Following a process of wide consultation and careful consideration, Catholic school employers provided a detailed response to the employee log of claims at the single bargaining unit (SBU) meeting held yesterday (17 April 2012). The employer response is the culmination of:

- listening to the explanations and reading the supporting documents tabled by the employee representatives in support of their log of claims
- giving careful consideration to the intent and basis of each claim item
- conducting wide consultation with all Catholic school employing authorities with regard to each claim item; and
- giving specific consideration to our core values as they relate to the employer/employee relationship in Catholic schools and balancing these with responsible stewardship of our schools.

Employer representatives tabled a 22-page response document addressing each claim individually, and engaged in detailed discussion with employee representatives to clarify the basis of responses.

Employers were able to provide agreement to a wide range of wage and non-wage related claims that address a fair and reasonable proportion of the employee’s claims. In addition, specific and favourable consideration has been given to claim items with a strategic focus. The interpretation of the report regarding the Review of Positions of Added Responsibility Joint Working Party generated robust discussion. The report will be considered further at the next SBU meeting.

As part of the settlement of the employee log of claims, Catholic school employers are committed to providing fair and responsible salary and wage increases to school-based employees. However, a number of considerations will influence Catholic school employers with regard to the quantum of such increases. These considerations include the structure of the ‘agreed in principle’ package of non-wage items, the future funding arrangements associated with the Gonski review, and the wages policies of major stakeholders within the education sector.

While it is proposed that discussion around the quantum for a salary and wage increase will be ongoing, Catholic employers believe it is in the best interests of all parties to have access to as much relevant information as possible to ensure that a fair and responsible outcome is negotiated.

The employer response to the employee log of claims has been delivered in good faith and grounded in the principle of the ‘common good’. Simply put, the response has been developed using a fair and responsible approach with a view to supporting and upholding the dignity of each person in the school community. However, responsible stewardship of our schools and the potential impact of some claims on our ability to deliver the best educational outcomes for students determine that not all the claims made by employees can be supported.

The full document detailing the response to each claim item can be found on the EB7 website by clicking here.

Employer representatives indicated that the employer log of claims would be tabled at the next Single Bargaining Unit meeting to be held on Wednesday 9 May 2012.

A log of claims from the Queensland Nurses Union pertaining to nurses working in Catholic schools was also tabled at this meeting and a response will be developed in the near future.