

# Contents

Message from Bishop Bill Wright	4
Message from the Director of Schools, Ray Collins	4
Vision Statement for Catholic Schools	5
Nature and Purpose of Catholic Schools Statement	6
Learning Framework: Philosophy of Learning	6
Rationale	6
Background	7
Measuring Our Success	7
Structure	7
2017 – 2019 SSP Overview	8
1. Domain Statement - Catholic Formation and Mission	12
2. Domain Statement - Learning	14
3. Domain Statement - Leadership	16
4. Domain Statement - Service and Governance	18

It is with pleasure that I present the 2017-19 System Strategic Plan (SSP), entitled *Disciples, Learners and Leaders*. This three-year plan outlines the Catholic School system's refreshed directions and encompasses the four domains of Catholic Formation and Mission, Learning, Leadership and Service and Governance.

The next three years will be an exciting time for our system of schools following the successes of the previous plans *Living Waters: Creating the Future Together 2010-2012* and *Forming Catholic Minds and Hearts 2013-2016* and the continued implications from the strong recommendations emanating from the numerous system reviews completed during this cycle. The 2017-2019 SSP title includes from scripture (Psalms 25:5), "lead me in your truth and teach me". It is with this in mind that we embark on

the plan at the beginning of the new year, sure that the Spirit will guide us in our journey.

I commend the 2017-19 SSP to you in the knowledge that through its implementation all stakeholders will work together to make a positive difference in the lives of young people and their families. *Disciples, Learners and Leaders* will indeed provide clear and strong

# Vision Statement for Catholic Schools



From & for the community of  
**Faith**

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## Nature and Purpose of Catholic Schools Statement

Inspired by the message and example of Jesus Christ, Catholic schools live out a distinctive educational vision. Supported by the Catholic community of which they are a vital part, they invite students and their families into a faith-filled educational experience.

As a key ministry of parishes and the diocese, Catholic schools encourage and support parents in their responsibility for the faith formation of their children. This formation is supported by prayer and opportunities to participate in the life, mission and liturgy of the broader Catholic community.

### Our schools commit to:

- f Nurturing each individual's growth in faith and unique potential
- f Offering outstanding educational experiences founded on Catholic values
- f Fostering partnership between parents and staff in the education of their children
- f Creating communities of respect for each other, the wider society and the earth
- f Encouraging active engagement in social justice issues, the service of others and the promotion of peace.

Catholic schools are part of a long tradition of Catholic education provided by religious and lay teachers in Australia and this diocese for over 180 years. They fulfil parents' rights to choose schooling for their children which reflects their own values, beliefs and hopes.

## Learning Framework: Philosophy of Learning

Catholic schools in the diocese of Maitland-Newcastle are communities of learning characterised by high expectations for learners to achieve excellence, academic rigour, innovation and purpose, within environments that engage, empower and enable.

### Rationale

All engaged in the enterprise of Catholic education commit to the values and tenets of the Church as revealed by the Good News. As disciples of Jesus, we strive to become more like him as we continue to grow in faith. Our faith is expressed in relationship with one another, and in our communities, both local and global. The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Catholic system of schools has in its Vision Statement;

“...at the heart of everything is always Jesus Christ...”<sup>1</sup>

Faith encompasses all aspects of school planning and school life. It is fundamental to our schools' improvement process.

1. *Educating Today, and Tomorrow: A renewing passion. Inspiration, Merit, in Laboris.* Section 111.



# Background

**D**, **L**, **L** **System Strategic Plan 2017-2019** will be the third cycle for strategic planning across the Maitland-Newcastle system of schools. Our two previous plans were entitled:

- f System Strategic Plan 2010 - 2012 *Living Waters*
- f System Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016 *Forming Catholic Hear and Minds*

and provided solid foundations for system and school strategic and annual planning. Strong feedback from evaluations of past plans has indicated significant success, in providing system and schools a framework with clear focus, direction and support.

While the 2017-2019 System Strategic Plan strives to develop significant improvement across all diocesan schools it also

provides creativity and scope for them to pursue their own school priorities by:

- f Articulating and integrating the new Vision for Catholic Schools Statement across all strategic areas
- f Setting a small number of ambitious goals directly related to student achievement and wellbeing
- f Fostering collaborative cultures focused on faith formation and institutional improvements across all schools as well as between schools across the system
- f Improving learning at all levels of the system
- f Building a financially secure and strategic approach to the development of new and existing schools
- f Providing effective governance and accountability.

## Measuring Our Success

The Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is committed to measuring and monitoring the progress and success of our strategic objectives and to improving system and school performance.

The plan will be monitored as part of the senior leadership work plan. The leadership team will, each term, analyse its progress in each domain and the strategies that are being implemented to ensure transparency and accountability. This will provide appropriate and

timely data and information to track progress against our domain objectives. A semester report will address the Annual Priorities and be available to system and school stakeholders.

Over the next three years the System Strategic Plan will provide opportunities for system growth and improvement. The system is committed to enhancing the educational opportunities for staff and students and to work collegially with the Catholic Schools Office and with school communities to ensure strong and positive outcomes.

