing services, accreditation to teach in a Catholic school, professional learning opportunities, succession planning, principal appointments and principal appraisal processes.

The operations and relationships with all Victorian Catholic systemic schools continue through the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV).

