Welcoming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into Catholic Schools

BYALLAWA means ‘yarn up’ or ‘speaking together’ and in this spirit of cooperation, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Parramatta work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to help them afford a quality, Catholic education.

BYALLAWA School Fee Co-Contribution Scheme
HOW DOES THE BYALLAWA SCHEME WORK?
You make the contribution you can afford to pay towards school costs (including tuition fees, the school building levy, school resource fees, subject fees, other levies, excursion fees, etc) and the school will cover the rest. If required, the school may also assist with the provision of a school uniform.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE BYALLAWA SCHEME?
Families from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds who receive Centrelink financial support and/or are holding a NSW Health Care Card are eligible to apply for the scheme.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR THE BYALLAWA SCHEME?
1. Complete an expression of interest form which is available from the school or www.parra.catholic.edu.au/byallawa
2. Post, email or take the completed form to the school who will contact with you
3. The principal will consider the level of financial contribution you are able to make based on the type and level of Centrelink support you receive, if you have a NSW Health Care Card, as well as other circumstances
4. The school will send you a letter to confirm the arrangements, including any regular automatic deductions from Centrelink you have agreed to
5. You will not receive invoices or school fee statements and there will be no debt recovery action for unpaid co-contributions – all the school asks is that you let them know if you are unable to make your contribution
6. An acknowledgement of any co-contributions paid will be sent home each term
7. The contribution can be reviewed at any time to respond to changing circumstances

IN THE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE OF LOVE AND WELCOME, THE PARRAMATTA DIOCESE SUPPORTS THE ENROLMENT OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN IN LOCAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS. WE RECOGNISE THAT FOR SOME FAMILIES, SCHOOL COSTS CAN BE DIFFICULT TO COVER AND IT IS OUR PROMISE THAT NO STUDENT WILL BE REFUSED ENROLMENT OR BE DISADVANTAGED FOR FINANCIAL REASONS.
DO I NEED TO BE CATHOLIC?

Not all students who attend Catholic schools are from Catholic families. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are accepted into Catholic schools on the understanding that they respect and agree to support the Catholic identity of the school and acknowledge the importance of a religious education for their children.

WHAT ELSE DO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFER ABORIGINAL FAMILIES AND THEIR CHILDREN?

• Our Catholic schools recognise and respect the heritage, spirituality, cultures and learning styles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

• Aboriginal education is incorporated into the curriculum from Kindergarten through to Year 12. Many schools also have special Aboriginal study units such as Aboriginal Languages and Aboriginal Cultural Experiences

• We incorporate an understanding of Aboriginal spirituality into Religious Education programs, prayer and liturgy

• Whole-school strategies have been developed to promote anti-racism. Catholic schools are working towards reconciliation between Aboriginal and other Australians

• The Jarara Indigenous Education Unit based at the Aengus Kavanagh Centre, Mount Druitt, is actively engaged in meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families.

Contact Jarara on (02) 9677 4301 or www.jarara.catholic.edu.au
The BYALLAWA School Fee Co- Contribution Scheme is one way of working towards equity.

Catholic schools are working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families every day – contact your local Catholic school to find out how.

For more information on BYALLAWA contact your local Catholic school principal, phone 9840 5600 or visit the website www.parra.catholic.edu.au