



As we come to the close of the year, it is appropriate to report on and celebrate the milestones of achievements that have been developed in relation to the provision of secondary schooling in the diocese. The projects, you will recall, are in response to the study into the future provision of secondary schooling (2013–2014) commissioned by Bishop Bill Wright. As I report to you, I am especially conscious of two particular things. Firstly, behind each of the projects there is a team of highly committed and capable educators, clergy, planners, parents and associated professionals that brings a wonderful spirit of collaboration in enacting an exciting vision for Catholic education. I have said many times that this body of projects forms the most significant block of developments in the history of secondary education in our diocesan. I am also aware that such a body of change can have its celebrations, and its challenges. Change, by its very nature, excites and confronts. The future of our Catholic secondary schools is robust, yet as we work through a phase of significant change, I am cognisant of the challenge, as well as the joy, involved in creating a richer future. Finally, as one reflects on these past twelve months, the progress to reality is quite stunning as you will see in this report.

## Catholic Practice and Faith Formation

The Religious Education & Spirituality Team has maintained its diligent implementation of three key themes. Firstly, there has been the continuation of the development of the recommendations into the Study into the Teaching of Secondary Religious Education. This has especially focused on the formation of faculties of specialist teachers in Religion and Studies of Religion, and has seen the significant growth in teachers whose focus is the teaching of these subjects. There has, also, been a significantly greater emphasis on the regular presence of Eucharistic celebrations in our secondary schools. This obviously presents a great challenge, given the myriad demands on our clergy, and speaks volumes for this particular aspect of the relationship between school and parish. There continues to be a commitment to the delivery to students of faith formation experiences that are sequential and developmental.

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

St Bede's Catholic College, Chisholm, is the outcome of this recommendation. In January, 2018, the first major stage of capital works will be completed for the inaugural Year 7 cohort. Implementation Chair, Craig Wattam, comments, "Stage One of the building works at St Bede's will include state of the art learning areas for all Year 7 and 8 students, administration facilities and staff and student amenities. The beauty of the design of this college is that it is easily transformed and adaptable to the growing and changing needs in teaching and learning practices. Once fully operational, Years 7–12, St Bede's will include a hall, hospitality and technology facilities, creative and performing arts spaces including a dance studio and quality science and research centres. The college buildings will be commented by an internal "trail" which will be utilised for both travel as well as informal learning areas. We are excited by the innovative design that SHAC architects have developed with us". Site preparation will occur in December and , construction will commence in January, 2017. The Principal and his Executive Assistant will be present in offices adjacent to the school site throughout 2017, readily available to engage with the community, enrol students and prepare St Bede's for its foundation year. Joining Principal, John Murphy, in Term Four, 2017, will be an Assistant Principal, Year 7 Co-ordinator, Learning Support Co-ordinator and Finance Officer. The early appointments will ensure a smooth and effective opening.



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

October saw the naming of our newest school and the unveiling of the foundation stone by Bishop Bill and Director of Catholic Schools, Ray Collins. Catherine McAuley Catholic College now has an identity and an architect has been appointed to commence the master planning of the site to accommodate an early learning centre, primary school, secondary school and a chapel for school and parish use. A submission for funding will be made in April, 2018, allowing construction to occur in 2019 with the initial Year 7 intake occurring in 2020.



*Sr. Mary Geason, Sisters of Mercy, Bishop Bill, Kate Washington Member for Port Stephens, Ray Collins, Director of Catholic Schools.*

## Investigate Alternate School Settings

In response to Recommendation 5 of the Study, the Catholic education system determined to investigate alternative school settings. This is responding to the need for flexible learning pathways within diocesan schools. Historically, schools within the system have been mainstream. The challenge now is to respond to adjacent and complementary models of schooling. An adjacent system is provided by the provision of a Flexible Learning Centre; such a centre is proposed for implementation in 2018, ideally in the Newcastle/Maitland areas. Future potential exists in such areas as Taree, Muswellbrook and West Lake Macquarie. The students attending a Flexi, by and large, would not currently be at school. In addition to the Flexible Learning Centre, the Catholic Schools Office is exploring the complementary model of learning. Such a system engages students in tailored learning approaches outside mainstream schooling in order to transition back into mainstream schooling. 2017 will see the investigation into the establishment of a complementary structure. This model would be largely for students within the Catholic sector, potentially both upper primary and secondary, ideally commencing in 2018, at the latest, 2019.

## Equitable Access to Curriculum Delivery

The learning environment has changed dramatically given the obvious advantages of contemporary technology, meaning space and time are no longer barriers to students learning. In exploring an environment in which students may access learning through a variety of modes, we need not be constrained by students and teacher needing to be within the same space. This obviously opens up a world of possibilities. While many at a tertiary level have experienced online or multi-modal learning, this has not been explored in a secondary or primary learning environment. Students from a range of cohorts across diocesan schools will have the capacity to study via this format, opening up access to subjects not necessarily available in their school. In the 2016 HSC a cohort of Music 2 students from Aberdeen, Taree and Hamilton engaged in this course, taught by Melissa Wattus of St Francis Xavier's, Hamilton. Initially, at a Stage 6 level, courses such as History Extension, Geography, Food Technology, Ancient History and Mathematics Extension 2 will operate with groups of students from across our schools, delivered by one of our teachers from his or her 'home' school. Courses will operate under this proposal in 2018. The potential for extending such opportunities through other Stages remains viable.

