

VISION

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Catholic Schools Council

formed and informed by the faith community, proclaims the liberating message of the Good News through a renewed Catholic Schools system.

WE VALUE

- A life ethic based on the Gospel command to love one another
- Authentic Catholicity
- True witness
- Education and Learning

WE BELIEVE IN:

- The dignity of the Human Person
- The individual's right to reach their potential

WE BELIEVE THAT:

- The gospel informs our direction and growth
- Faith is nurtured in community
- Schools are active participants in an evangelising church.

Vision Statement Rationale:

DOMN Catholic Schools Council: an advisory body formed to explore, discern and provide advice and recommendations to the Bishop of Maitland –Newcastle so that the best possible Catholic education is provided for the children in this Diocese. (Constitution, Sept 2008)

Formed and informed by the faith community: guided by Gospel values and **engaged** with Stakeholders and the Diocesan Community

Proclaims: "...There is no true evangelisation if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are not proclaimed." *Pope Paul VI Evangelii Nuntiand 21-22*

The liberating message of the Good News: where we hear of God's love for every human person and are called to recognise, by action, the dignity of the individual, their right to reach their potential and to live a life full of hope.

Through a renewed Catholic Schools System: reflecting both the **Catholic Schools at a Crossroads*** statement that calls for a "re-founding and re-visioning" of our schools as centres of the new evangelisation to which we are all called in this new century, and our evolving Diocesan Stewardship Plan.

** Catholic Schools at a Crossroads: Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of NSW and the ACT (August 2007).*

The Council's Constitution provides direction (May 2011):

EXTRACT

THE ROLE OF THE DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE CSC:

- 1.1. The role of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Schools Council is to explore, discern and provide advice and recommendations to the Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle for the purpose of providing the best possible Catholic education for students. The CSC is to provide leadership in all areas that relate to the nature and purpose of Catholic schools with a particular emphasis on their Catholic mission and ethos.

FUNCTION:

- 2.2 The CSC reviews and analyses the current educational system to identify areas for development and improvement. It exists to be a forum of creative thinking, research and discussion.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

- 1.2 The CSC, sharing in the responsibility of the evangelising mission of the Diocese, works in collaboration to promote the vision of listening carefully to the voice of God's people and empowering them to participate fully in Christ's mission.
- 2.1 The CSC is an advisory body only. All final decisions in regards to the CSC, its mission and purpose, and the Catholic school system remain with the Bishop.
- 2.3 The CSC is independent of the Catholic Schools System of the Diocese, though in dialogue with it and in service to it.

MEMBERSHIP:

- 3.1 The Bishop appoints all members of the CSC. Members are appointed for their broad spectrum of expertise and experience in a range of fields relevant to the diocesan education system.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION:

- 6.1 The Bishop requires the CSC to take seriously its obligation to consult with its stakeholders and to develop and demonstrate a process for periodic consultation.

Current CSC Members:

- Mr Stephen Aitken (2013-)
- Adjunct Professor Anne Benjamin CHAIR (2013▶)
- Sr Laretta Baker rsj (2014▶)
- Mr Peter Cunningham (2014▶)
- Mrs Robyn Hope (2013▶)
- Fr Tony Potts (2010▶)
- Mr Paul Smith (2013▶)
- Professor Stephen Fityus (2014▶)
- John Wakely (NEW-2015)

Ex Officio: Bishop, Teresa Brierley, Ray Collins

PREVIOUS MEMBERS:

Christine Tyler (CHAIR 2007-2012), Dr Louise Drinkwater (2013), Bernard Cumming (2007-2014), Bernard Goldman (2007-2011), Michael Gore (2007-2014) Mark Howland (2007-2008) Professor Terry Lovat (2007-2012), Martin Nixon (2007-Feb 2014), Sr Carmel Moore RSJ (2007-11), Fr Matthew Muller (2007-2008), Associate Professor Anne Young (2009-11)

2013

Summary of CSC Meetings

FEBRUARY, MAY, JULY, SEPTEMBER, NOVEMBER

PRAYER AND FORMATION WAS LED IN TURN BY CSC MEMBERS, INCLUDING:

