

Provision of Secondary Schooling Update



TERM 1, 2016

Catholic secondary education in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is entering an unprecedented period of development. Periodic updates will be provided to ensure our diocesan community is well informed of the developments.

In late 2013, Bishop Bill Wright commissioned a study into the Provision of Secondary Schooling. Many changes, both educational and demographic, had occurred in the decades since the last secondary school was established at St Paul's, Booragul in 1984, preceded by the restructuring of secondary schools in Newcastle and Maitland. It was timely to have a detailed study of future needs for secondary schools.

In 2015, Bishop Bill accepted a range of recommendations that arose out of this study, which are now timetabled into a program of implementation. The body of recommendations provides an exciting and proactive response by the Catholic Schools Office and will very much change the landscape in secondary education. The following provides a brief overview of the actions being implemented.

Catholic Practice and Faith Formation

Essential to this will be an exploration of the progress to specialist Religious Education facilities in schools with a core of specialist, qualified and committed teachers who are delivering high quality teaching of the Religious Education curriculum.

Further, there is an exploration of the provision of Eucharistic and faith formation experiences across Years 7 to 12 to ensure that such experiences are regular, sequential and developmental, deepening all students' encounters with Jesus Christ and the tenets of the Gospel.

The initial phase of this is to gather data from our eleven secondary schools that presents the current state of practice with regards to the above. This will occur during the early phase of this year.

Provision of a New, Coeducational Secondary School, Years 7–12, at Chisholm

A project implementation committee is actively planning for the opening of the school in 2018. An education brief has been completed, an architect appointed and plans for the school well developed with a view to seeking funding for building in 2016.

Construction of the first stage will occur in 2017. Parent and community engagement will take specific shape early in 2016.

Project Implementation Committee

Craig Wattam (Chair)	David Hutton (ex-Director, Archdiocese of Brisbane)
Gerard Mowbray (Executive Officer)	Geoff Whitnall (CSO)
Fr Paul O'Neil (Parish Priest)	Carmel Tapley (CSO)
Michael Blake (Principal)	Paul Murray (CSO)
Boyd McCallum (Diocesan Property)	Vicki Sheriff (CSO)
	Steven Scanes (Parent)
	Rita Campbell (CSO)

Provision of a New, Coeducational Secondary School, Years 7–12, at Medowie

An implementation committee has been formed and will commence planning in March 2016. All major projects comprise committees that combine the wisdom of educators, facilities and finance planners, clergy and parents. The focus for Medowie in 2016 will be a timeline for 2016–2019, the development of an education brief that informs an architect's design, and the appointment of an architect by the year's end. The school's first intake will be in 2020.

Project Implementation Committee

Gerard Mowbray (Chair)	Fr Kevin Kiem (Parish Priest)
Craig Wattam (CSO)	Nick Deimar (Parent)
Paul Murray (CSO)	Rachael Connor (Parent)
Geoff Whitnall (CSO)	Monique Malone (Parent)
Ray Bowen (Diocesan Property)	Anita Howarth (Parent)
David Palmer (Principal)	Rita Campbell (CSO)
Carmel Tapley (CSO)	David Hutton (ex-Director, Archdiocese of Brisbane)

Evaluate the Potential for Secondary Education at Cessnock

A key factor in future educational planning has been the substantial population growth relevant to school-age children in the Maitland, Cessnock and Port Stephens local government areas. Chisholm will accommodate students across Years 7–12, and Lochinvar will now offer additional years of schooling, Years 11–12. Will these changes effectively meet the demographic needs of the area? The key planning question is whether the current and projected growth require an additional school setting at Cessnock. The initial feasibility study will occur in 2017.

Investigate Alternate School Setting

This recommendation seeks the establishment of a secondary school setting to provide a facility to best support students who, for a range of reasons, are at significant risk of not completing their schooling.

Such a setting will provide an option to allow students to retain an effective educational pathway in a Catholic school.

The initial priority is to consider how to best provide this service, which will, initially, explore Catholic educational providers who have significant experience in this area. It is hoped that such a facility will be operational by 2018.

Steering Committee

Gerard Mowbray (CSO)	Tony Kelly (recent Secondary Principal/CSO)
Kathryn Fox (CSO)	Graeme Selmes (Secondary Principal)
Paul Sleishman (CSO)	

Extension of St Mary's, Gateshead to Include Years 11 and 12

Year 11 students will commence at St Mary's in 2018, with the first HSC class in 2019. An implementation committee of school staff, parents and system leaders (which will also incorporate students in 2016) has been operational from the latter half of 2015. A comprehensive implementation plan has been developed that will ensure St Mary's will be fully prepared to successfully meet the needs of its initial student intake.

Project Implementation Committee

Gerard Mowbray (Chair)	Cheryl Murphy (Parent)
Larry Keating (SMG)	Steve Bernasconi (Parent)
De-Anna Addicoat (SMG)	Martina Walsh (Parent)
Kathy Baguley (SMG)	Christina Bush (SMG)
Paula Finlay (SMG)	Karen Millstead (CSO)
Daniel Beckett (SMG)	
Julie Steffner (Parent)	
Cathy Stace (Parent)	

Facilities Development Committee

Gerard Mowbray (Chair)	Peter Antcliff (SMG)
Geoff Whitnall (CSO)	De-Anna Addicoat (SMG)
Felicia Sharman (CSO)	Helen McIntosh (SMG)
Larry Keating (SMG)	

While there is a multitude of needs to be addressed, key priorities are the professional development of the staff in the teaching of Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12), curriculum development, the physical facilities to accommodate a senior cohort, and parent/community engagement.