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

All Saints College now comprises St Peter's Campus, delivering Stages 4 and 5 learning, and St Mary's Campus, delivering Stage 6 learning. This recommendation explores how the two campuses will provide a continuum of excellence across the two campuses. Clearly, there are some immediate demographic challenges as students from Our Lady of Lourdes, Tarro, and St Aloysius, Chisholm, will now move to St Bede's for secondary education, and students will remain at Lochinvar for senior schooling. Both leadership teams and staff have been highly proactive in their desire to market the qualities, uniqueness and strengths of the college in attracting increased enrolments. The two staffs have been exploring how they can best function to provide a seamless experience for the students of All Saints College.





## Extension of St Mary's, Gateshead and St Joseph's, Lochinvar to Include Years 11 & 12

Both schools are 'on track' to commence the effective delivery of Preliminary HSC courses in February, 2018. A great deal of work is being completed to ensure all that is required to add Stage 6 is in place. Both staffs face significant challenges to ensure this exciting vision is readily embraced and delivered in an effective manner. Professional learning by staff has been a major priority, and enhanced by the consultancy work of HSC guru Dr John DeCourcy. Curriculum Co-ordinators are working in networks with colleagues experienced in Stage 6; Curriculum Handbooks and Assessment Policies and schedules are being compiled; there is an extensive range of policies, handbooks and senior procedures; initial curriculum offerings are being finalised; parent information and engagement is being shaped as are the orientation processes; student wellbeing policy, student leadership structures and student award structures are being developed; the schools have rebranded their visual identity and are launching themselves under new names from the outset of 2017. Lochinvar will return to its historic roots and be known as St Joseph's Catholic College, Lochinvar, and we will also have in place St Mary's Catholic College, Gateshead. Both changes were the result of significant community consultation. Fortunately, Lochinvar is coming to the end of three major stages of building, but will also be enhanced in 2017 with significant refurbishing of the Creative and Performing Arts and Science areas. Facilities at Gateshead in Hospitality and Construction will undergo major redevelopment in preparation for 2018, and funding will be applied for to allow major additional developments in administration and staff facilities, a redevelopment of the learning centre and associated classrooms, and refurbishing of current class facilities. Come 2018, both schools will be very well prepared to accommodate their first intake of seniors.

## Strengthened Relationship Between the Newcastle Cluster of Schools

The leadership teams of St Francis Xavier's, Hamilton St Pius X, Adamstown and San Clemente, Mayfield have been responding to three key themes: their existence as three schools that educate students on a continuum, Years 7–12, and how this can be seamless for students; how the three schools can enhance the inter-relationship of the leadership teams, co-ordinators and staff, to create greater cohesion in learning across Stages 4 to 5, and to consider responses to some key demographic patterns that will emerge from 2018. With the commencement of senior education at St Mary's, Gateshead, there will be an impact at St Francis Xavier's, Hamilton; when Catherine McAuley, Medowie, commences in 2020, there will be an impact at San Clemente. These teams are examining means to manage these trends, as well as how system responses may assist in the management of this issue. As with the leaders at All Saints, there is determination to optimise schools' management of this in the immediate future.

## Related Developments

### Marketing of Catholic Education

Marketing emerged in 2016 as a priority for Catholic schools. This arose from a recognition that there is much to celebrate about the purpose and nature of our schools, as well as affirming current enrolments and continuing to attract new enrolments. The Vivid Campaign was the centre-piece of this year's strategy and has been highly successful in having the Catholic school 'brand' prominent throughout the community. As we move into 2017, the Communications Team of the Catholic Schools Office will drive a further version of the Vivid campaign to follow Catholic Schools Week; there will be a range of specific marketing projects to support targeted schools, there will be ongoing advice to schools as they engage in marketing, there is the ongoing management of the system's social media platforms, as well as providing advice and support for schools' social media activities. This is in addition to the many school-based stories that are developed and presented across our communication media. It has certainly been a highlight of the year to have launched our initial approach to marketing and this will continue to mature and be refined in 2017 and beyond.

### School Enrolment Boundaries

What is evident with the implementation of these projects and the development of new schools, both primary and secondary, is the management of student populations. It is demographically evident that Catholic schools will continue to grow in enrolments and that the school age population that Catholic schools would typically attract remains strong. However, with new school developments and changes to school structures, there is a need to better manage where students attend schools. This implies a refinement of enrolment boundaries. In short, there will be a greater definition of where students attend a primary school, and to which secondary school primary schools link. The process of managing enrolment boundaries within the primary schools in the Chisholm Pastoral region is a good example of how this process might be implemented. With the development of St Aloysius, Chisholm, there is an obvious need to clarify for parents and schools enrolment boundaries for adjoining schools at St Joseph's, East Maitland, Our Lady of Lourdes, Tarro, St Brigid's, Raymond Terrace and St John's, Maitland. Thus, we will have in place for those schools, definition of where students will attend school, and the linkage into St Bede's, Chisholm and All Saints College, St Peter's Campus. Underpinning this is respecting and supporting where siblings attend school, and also supporting particular educational or family needs that warrant flexibility in enrolments. The process ensures wise future management of student populations, allowing great certainty in school planning.

This update is an appropriate reflection of how effectively school communities are working to embrace the recommendations made ensuring the future of Catholic secondary education is robust and authentic.



# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS VIVID EVERYDAY



Gerard Mowbray  
Assistant Director – Secondary Schools Projects | December 2016