

2025

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

SERVICE | LEADERSHIP | JUSTICE

TOGETHER IN CHRIST



**Catherine McAuley
Catholic College**
MEDOWIE

Catherine McAuley Catholic College

507 Medowie Road, MEDOWIE 2318

Principal: Bernard Burgess

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About this report

Catherine McAuley Catholic College (the 'College') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (CDMN) which forms part of the broader system of schools governed by Catholic Schools NSW. The Annual School Report (the 'Report'), provides parents and the wider community with fair, accurate and objective information about various aspects of school performance and development. Additionally, the Report complements and is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the College community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students.

Detailed information about the College's improvement journey is documented in the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) which is developed, implemented and evaluated in consultation with key stakeholders. Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the College directly or by visiting the College's website. Information can be also be obtained from the My School website.

Message from key groups in our community

Principal's Message

Catherine McAuley Catholic College, Medowie (CMCC) opened its doors to Years 7 and 8 in 2021. A study in 2015-16 commissioned by the late Bishop Bill Wright highlighted the strong desire within the Port Stephens community for a co-educational, Years 7-12 Catholic secondary college on the peninsula. The Sisters of Mercy have strong historical roots in the diocese which influenced the name of Catherine McAuley Catholic College.

The enrolment profile for the College remains very strong with the student population now comprised of students from Years 7 to 12. In 2025, the student population increased to 890 students across Years 7-12 with 120 staff supporting the spiritual, academic and wellbeing growth of all students.

The first Year 12 Graduates were farewelled from CMCC at the conclusion of their HSC in Term 4 2025, having achieved creditable HSC results with several ATARs in the 80s and 90s and first in diocese Awards. This cohort then became the first Alumni of the College.

CMCC continues to be equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, including in 2025 the completion of more building works with a focus on Stage 6 courses. The completion of the Francis and Warde Wings primarily housing General Learning Areas (GLA's) was imminent at the end of 2025 with the spaces expected to be in use from the beginning of the 2026 school year.

As a new and evolving school, the College continues to reimagine education to best prepare our young people to be both life-ready and career-ready and with a renewed focus now on HSC readiness and success. It continued its Core Plus Stage 5 Elective program which offers greater choice to Year 9 including traditional (RoSA) and non-traditional courses. The College honours the uniqueness of each child as we commit to offering choice in the curriculum, and meeting individual passions, interests and needs.

In 2025 the college continued to focus on literacy and numeracy skills for all students. Additionally, members of the Senior Leadership Team had oversight of Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) framework with a particular focus on routines that support student engagement and learning.

During 2025, the College continued a strong Student Leadership program with the second group of student leaders commissioned at the inaugural Year 12 Graduation Ceremony. The Senior Student Retreat at Mt Carmel Retreat Centre in Varroville rounded out the establishment of the next College student leadership group.

Parent Body Message

Catherine McAuley Catholic College is firmly committed to engaging with our Parents and Carers to develop strong and effective partnerships with our families that empower confident, agile and reflective learners.

During 2025, the College Parent Engagement Group (PEG) adopted the new Family and Community Engagement model (FACE). FACE is a framework that encourages strong partnerships between parents, schools, parishes and the wider community. It provides a forum where parents and carers can engage with school leadership, share feedback, and contribute ideas that support students' learning, wellbeing and faith development.

CMCC Parents and Carers are invited to meet termly for the purpose of connecting with the College Principal and school staff to build capacity to engage in students' learning. Meetings are well supported and feature a Senior Leadership report, an opportunity for questions as well as an educative component on a topic relevant to a child's learning at CMCC.

Catherine McAuley continues to offer a range of effective communication modes for parents through their use of Compass, the College Newsletter 'The Nest' and Facebook site, email communication and Zoom information sessions. In 2025, the College continued to hold events for Mother's Day and Father's Day, Year 9 Elective Evening, Year 11 Course Information Evening and Year 6 Information Evenings, including a student orientation.

