

# SOS

## Save our Seton College Media Release

Wednesday 18th November 2020

### **BRISBANE CATHOLIC EDUCATION SCHOOL CLOSURE ATTRIBUTED TO LOW ENROLMENTS. PARENTS ARE TOLD A DIFFERENT STORY.**

Recently, ABC aired a story on the closure of Brisbane Catholic Education's (BCE) Seton College in Brisbane. The story interviewed current Seton College parent, Angela Farris, on why she chooses to commute nearly one hour each day to her son's high school. Ms Farris' told of the "life changing" quality of education at Seton, and how she no longer feels like she has to fight for her son's right to an inclusive education since his attendance at Seton College. BCE informed the community in July this year that the college would close within the next four years, claiming a drop in enrolments are to blame. The statement leaves parents and carers stunned as prior correspondence from Seton College suggests numbers were steady and the school was very much in demand.

In direct contradiction to BCE's statement of declining enrolments, an email was sent to parents in 2019 stating that *"no further enrolments will be taken..... Our College is set to be at the maximum capacity in 2020, with a waiting list already in place."* BCE have made no mention of this waiting list since announcing the closure of the school in July 2020.

In the years leading up to the announcement of the closure, the number of students entering at year 7 were 54 (2017), 67 (2018) and 86 (2019). BCE received over 90 enrolment applications for students wishing to start in year 7 for 2020. However, only 30 of those families were offered an interview, leaving over 60 families to look for other high school options. At the time, current parents shared their concern for these families as they had little over six months to find an alternative high school for their Year 6 children, many with learning disabilities. Frustratingly for parents, there are only 22 students in the year seven cohort of 2020 at Seton College, leaving eight enrolment places unfilled.

BCE have turned away numerous families who have applied or made it very difficult for them to apply, so there has not been a drop in enrolments rather a reduction in the number of students that BCE has accepted into the school. One prospective parent said "I'm appalled at Seton's conduct during this time. The manner in which they gave us very little notice for interviews, bombarded us with enormous amounts of information and then demanded responses within a couple of days was, in my opinion, highly unprofessional and contrary to the ethos of the Catholic faith, or any Christian organisation."

Members of the SAVE OUR SETON COLLEGE (SOS) campaign are seeking answers to the contradictory information given to them by BCE. They are interested in finding out how the 2020 waitlist was utilised in the objective to avoid a school closure, and if the 60+ families who were declined enrolment were contacted when places became available. Of equal disappointment to SOS members is Seton College's exclusion of any and ALL future enrolments, which parents say is counter-productive to BCE's commitment to stay open until 2024 "providing enrolment numbers don't decrease any further."

Anyone wishing to pledge their support to keep Seton College open can do so at our website - [www.saveourseton.org](http://www.saveourseton.org)

For media enquiries please contact:  
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