

National Student Wellbeing Program (2024 – 2027) CESA Guidelines

October 2023



Contents

Contents	2
1 Introduction	2
2 Overview of the National Student Wellbeing Program	3
2.1 Grant Applications for the period 2024-2027	3
2.2 Role options in CESA schools	3
2.3 Minimum Qualification Requirements	3
3 Roles and Responsibilities	4
3.1 What is the role of CESA under the new program?	4
3.2 Roles and responsibilities of a School Chaplain/student wellbeing officer	4
3.3 The School Principal - Role and Responsibilities	5
3.4 Making a complaint	6
4 What is the application process?	6
4.1 How does my school apply for funding?	6
4.2 Applying for funding?	7
5 What funding is available?	7
5.1 Funding Amounts and Minimum Hours	7
5.2 Notification of Funding Decision	8
5.3 Use of funds	8
6 What is the employment process	9
6.1 Who is the employer?	9
6.2 Is there an appointment approval process?	9

1 Introduction

The National Student Wellbeing Program (2024-2027) (NSWP; ‘the Program’) aims to support schools in promoting the wellbeing of students by providing funds that contribute to the maintenance or establishment of chaplaincy and student wellbeing services in the school. The NSWP consists of the provision of chaplaincy and/or student wellbeing services in Australian schools to support the wellbeing of Australian students through:

- pastoral care services; and
- strategies developed in consultation with the school community, relevant school staff and school principal, that support the wellbeing of the broader community, for example coordinating volunteering activities and support, breakfast clubs, lunchtime activities, excursions, school incursions, and parent/carer workshops.

The NSWP is a complementary service to those provided by qualified specialists. The NSWP is not designed nor intended to provide specialist services to school students, such as professional counselling, professional mental health and psychological services and other allied health services. In addition, the NSWP is not a religious program and does not provide religious instruction or religious counselling to students.

In Catholic schools, the NSWSP should enhance their Catholic Identity and Mission.

Under an agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the States ('NSWP Agreement'), the Commonwealth provides funding to the States, the NSWSP is administered by the States with a cross sector panel in each state. The Cross Sector Panel in South Australia consists of government, Catholic and independent school sector representatives. The CESA representative is the Manager: Catholic Identity and Mission.

2 Overview of the National Student Wellbeing Program

2.1 Grant Applications for the period 2024-2027

For the 2024-2027 NSWSP agreement, CESA will be calling for expressions of interest from schools for the duration of the agreement. The secured duration of funding to schools in South Australia is for one year and will be confirmed for each subsequent year until the end of the agreement. Schools can withdraw in any year.

2.2 Role options in CESA schools

In the NSWSP, the default titles for providing wellbeing services are 'School Chaplain' (Catholic or another recognised or accepted Christian religious institution) or 'Student Wellbeing Officer'.

In a Catholic School:

- a) A School Chaplain is an individual who:
 - i. Is recognised by the school community and the appropriate governing authority for the school as having the skills and experience to deliver school chaplaincy services to the school community; and
 - ii. Is recognised through endorsement by a recognised or accepted Christian religious institution:
 - o For a School Chaplain (Catholic), the person is to be an active member of a Catholic Eucharistic community. Appointment of a School Chaplain (Catholic) requires Church ratification obtained via the CEO; written endorsement is required from Parish Priest of appointee.
 - o For a School Chaplain (another recognised or accepted Christian religious institution) written endorsement must be provided by a relevant Religious Minister for the appointee.
 - iii. Meets the NSWSP's minimum qualification requirements.
- b) A Student Wellbeing Officer is an individual who:
 - i. Is recognised by the school community and the appropriate governing authority for the school as having the skills and experience to deliver school wellbeing services to the school community; and
 - ii. Meets the NSWSP's minimum qualification requirements.

2.3 Minimum Qualification Requirements

- School Chaplains and Student Wellbeing Officers are required to hold a minimum qualification or qualifications equivalent to or higher than a Certificate IV as determined by the States, and this qualification or qualifications must include competencies in:

- Mental health and making appropriate referrals, and
- Providing pastoral care, and/or working with youth
- School Chaplains and Student Wellbeing Officers are also required to undertake a professional learning package in responding to and preventing cyberbullying delivered by the Office of the eSafety Commissioner within three months of commencing NSW services and refresh this professional learning at least once every two and a half years
- Have relevant and valid Working with Children Check
- Have valid certification for Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care Training (RRHAN-EC)
- School Chaplain duties are referenced in the [Catholic Schools Enterprise Agreement 2020](#) (Enterprise Agreement) as ESO Grade 4 (requiring a Diploma qualification or equivalent competency) and as such must meet ESO classification requirements of the EA to meet compliance requirements.
- For Catholic schools, the normal CESA employment protocols and requirements (including CESA's electronic screening) would also apply.