Student Body Message

Catherine McAuley Catholic College remains committed to empowering a Mercy inspired community of confident, agile and reflective learners. In 2025 the College strengthened this mission by deepening its core wellbeing practices and embedding Positive Behaviour for Learning across all settings. As an extension of our learner norms, explicit teaching of routines, expectations and 'Active Listening' was launched embed key developmental behaviours throughout daily life at school. The community also embraced The Power of Praise, encouraging staff and students to intentionally recognise the strengths and positive actions of others. Student voice remained central to decision making through ongoing surveys, regular Pulse Checks and the continued work of the Wellbeing Team, including a College Psychologist available five days per week. Opportunities for meaningful academic dialogue continued through Student Parent Teacher Conferences and Learner Led Conferences, providing students and families with structured opportunities to reflect on growth and progress.

Throughout the year, the curriculum maintained its strong emphasis on student choice, with Leaders of Learning ensuring that personalisation was evident across both traditional subjects and nontraditional offerings within the Core Plus program. Year Ten students again engaged in a comprehensive course selection process supported by fortnightly Study Sessions designed to prepare them for the transition to Stage Six. The College's unique

House Structure continued to strengthen identity and belonging, particularly through experiencing the completion of our first Catherine McAuley graduating year. The House system remained a central foundation of learning and wellbeing, honouring the cultural significance of the land and the custodianship of the Worimi people and the core values of Catherine McAuley, alive in our students learning.

The year 2025 marked a milestone in the College's history as students completed and graduated from the first Higher School Certificate cohort, with the community celebrating the successful completion of the College's first HSC examinations. Student leadership continued to evolve, with students again participating in a comprehensive nomination and selection process involving student voting, teacher recommendations and interviews with the College Executive. The appointment of the 2026 Student Leadership Team was highlighted by the College's first Passing of the Light ceremony, symbolising the transfer of responsibility from outgoing leaders to those who will guide the community forward. Together, these achievements reflect a year of significant growth, celebration and consolidation of the Mercy inspired culture that continues to define Catherine McAuley Catholic College.

School Features

The kernel for the foundation of the College was a study Bishop Bill commissioned and which the Catholic Schools Office carried out in late-2015 early-2016. The study was an analysis of the provision of secondary education in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. Historically, schools had been built where populations existed, but over the previous 30 years it was obvious that they had shifted. The Diocese needed a thorough analysis of what needs existed and how it would respond.

The study clearly identified a significant demographic need as well as the local communities' real desire for a Catholic school presence somewhere on the peninsula. Recommendation three of the study was formalised for implementation: to build a co-educational, Years 7–12 secondary school at Medowie. A suitable block of land was purchased on Medowie Road and the vision of Bishop Bill for a precinct was realised. The land purchased would accommodate a St Nicholas Early Learning Centre, a primary school, a secondary school and a chapel to serve the educational communities and local parish community. An educational brief was developed, and this informed the design of the college.

The naming of the college was then the critical component. Given the historical roots of Irish Catholic families on the peninsula, the very strong presence of the Mercy congregation at St Brigid's, Raymond Terrace, St Michael's, Nelson Bay and St Peter's, Stockton, there was a strong argument for naming the college after Blessed Catherine McAuley. This Irishwoman, who founded the Mercy nuns, could speak strongly to the young people of today with her deep sense of social justice and her commitment to the education and healthcare of poor communities in Dublin.

When Bishop Bill officially unveiled a foundation stone and plaque to reveal the new school name on Friday 28 October 2016, the Year of Mercy, he stated: "We are building on the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy in their educational work in the area when we bestow on this newest Catholic college in our Diocese the name of Catherine McAuley Catholic College."

Stage 4 building works were completed towards the end of 2023 and in 2024, the College opened new TAS facilities which included specialist areas for Visual Arts, Construction and PDHPE.

The Catherine McAuley Primary School saw further realisation of Bishop Bill Wright's vision during 2025, with substantial progress made on the building program of the school and the appointment of Principal Samantha Kelley. The opening of the primary school was scheduled for 2027 following completion of the building program throughout 2026.

Student Profile

Student Enrolment

The College caters for students in Years 7-12. Students attending this College come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2025: Additional information can be found on My School website.

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
436	448	49	884

* Language Background Other than English

Enrolment Policy

The [Enrolment Policy](#) applies to all school enrolments within the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. School authorities manage local enrolment processes and procedures in a manner consistent with the rationale and guiding principles articulated in this Enrolment Policy.

Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for 2025 was 85.52%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group					
Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
88.17	85.78	85.32	85.31	83.72	84.80

Managing Student Non-Attendance

All schools maintain an accurate register of their student's attendance. Any absences (part or full day) from school are recorded on this register and appropriate intervention strategies are implemented if required.

While parents/carers are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their child at school, school staff, as part of their duty of care, play a vital role in providing a continuum of active support including universal, targeted, and individualised strategies when supporting students with attendance concerns. Documented attendance plans may be developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern.

Senior Secondary Outcomes

The table below sets out the percentages of students undertaking vocational training in their senior years as well as those attaining the award of Higher School Certificate (or equivalent vocational education and training qualifications).

Senior secondary outcomes 2025	
% of students undertaking vocational training or training in a trade during the senior years of schooling	41 %
% of students attaining the award of Higher School Certificate or equivalent vocational education and training qualification	100 %

Post School Destinations

Each year the College collects destination data relating to the Year 12 student cohort.

- 56% - University.
- 7% - TAFE
- 9% - Employment
- 5% - Apprenticeships/Traineeships.
- 8% - ADF
- 15% - Unknown

Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile

Note: The data presented reflects the most current information available at the time of reporting. Variations in data currency may occur where staff updates are pending. Differences between tables are due to variations in staff inclusion criteria; therefore, minor discrepancies in reported numbers may occur.

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2025:

Total number of staff	135
Number of full time teaching staff	80
Number of part time teaching staff	20
Number of non-teaching staff	35

Total number of teaching staff by NESA category

Teachers are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004 (NSW). Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher is voluntary.

The following table describes the accreditation status of teachers at Catherine McAuley Catholic College in 2025:

Conditional Teachers	10
Provisional Teachers	3
Proficient Teachers	88

Catholic Identity and Mission

Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle participate, under the leadership of the Bishop and in partnership with parents and parishes, in the mission of the Church to provide quality education in the context of a living Catholic Christian tradition. Within this context, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle educate from and for vibrant, welcoming and diverse communities with a particular commitment to the poor; for justice, integrity and peace; and with hope for the future.:

At the heart of everything there is always Jesus Christ.

Catholic schools educate:

- From and for the community of faith
- From and for excellence in learning
- In a rigorous, creative and critical pursuit of truth

(Adapted from: The Catholic School's Office Diocesan Vision Statement, 2016)

Catherine McAuley Catholic College's mission is to co-create learning environments where faith, purpose, fulfilment and joy are experienced by all. To embed this mission, the College has intentionally focused on bringing presence and joy to the celebration of our faith, ensuring that students are placed at the centre of building and expressing the Catholic identity of our school. Inspired by Catherine McAuley's call to be "shining lamps to all around us," our community has grown in confidence and clarity in living out our evangelising mission.

A key priority has been strengthening the authenticity of our school liturgies so they provide meaningful opportunities for students to encounter God. Central to this has been the continued growth of our Music and Ministry initiative, PROCLAIM, which engages students through praise and worship music that enriches the sacred atmosphere of our celebrations. Building on this foundation, 2025 also saw the introduction of additional student faith groups to deepen participation in the faith life of the College. UNITE, our liturgical dance group, uses reflective movement to bring the Gospel message to life, while ENACT, our drama ministry group, creatively presents Gospel narratives through embodied storytelling.

In partnership with our Aboriginal Education Officer, the College has also collaborated with the Yakul Murray Dance Group to respectfully integrate Aboriginal spirituality into our liturgical life, enriching our celebrations and strengthening cultural understanding within our community. Intentional formation and mentoring have further strengthened the capacity of student leaders to confidently lead prayer and liturgical moments, increasing student voice and ownership in significant College celebrations.

Staff formation remained a priority throughout 2025. 'Praisin' Toast', our annual staff breakfast book club, continued to provide space for communal reflection and spiritual dialogue. Additional formation opportunities were offered, including sessions on Theology of the Body and the Trinitarian nature of God. A formation experience combining prayer, reflection and community-building activities invited staff to encounter God through shared hospitality and physical wellbeing.