## Structure

The 2017-2019 plan will ensure an holistic structure by delivering to schools both an aspirational three-year System Strategic Plan combined with System Annual Improvement Plan (SAIP) priority areas and strategies for success over each year of the cycle. It is important to note that the System Strategic Plan is designed to inform but not direct School Plans.

The areas for strategic engagement/intent have been articulated in the plan to the following four domains:

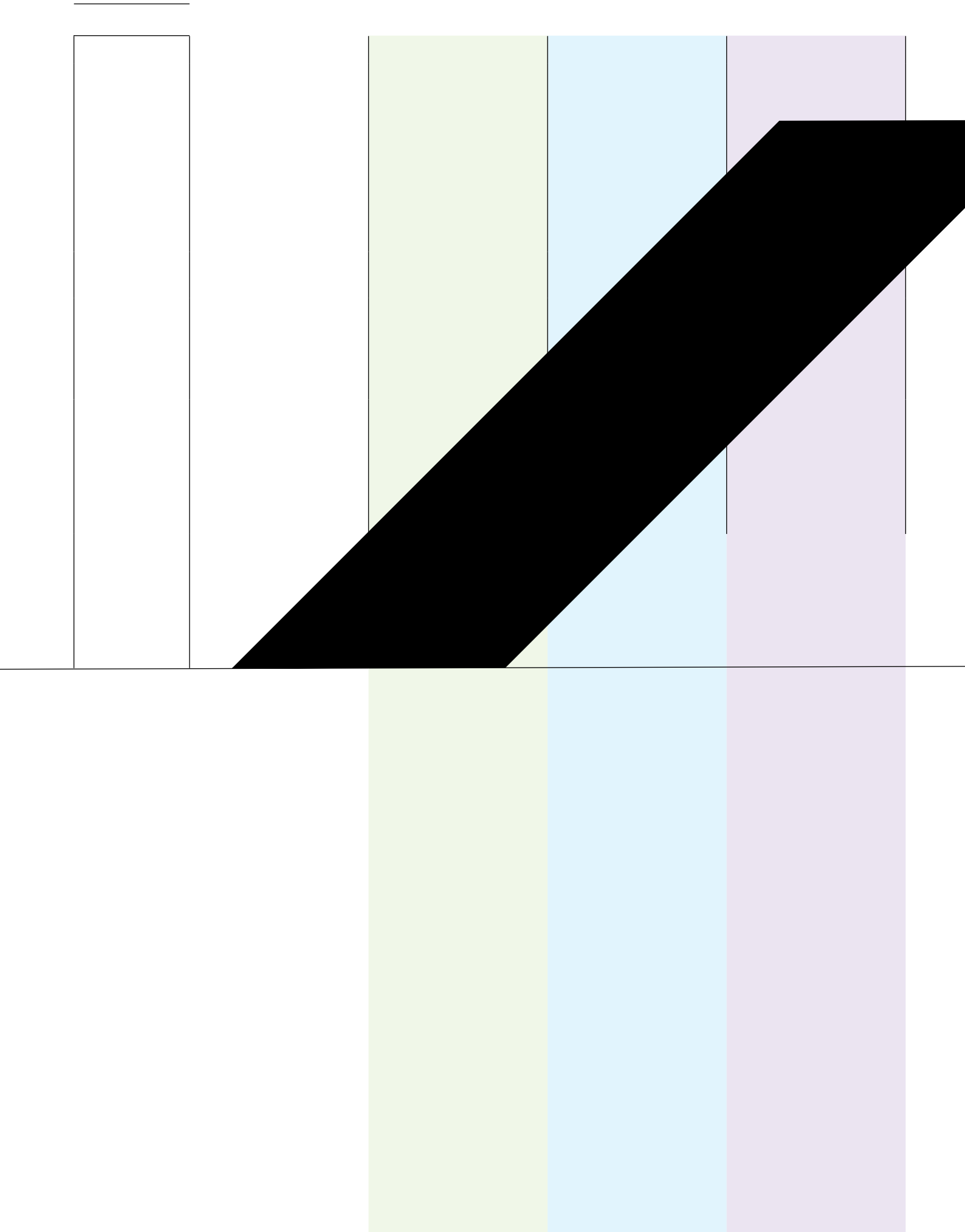
1. Catholic Formation and Mission (formerly Catholic Identity)
2. Learning (formerly Quality Teaching, Quality Learning meeting students' needs)
3. Leadership (formerly Empowered School Leadership)
4. Service and Governance (formerly Transparency & Accountability)

These four domains have subsumed the six key areas from the 2013-2016 Plan to reflect more implicitly their fundamental strategic purpose.