An initial enrolment of 800–850 students across Years 7–12 is anticipated.

Strengthened Relationship Between the Newcastle Cluster of Schools

As of 2018–2019 St Mary's, Gateshead will join St Paul's, Booragul operating as a Year 7–12 campus, offering students a continuous journey across their secondary years. The exciting opportunity that awaits San Clemente, Mayfield (7–10), St Pius X, Adamstown (7–10) and St Francis Xavier's, Hamilton (11–12) is to revisit their relationship to ensure the opportunities students and staff experience are equally seamless and effective.

There is a timely opportunity to explore the interface of the three schools. Initially this will be done at a leadership level, before engaging the three staffs.

Extension of St Joseph's, Lochinvar to Include Years 11 and 12

Lochinvar will reintroduce senior students into the school in the tradition that the Sisters of St Joseph had for 76 years. As with Gateshead, Year 11 students will commence in 2018 and the first HSC class will conclude study in 2019.

An implementation committee has been established that has a comprehensive strategy in place. St Joseph's has recently enjoyed the advantages of two major upgrades of facilities.

Enrolment demand has been significant and projections indicate substantial student numbers for the Lochinvar campus.

Project Implementation Committee

Craig Wattam (Chair)	Paul Greaves (SJL)
Gerard Mowbray (Executive Officer)	David Crawford (SJL)
Julie Leverton (SJL)	Nick Wickham (SJL)
Leanne Carman (Parent)	Lisa Donnelly (SJL)
Jo Abrams (Parent)	Erin McCort (SJL)
Andrew Gill (Parent)	Gabbie Maloney (SJL)
	Matt Johns (SJL)
	Anne Akers (SJL)

Strengthened Relationship Between All Saints College, St Peter's Campus and St Mary's Campus

The two All Saints College campuses have a unique opportunity to revisit their relationship. With Lochinvar returning to an autonomous status, St Peter's and St Mary's have a new landscape in which to map their connections. The campuses are physically close and historically, through the All Saints Cluster, also have strong links.

Following work with the leadership teams of the campuses, a working party has been established that will now explore the means by which the two campuses may more effectively provide a quality, seamless education for students, Years 7–12, and to explore opportunities for staff development.

Equitable Access to Curriculum Delivery

With regard to the provisions of secondary education, one identified need was ensuring all schools, regardless of size, could offer students a purposeful curriculum. The size of Year 11 and 12 cohorts varies widely in the diocese and this can impact on the range of subjects on offer. Currently, very good distance learning options are available through the Open High School (Camden Haven) and the Diocese of Lismore.

A working party will look at the implementation of course options that may combine course delivery across several diocesan schools. For example, an Extension 2 Mathematics course may have a cohort from several diocesan schools and be taught by a teacher from one of these schools.

There will also be an exploration of the development of online learning options.

Future Reviews

A key component of the 2013–2015 review was that the momentum from the study would be ongoing. The recommendations made were considered appropriate at a particular point in time; they were not seen as a final or complete solution. What future needs may emerge will be considered by ongoing study.

Formal reviews have been scheduled for 2022 (Maitland) and 2023 (Newcastle). These dates themselves are not set in stone and should the need be evident, such dates would be revised. The key outcome is ongoing study into the evaluation of the provision of secondary education.

Subject Specialisation

One particular task of the Implementation Committees for Chisholm and Medowie is to explore whether each school may offer any curriculum specialisation. Both schools will offer comprehensive curricula; however, beyond this there will be an opportunity to consider unique subject offerings.

Related Developments

School Enrolment Boundaries

With the implementation of a range of changes, both with new schools and additional stages of schooling, there is a need to review the current enrolment boundaries.

The diocese has an, in principle, commitment that bases enrolments on enrolment boundaries so that a student from a particular location is zoned to a specific school. For particular reasons, parents have the option of seeking enrolment to a school that is out-of-zone, but in the first instance, enrolment is generally to the zoned school.

With the onset, in particular, of Lochinvar (7–12) and the implementation of Chisholm and Medowie, there is an immediate need to clarify enrolment boundaries. This is targeted for completion in 2016.

Marketing of Catholic Education

Simultaneous to the emergence of these recommendations has been the development of a marketing strategy by the Catholic Schools Office. The strategy wanted to celebrate, consolidate and enhance the position of Catholic education, K–12, both within the current Catholic school community and beyond.

The community will see, in 2016, two periods of focus – in May and October – that will celebrate the character and qualities of Catholic schooling across the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

Staffing Opportunities

The expansion of secondary schooling clearly implies additional staffing needs, both teaching and support. 2017 and 2018 will see significant additional staffing opportunities for Gateshead, Lochinvar and Chisholm in particular, with Chisholm continuing until Year 12 is in place, Staffing for Medowie will commence in 2019 for the 2020 intake.

In 2016 there will be particular roles advertised to commence in 2017 to facilitate the expansion of Gateshead and Lochinvar.



Gerard Mowbray
Assistant Director – Secondary Schools Projects

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