Through these initiatives, Catherine McAuley Catholic College continues to strengthen a shared understanding of its Catholic identity, forming a vibrant community where faith is lived, celebrated and intentionally proclaimed.

Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

Secondary Curriculum

The Secondary Curriculum follows the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabus for each course offered as required for Registration and Accreditation under the Education Act 1990 (NSW) and implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools in the Diocese.

The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science, Technological and Applied Studies, Human Society and its Environment, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education, Creative Arts, Languages, and Vocational Education and Training. The Curriculum is structured around the outcomes and content for each KLA and provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding through assessment. The curriculum embeds capabilities and priorities within curriculum content points in all KLAs. These include literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, and personal and social capability.

Catherine McAuley Catholic College ensures its students comprehensively meet mandatory NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) requirements. Additionally, the College also provides students with individual choice, particularly in Watha Endeavour House (Stage 5), which is outlined in more detail in the myARC section of the website. We believe it is essential to support student passions, interests and strengths and the curriculum provides an excellent opportunity to do this.

In Years 7 and 8 (Stage 4) and Years 9 and 10 (Stage 5), all students study a common curriculum, which covers eight Key Learning Areas (KLAs) as detailed below. An outline of each of these Key Learning Areas is also located on the NESA Website.

In Years 9 and 10 (Stage 5), the College offers the Core + (Elective) program which provides students with choice, agency and ownership throughout their learning journey by giving them permission to explore and develop their strengths, passions and interests. These students tailor their course load to reflect their passions and future aspirations. They have numerous choices (approximately 30) covering traditional subjects and also bespoke College developed courses, designed around areas of student interest and teacher passion. Core + is a genuine point of difference for the community. Bespoke courses make up around 25% of the courses selected.

Students in Stage 5 can choose over 2 years: 2 x 200-hour courses.

1 x 200-hour course & 2 x 100-hour courses
4 x 100-hour courses
2 x 200-hour courses

2025 saw our first Year 12 cohort graduate and complete HSC exams. Becoming a 'complete' secondary school from Year 7-12 gave the CMCC community much to celebrate and the success of the first cohort, with 1/3 of all courses studied achieving above state average results, has provided a solid benchmark and an understanding of areas for improvement.

When selecting course preferences for Stage 6 studies, students must include:

- At least one unit of Studies of Religion or Studies in Catholic Thought.
- At least two units of English.
- A minimum of six units (3 x 2 units) of Board Developed Courses.
- A minimum of twelve units in total.

CMCC continues to cater for the needs of all students for those who preference a vocational pathway over an ATAR pathway for their HSC. Vocational Education and Training offerings included Construction, Hospitality, Entertainment and Industry AND Sports Coaching. Students are also supported to undertake SBAT studies such as in Early Childhood, partnering with neighbouring St Nicholas Early Childhood Education as well as Retail and Nursing.

Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

NAPLAN

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia participate in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

NAPLAN is a nationwide measure through which parents/carers, teachers, schools, education authorities, governments and the broader community can determine whether or not young Australians are developing critical literacy and numeracy skills. NAPLAN results allow parents/carers and educators to see how students are progressing in literacy and numeracy over time - individually, as part of their school community, and against national standards. NAPLAN is made up of four domains of:

- reading
- writing
- conventions of language (spelling, grammar and punctuation)
- numeracy.

NAPLAN results are reported against proficiency standards with four levels of achievement to give parents and carers, teachers and schools clearer information on how students are performing:

- Exceeding: The student's result exceeds expectations at the time of testing.
- Strong: The student's result meets challenging but reasonable expectations at the time of testing.
- Developing: The student's result indicates that they are working towards expectations at the time of testing.
- Needs additional support: The student's result indicates that they are not achieving the learning outcomes expected at the time of testing. They are likely to need additional support to progress satisfactorily.

The percentage of student achieving at Exceeding and Strong proficiency standards in NAPLAN at Catherine McAuley Catholic College for 2025 is reported in the table below.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2025		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 7	Grammar and Punctuation	59%	62%
	Reading	64%	69%
	Writing	61%	64%
	Spelling	73%	72%
	Numeracy	65%	69%
NAPLAN RESULTS 2025		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 9	Grammar and Punctuation	55%	56%
	Reading	58%	65%
	Writing	60%	61%
	Spelling	74%	72%
	Numeracy	68%	66%

Higher School Certificate (HSC) Diocese

The results of the College's Higher School Certificate (HSC) candidature are reported for particular subjects. The table provided shows the percentage of students who achieved in the top two bands and shows comparison with results from previous years.