- The gospel values as articulated by St Paul and how the school system strives to demonstrate these values (Ray Collins)
- The nature of “busyness” and the value of saying no to something that is not important by choosing to say “yes” to the really important things that God has in mind for us. (Bernard Cumming)
- Focus on the “Call to Community”, a scriptural reading (1 Corinthians 12:14-26, and the good that the church rarely tells anyone)
- Reflection on the historical journey of the Church in its mission to schools in the light of Genesis 32 (prepared by Anne Benjamin led by Ray Collins)
- Presentation of conference paper from ACU Educational Leadership Conference: Paradox and Possibility Who’s Leading Who? Parish - School Partnerships. Is It Really a Partnership? by Bernard Cumming

AGENDA OVERVIEW

OPEN FORUM: MAIN FOCUS OF EACH MEETING:

A. REVIEW OF CSC PRIORITIES FOR 2013 AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE

- CSO Strategic and Annual Plan presentation and discussion with a focus on key priorities for 2013
- Sr Marie Hughes provided great insight into the historical context of secondary schools in the diocese and how they were established and managed. Of particular note were the lessons learnt from the reforms and the rationalizations which took place in the 1980s and how these were implemented. Members discussed this in light of the current study into the provision of secondary education.

B. REVIEW OF THE TEACHING OF RELIGION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS REPORT

- As an outcome of the CSC senior student survey an extensive review of the teaching of religion in secondary schools was undertaken in 2012 by the ACU. Dr Michael Bezinna presented the review report for discernment. Members discussed the recommendations focusing on the four dimensions
 - Matters relating to staffing of Religion:
 - Matters relating to the Religion syllabus and support materials
 - Matters relating to the effectiveness of Senior religion
 - Matters pertaining to the adequacy of the CSO Religious Education and Spiritual Formation Team with respect to support for high quality teaching of Religion in Secondary schools

C. STUDY INTO THE PROVISION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

- Ellen Davis-Meehan as Project Facilitator briefed members on progress and major emerging themes in the *Study into The Provision of Secondary Education*. Members discussed issues and particularly those in relationship to their involvement in the process and the agreed and published educational principles by which decisions will be made. Members will be kept informed of progress.

D. STRATEGIC PROJECT BRIEFINGS

- The response from CSO Leadership Team to the Review of the Teaching of Religion in Secondary Schools was presented and discussed
- CSC members were briefed by the Head of Financial Services on the basis for the selection of designated reserves and performance ratios in the draft Retained Earnings policy. The CSC accepted the Draft Retained Earnings policy and advised Bishop Bill that the Retained Earnings Policy was sound and prudent.

E. 2013 CSO REVIEW REPORT

Anne Benjamin provided members with the detailed panel CSO review report. The presentation and discussion focused on the contextual factors, the sources of information for the review, key findings as well as strengths and directions for ongoing consideration across the five areas of Catholic Identity, Teaching and Learning, CSO Leadership, Community and Partnerships and Strategic Resourcing.

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS INCLUDED:

- Review of 2012 CSC activities and development of continuing priorities of CSC in 2013
- Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy finalisation
- Revised Diocesan Enrolment Policy
- Enrolment and census data including Catholic and non-Catholic enrolments & student diversity data
- Stakeholder consultation
- School Planning and Development including committee reports and updates on capital projects
- New Catholic Primary School at Chisholm
- New family school fee billing model
- Student Leavers and Arrivals Analysis
- Gonski reforms and funding issues
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy
- Staff Faith formation in Catholic Schools
- NAPLAN and HSC results

STANDING COMMITTEES:

GOVERNANCE STANDING COMMITTEE:

This group continued to manage the business of the Council, with particular emphasis in 2013 on Director of Schools Performance Review, stakeholder consultations and recruitment of new members as members terms are completed.

FINANCE AND FINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT STANDING COMMITTEE:

This group meets regularly with CSO Finance Team to analyse financial and compliance performance and review and discuss and strategic financial management. Meetings also focused on changes to the Diocesan School Building Fund, the draft retained earnings policy, school fees and the Gonski funding formula.

2014

Summary of CSC Meetings

FEBRUARY, MAY, JULY, SEPTEMBER, NOVEMBER

PRAYER AND FORMATION LED BY CSC MEMBERS, INCLUDING:

- Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium presentation and discussion led by Stephen Aitken
- Bishop Bill led CSC members through a visioning exercise focusing on their hopes and dreams for the future of Catholic schools.
- NAIDOC Week Reflection led by Sr Laretta Baker based on Jean Vanier's reflection on spiritual growth in intentional communities and Frank Brennan's Homily for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
- Bernard Cumming led members through a reflection activity based on the scriptural readings of Luke 10:38-42; John 12:2.
- Reflection on the four essential pillars of Christian spirituality as outlined by Ronald Rolheiser in Seeking Spirituality was presented by Michael Gore.