The onus will be on the school to assess whether qualifications meet the criteria above. The CEO can provide advice (please note that a teaching qualification is seen as an equivalent one; partial completion may also have deemed equivalency). Equivalency determinations by the Cross Sector Panel can be sought through the CEO, as can expectations regarding completion of core competencies.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 What is the role of CESA under the new program?

Under a cross-sector agreement CESA, through the CEO, is responsible for assessing applications and distributing NSW funding to Catholic schools in SA. The CEO also arranges Church ratification for the appointment of School Chaplains (Catholic). It also provided information to the Cross Sector Panel for the annual reporting to the Commonwealth on the NSW.

3.2 Roles and responsibilities of a School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer

The School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer must ensure that all services that are delivered are:

- approved by the Principal; and
- have the voluntary consent of parents of students who participate (Schools must obtain written consent from a parent, carer or the student (if that student is an adult or mature minor) before services are provided.

To facilitate these conditions of delivery, the School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer must also:

- assist the Principal in notifying students/parents about all aspects of the School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer's role including the voluntary nature of the program;

- report on services relating to the program and participate in any monitoring and/or evaluation strategies required by the Principal;
- ensure that they take responsibility for, and obtain prior approval from the Principal for, any external people they invite onto school premises to provide student activities such as musical shows or lectures or to assist in providing pastoral care;
- deliver services in a way that respects and is sensitive to the Catholic identity and mission of the school and the religious backgrounds of all students.

When delivering services under the NSWP, School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officers must adhere to these guidelines and the school Code of Conduct.

In their work as School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officers, the NSWP requires that they must:

- not proselytise (attempt to convert someone to another religion)
- respect, accept and be sensitive to other people's views, values and beliefs;
- promote a safe and inclusive school community, where all people are respected.

Services provided by School Chaplains/Student Wellbeing Officers should not include:

- putting students in a position of feeling manipulated or intruded upon by intense persuasive conversation;
- teaching religious education in their schools in the School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer role (although being a guest speaker/presenter would be acceptable);
- providing professional support services, for example counselling or legal or medical advice, unless appropriately qualified to do so and is included in their Position Information Document, and/or consistent with relevant state policies and procedures;
- providing support to students who have indicated that they do not wish to access the service of a School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer; and
- not participate in any activity in a private capacity that might impact or be perceived to impact on their delivery of the services under the program.

3.3 The School Principal - Role and Responsibilities

The Principal, in consultation with the parent body and the school's governing body, is responsible for leading, coordinating and managing all aspects of the School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer services within the school, including complaints management. The Principal may appoint another member of the school's staff to undertake these tasks on his/her behalf.

The Principal is responsible for:

- undertaking and/or coordinating ongoing consultation with the school community at a minimum on an annual basis, to assess the demand, support for, and nature of School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer services;

- checking that all School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer personnel who may come into contact with students in their school comply with all legislative, policy and other requirements and permissions necessary (i.e. including a Working With Children Check, up to date Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care training) to have access to and work on the school premises;
- ensuring there is an appropriate Position Information Document for the School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer;
- making every effort to inform all parents and students of the voluntary nature of program participation;
- completing, endorsing and submitting the school's application for funding;
- endorsing the choice of School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer prior to employment; for a School Chaplain (Catholic), this included obtaining Diocesan Church Approval for a new School Chaplain or a written endorsement for a School Chaplain of another recognised or accepted Christian religious institution;
- encouraging the School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer to access Catholic Identity and Mission professional learning and formation provided by CESA;
- overseeing the delivery of the School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer service within the school;
- ensuring that effective complaints handling protocols, including the documentation of complaints to notify the Catholic Education Office (if appropriate) of complaints or issues that may arise;
- ensuring appropriate induction, facilities and relevant resources are provided as required
 - in particular, induction must include engagement with *Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people – Guidelines*, with annual refresher with all staff and volunteers;
- advising the Catholic Education Office of variations in routine such as absences of the School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer and long-term gaps in service when there is no service provision and other day to day management issues;
- ensuring that a School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer does not deliver services if a child protection check/police check expires and a renewal is not in place;
- ensuring the NSWSP grant is acquitted appropriately

3.4 Making a complaint

As with any concerns in relation to a school matter, the school should always be the first point of contact. The normal CESA complaint procedures are to be followed.

4 What is the application process?

4.1 How does my school apply for funding?

The Catholic Education Office's application process for the 2024-2027 round will be launched in October 2023.

Applications close: Friday 3rd November 2023

Any queries in relation to the funding or the program in general please contact Angela Brown (angela.brown@cesa.catholic.edu.au) or Julian Kluge (julian.kluge@cesa.catholic.edu.au) or 8301 6674).