NB: A number of new syllabuses were implemented this year which means there was a change in either subject name and/or course number. For this reason, results from previous years may appear as 0%. Some courses no longer run and therefore will show as 0%.

The HSC results of students in 2025 reflected the diversity of the cohort with several students achieving ATAR's in the 80's and 90's and many who sought pathways other than university entry such as TAFE, work, apprenticeships and Defence opportunities realised their aspirations.

Of the 32 subjects that CMCC students undertook in the 2025 HSC 11 of the subjects saw above state average results with a further 4 sitting on or just below state average. Analysis of the HSC data for the very first cohort of HSC students showed excellent results in comparison to other comprehensive secondary schools in the Diocese and the region. The

foundations were set by the first graduating cohort for strong academic achievements in the years to come.

The College has undertaken to have an ongoing review of the impact of course selections on overall outcomes for students. There is a focus on ensuring that the best possible advice is received by students at the time of entering course preferences and that the right students select and study the right course for them to achieve their personal best.

Higher School Certificate	<i>Percentage of students in the top 2 bands (Bands 5 and 6)</i>					
	2023		2024		2025	
	School	State	School	State	School	State
Ancient History	-	-	-	-	57 %	14 %
Community & Family Studie	-	-	-	-	54 %	13 %
English Extension 1	-	-	-	-	100 %	95 %
Entertainment Ind Exam	-	-	-	-	67 %	18 %
History Extension	-	-	-	-	100 %	87 %
Mathematics Advanced	-	-	-	-	60 %	21 %
Mathematics Extension 1	-	-	-	-	100 %	77 %
Music 1	-	-	-	-	75 %	29 %
Society and Culture	-	-	-	-	67 %	19 %
Visual Arts	-	-	-	-	100 %	27 %

Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

Pastoral Care Policy

The College's approach to pastoral care and wellbeing is guided by the [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#).

This policy provides a framework for the development and implementation of policies, programs, resources, and practices at all school levels. Its purpose is to support and enhance the wellbeing of students and all members of the school community, fostering a climate of care within a Catholic educational context.

The College is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and academically rigorous environment. A strong emphasis is placed on nurturing and maintaining positive, respectful relationships among staff, students, and parents, with the wellbeing of all at the forefront.

Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy

The College's behaviour management and student discipline procedures align with the Catholic School's [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#) and to the [Schools Behaviour Management Policy](#). These policies uphold the dignity and responsibility of each individual, promote positive student behaviour, and ensure respect for the rights of all students and staff. Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited at the College. The College does not permit or condone the use of corporal punishment by any College personnel or non-College individuals, including parents, as a means of discipline in the College. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the College's website.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The College implements the Catholic Schools [Anti-Bullying Policy](#) which is adopted by all schools within the Diocese. This policy provides a framework for school communities to collaboratively prevent and address bullying, fostering respectful relationships and responding to individual needs with sensitivity and care. The Catholic Schools Leadership team monitors the implementation of this policy.

The full text of the Anti-Bullying Policy may be accessed on the College's website, the administration office or on the Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle website.

Complaints Handling Policy

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) is implemented by the College and all schools in the diocese. This policy acknowledges that misunderstandings and differences of opinion may arise and provides a structured process for resolving such matters respectfully and constructively. By addressing concerns within a framework of dignity, respect and truth, the policy reflects the values of the Catholic faith and offers opportunities to model the love of Christ in contemporary contexts. The Catholic Schools Leadership team monitors the implementation of this policy in our schools.

The full text of the [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) may be accessed on the College's website, the administration office or on the Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle website.

Community Satisfaction

Consultation with parents, students and teachers is valued and sought. Their feedback contributes to the planning and the achievement of improved outcomes for students. This year, the College has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the College from parents, students and teachers. The school undertakes extensive surveying of all stakeholder groups every 2 years. This data is shared with the school community and contributes to the priorities for future planning.