AGENDA OVERVIEW

OPEN FORUM: MAIN FOCUS OF EACH MEETING:

1. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA AND SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR 2014

- The CSO Teaching & Learning Team of Kathryn Fox, Carmel Tapley, Catherine Murray and Trish Gleeson briefed the CSC about diocesan academic results in 2013. The presentation and discussion focused on an overview of results, trend and growth data for NAPLAN and HSC. There was also information and discussion about the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) that informs NAPLAN and ultimately the HSC
- CSO Strategic and System Improvement Plan presentation and discussion with a focus on key priorities for 2014 and how these might tie in with CSC priorities

2A. CSO PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF THE TEACHING OF RELIGION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS REPORT

- Michael O'Brien outlined the actions and conclusion of the working party established in to respond to the review recommendations. Members also discussed the 2014 working party established to follow up on the specific recommendation to consider the adoption or adaption of a religion program from the Archdioceses of Brisbane or Sydney was also discussed. The guidelines for Principals in the formation of a Specialist Faculty in Religious Education in Secondary Schools was also discussed.

2B. SPDC RECOMMENDATIONS ON DEMOGRAPHIC AND FACILITIES STUDY OF SCHOOLS IN LAKES, CENTRAL AND NORTH REGIONS

- Paul Murray Head of Financial Services, Terry O'Hanlon, QOH Architects and Peter Laybutt, Whelan Insites were in attendance
- The presentation and discussion focused on the 2013 demographic analysis and facilities assessments on schools in the Lakes, Central and North Regions and the subsequent SPDC report on key issues and recommendations to Bishop Bill and the CSC.

3A SEVDEV THEMES & TRENDS AND RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO PROCESS

- Gerard Mowbray, Assistant Director and Lisa Little Education Officer were in attendance to facilitate understanding about the School Evaluation and Development (SEVDEV) 2013 Themes and Trends report.
- The CSC also discussed suggested future changes to the SEVDEV process as recommended in the 2013 CSO Review. A shift in focus from 'an event' to 'a continuum of school improvement with streamlined processes and practices was endorsed.

3B FAITH EDUCATION ACCREDITATION REPORT & ISSUES RELATING TO THE TEACHING OF RE

- Members engaged in a wide discussion of the report and the accompanying data, including: the implications for expected levels of staff/leadership qualifications; methods of encouraging compliance by individuals and schools and the quality and range of professional development.

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4B. STUDY INTO THE PROVISION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

- Members of the Steering Committee including the Director and Assistant Directors presented the Study of Secondary Schooling to determine the optimal provision of educational services to the students and families within the diocese.

5A CHALLENGES, STRENGTHS & HOPES FOR TEACHERS

- CSC members had an opportunity for discussion and questions about the Director's perspective on issues, challenges and strategies for building teacher capacity and how to keep teachers "vital".

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS INCLUDED:

- Proposed 2014 CSC work plan and Future Agenda Priorities
- Exit interviews and parent inquiries and complaints
- Stakeholder consultation reports
- CEC funding formula and Commonwealth Government Budget implications for funding
- Myall Coast Deanery Response to Secondary Study
- St Aloysius Catholic Primary School at Chisholm update
- Student Leavers and Arrivals Analysis
- Enterprise Agreement Negotiations
- Catholic Identity Policy
- Student religions

STANDING COMMITTEES:

GOVERNANCE STANDING COMMITTEE:

This group continued to manage the business of the Council, with particular emphasis in 2014 on the development of a CSC Governance Handbook, updating of website information, role descriptions for Chair and Deputy Chair, stakeholder consultations and membership succession.

FINANCE AND FINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT STANDING COMMITTEE:

This group meets regularly with CSO Finance Team to analyse financial and compliance performance and review and discuss and strategic financial management. Meetings also focused on the NSW CEC Funding Distribution Model, updated Retained Earnings Policy, Diocesan Schools Tuition Fees and Diocesan Family & Schools Building Levy rates for 2015 and progress updates on the Fees Management Policy.