4.2 Applying for funding?

You will be required to complete an application form indicating your school's intention to participate in the NSW Program.

Principals must sign a declaration that they have:

- Read, understood and are prepared to comply with the NSW Guidelines;
- Planned to advertise and recruit for a School Chaplain (Catholic) in the first instance and provide evidence of this if appointing a School Chaplain (Other Christian) or Student Wellbeing Officer.
- Taken appropriate steps to ensure that all stakeholders are aware that participation in the program is voluntary;
- Consulted with the school community as appropriate about the engagement of a School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer and that there is community support for the position (the CEO reserves the right to request relevant documentation demonstrating that consultation has been undertaken); and
- Provided true and correct information in the Application form.

4.2.1 What evidence needs to be provided which demonstrates school community support for involvement in the program?

The NSW requires evidence that participation by schools and students is voluntary. For Catholic schools, at a minimum¹, there must be consultation with the school's Governing Council on an annual basis to review and confirm the support of the school community for the Program. Evidence and feedback from the school community consultation will form the basis of progress reports and continued funding. School Principals can use the outcomes of school community consultation to determine the nature of the service required in the school community.

5 What funding is available?

5.1 Funding Amounts and Minimum Hours

All schools will have the opportunity to apply for the 2024-2027 round grants. The funding allowed per school in the new NSW Agreement will be up to \$20,280 per year for the

¹ Evidence and feedback may take various forms including:

- the documented results of parent and school surveys, for example a summary of the results and comments
- meeting notes from meetings of the representative parent body or school equivalent which document all discussion and decisions

² Please note this is as stipulated by the Australian Government. Geolocation categories are based on the 2011 version of Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia Plus (ARIA).

duration of the funding round (or up to \$24,336 to each school in a designated remote/very remote area)².

Examples of minimum service delivery for the different levels of funding available under the Program are:

- Tier 1 Funding: \$20,000 (plus 20% for remote schools), ex GST
 - o indicative of 400 hours
- Tier 2 Funding: \$10,000 (plus 20% for remote schools), ex GST
 - o indicative of 200 hours

School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer salaries are to be calculated in line with the [Catholic Schools Enterprise Agreement 2020](#) (Enterprise Agreement), as varied and/or replaced, commensurate with qualifications and classification requirements.

A Position Information Document (PID) is to be developed, outlining indicative tasks and necessary attributes and abilities, to manage performance accordingly.

Appointments for School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer must be in accordance with applicable conditions of employment as per the Enterprise Agreement and relevant legislation.

5.2 Notification of Funding Decision

Once the selection process has been finalised by the CEO, schools will be notified of their success or failure. The CEO will inform schools whether their funding has been approved soon after verification of our funding proportion.

5.3 Use of funds

National Student Wellbeing Program funding can only be used for the provision of School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing officer services to support the wellbeing of students by providing:

- pastoral care services; and
- strategies that support the wellbeing of the broader school community.
- School communities may engage the services of more than one School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer however the amount of funding available to school communities will not increase if there is more than one worker engaged under this program.

² Please note this is as stipulated by the Australian Government. Geolocation categories are based on the 2011 version of Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia Plus (ARIA).

For more information on geolocations visit
<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/remoteness+structure>

6 What is the employment process

6.1 Who is the employer?

For diocesan schools, the employer is the Catholic Church Endowment Society (CCES) or the Catholic Diocese Port Pirie (CDPP), as applicable.

The School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer will be located at the Catholic School in receipt of the funding for this program.

6.2 Is there an appointment approval process?

The school can proceed with the employment of a School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer for which it is seeking NSW funding once:

- a funding application has been submitted and the school is prepared to proceed even if it is unsuccessful in receiving a grant; or
- it has received notification of being successful in its grant application.

Please note that funding will not be released by the CEO to a school that has been offered funding until:

- the school has submitted a NSW Declaration Form with pertinent details to the CEO confirming the School Chaplain/Student Wellbeing Officer meets all the NSW requirements.
- Where applicable, Diocesan Church approval for a new School Chaplain (Catholic) or written endorsement for a new School Chaplain (another recognised or accepted Christian religious institution) has been received.
- the CEO assesses that
 - the appointee's tertiary qualifications meet the minimum requirements
 - the school has completed a robust recruitment process that premises the preferred employment of a School Chaplain (Catholic) and that this is evidenced when appointing a School Chaplain (another recognised or accepted Christian religious institution) or Student Wellbeing Officer
 - the appointment details (role title, minimum hours, etc) are consistent with the grant application and the subsequent CEO grant offer to the school.

Schools will report that the salary component of the grant has been fully expended at the appropriate grant level. Schools should inform angela.brown@cesa.catholic.edu.au if they cannot, or anticipate they won't be able to, use the grant for its intended purpose.