Parent satisfaction

The College continues to prioritise its relationships with families and parents as partners in supporting their children. In 2025, parent engagement with the school was provided through assemblies, Awards Ceremonies, Liturgies, Mother's and Father's Day breakfasts, the first College Musical produced by the CAPA faculty and Student/Parent/Teacher Days, including Learner Led Conferences.

Family and Community Engagement (FACE) meetings continued with strong attendance on Week 6 of each term, with a learning focus, questions with notice from attendees, and an opportunity for receiving constructive feedback. These forums were very well received by parents, with positive feedback regarding the format, particularly the educational component, which parents reported as highly informative.

A leadership team approach to interviews for every student entering Year 7 in 2026 and their families took place during Term 2 and into Term 3. Feedback gained from these meetings highlighted the excellent reputation that Catherine McAuley has in the Port Stephens region and enabled every student to be known and their abilities and interests noted to help them with a smooth transition to high school.

Student satisfaction

Student feedback is gained regularly through weekly timetabled Learning Advisor Sessions. This feedback assists staff in continuing to develop the program, so it better meets student needs with a focus on their overall wellbeing. The continuation of a fortnightly student survey this year, Pulse Checks has provided valuable information regarding wellbeing and satisfaction.

Leaders of Learning regularly seek student feedback through surveys in their subject areas. Student feedback has indicated a strong sense of belonging and connectedness to the College with affirmation of school staff and the relationships that exist within the community.

The broad range of extracurricular activities offered to students at CMCC across sport, the arts and passion areas continued to enable student connection to the college community, their peers and the educators in the college community.

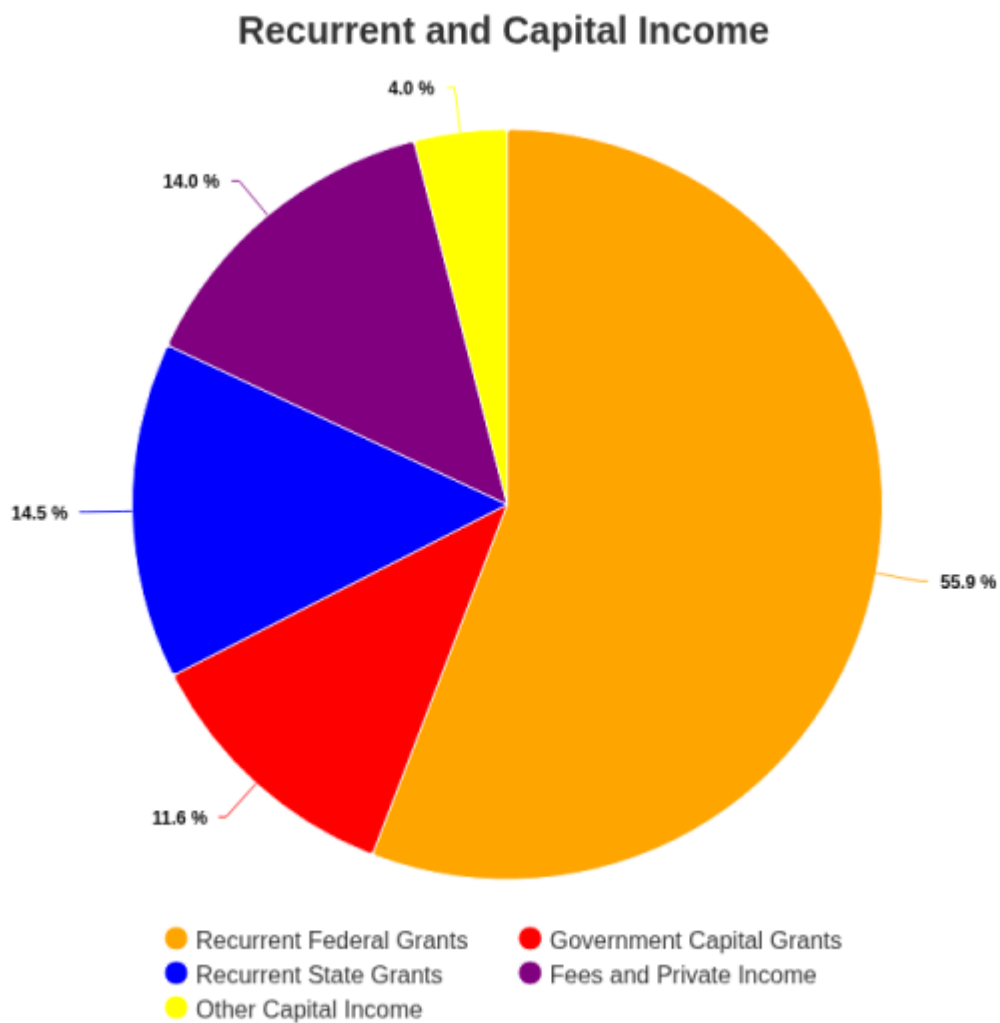
Teacher satisfaction

The College welcomed another 25 new staff in 2025 including the newly appointed College Principal and Assistant Principal. All staff members in 2025 were invited to participate in the Staff Engagement Survey facilitated by the Diocese. There was strong uptake by staff to engage with this process and feedback reflected positive experiences for staff in all categories across this survey. A recurring theme is the appreciation for the positive community spirit and the staff culture. High expectations that underpin the college culture as well as a strong sense of welcome and belonging were highlights gleaned from the survey.

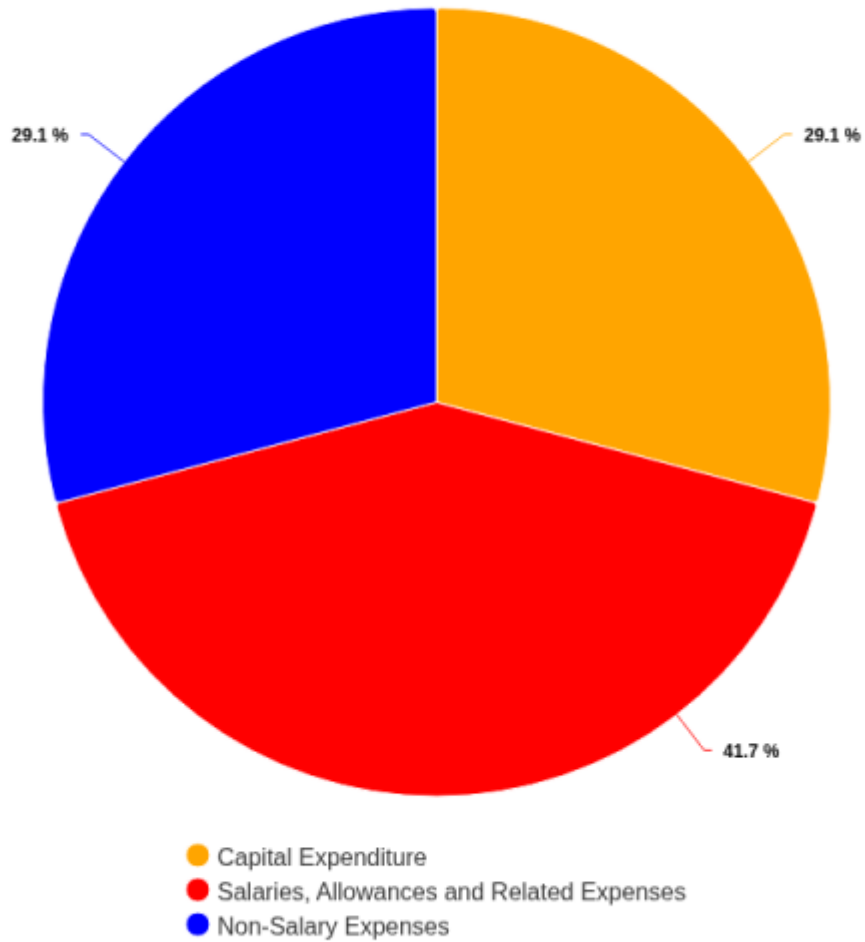
Financial Statement

This School Financial Information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire.

School Financial Information for the 2025 year is detailed below:



Recurrent and Capital Expenditure



END OF 2025 REPORT