DOMAIN	OBJECTIVES	2017	2018	2019
	<p><b>INFORMATION SYSTEMS</b></p> <p><b>4.6</b> Quality ICLT systems and services that align with other strategic priorities to improve student outcomes and staff/school wellbeing</p>	<p><b>4.6.1</b> Ensure operation of the ICLT Governance Standing Committee to strategically align, coordinate and manage information, communication and learning technology-related activities in the diocese</p> <p><b>4.6.2</b> Ongoing implementation of new payroll/human resources system</p> <p><b>4.6.3</b> Develop planning</p>		

“Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God, who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth”.<sup>1</sup>

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle provide opportunities, programs and experiences that will lead students, staff and parents to have a genuine encounter with Jesus Christ. Our schools are challenged to provide an educational alternative that is centred in the Gospel story and takes its inspiration from the Catholic faith, and our connectedness with the wider Eucharistic community of the Church.

Using the context of Bevens<sup>2</sup> ‘that God’s church doesn’t have a mission, rather God’s mission has a church’, we therefore commit, in partnership with parents and clergy, to ensure that those involved in Catholic education have an understanding of their role as co-contributors to the building of God’s Church. To that end we acknowledge and celebrate our relationship with our parish churches, encouraging all staff and families to make an active contribution to a worshipping community.

Acknowledging that our schools exist within an increasingly secular society that may at times inhibit the opportunity for its members to engage in rich dialogue on faith and doctrine, strategies will be established that contribute toward formation and will affirm and promote the unique mission of the Catholic school. Through the ongoing development and implementation of a rigorous Catholic curriculum, coupled with a supportive program of formation, students and staff will be invited to develop their understanding of faith and to deepen their relationship with God as well as assisting them as members of school communities to ‘appreciate their roles in receiving and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ’<sup>3</sup>

Catholic Formation and Mission is a key component of the System Strategic Plan. The Objectives and Strategies that follow identify our engagement with this domain.

1. Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI, Meeting with Catholic Educators, Washington DC, April 2008.

2. Stephen Bevens, *Consensus in Concreta: A Theology of Mission for Today*.

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## 2. Domain Statement - Learning

Catholic education in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle subscribes to the belief that we are all learners. The Catholic Schools Office assists schools to promote excellence in student learning, in an atmosphere characterised by care and the upholding of the dignity of each person. Our schools are learning-centred communities that:

- f Provide high quality learning experiences that engage, motivate and inspire learners to exceed expectations
- f Produce critical, self-directed, interdependent learners
- f Recognise that learning is for life; students are equipped with the knowledge, skills and understandings that prepare them to make an active contribution to their world
- f Respect the diverse needs of learners; personalising learning such that those who exhibit particular gifts and skills are extended and those who need assistance are given the support they need to flourish and grow
- f Hold high expectations for success for all learners
- f Promote the wellbeing of staff, students and community members
- f Are invitational; parents and community members are included, involved and partner with staff in the learning enterprise of the students
- f Respect the environment, working for sustainability and stewardship of all that has been gifted to us
- f Embed contemporary practice and the use of technology in learning.






Learning is informed by our learning framework, the vision for Catholic schooling and the diocesan Nature and Purpose

statement. A variety of targeted strategies will be employed to support our aims in lifting the performance outcomes for all students.

As members of a global community in a rapidly changing world, our students will need to be adept and flexible learners, who are readily able to pose as well as solve problems, be creators of new knowledge and be creative in their thinking. Students will require performance, communication and presentation skills as tools to serve their learning. In order to facilitate this learning, our schools as professional learning communities, need to be appropriately supported by:

- f A commitment to fostering the faith journey of all people as inherently spiritual beings
- f Well qualified, passionate leaders, teachers and support staff
- f Professional learning that is targeted to the needs of staff
- f Flexible learning environments that are able to be adapted for local contexts and particular pedagogies
- f Curriculum materials that are well planned and expertly delivered
- f Contemporary, collaborative pedagogical practice that is evidence-based and improvement focussed
- f Opportunities for students to pursue their interests and passions in the formal curriculum, co-curriculum and in sporting, cultural and community endeavours.

Learning is a key component of this strategic plan. The Objectives and Strategies that follow identify our targeted areas for improvement.

DOMAIN	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES		
		2017	2018	2019
<b>2</b> <b>Learning</b>	<b>DOMAIN PRIORITY 1</b> <b>Academic performance</b>			
	<b>2.1</b> Evidence-based approaches to lift the performance of all students	<b>2.1.1</b> Conduct specific professional learning opportunities in literacy and numeracy informed by research and best practice	<b>2.1.2</b> Utilise structures to facilitate the collective responsibility in schools and regions for real and deep analysis of NAPLAN, HSC and other academic data to improve student learning in literacy and numeracy	
	<b>2.2</b> A system-wide approach to education of gifted students	<b>2.2.1</b> Implement the agreed recommendations from the Working Party for education of gifted students		
	<b>DOMAIN PRIORITY 2</b> <b>Early Learning</b>			
	<b>2.3</b> A system-wide approach to the needs of early learners	<b>2.3.1</b> Develop a policy on early learning that makes connections with the Diocesan Learning Framework; one that emphasises the system's directions in philosophy, play, environment and space, transition, pedagogy for success in professional learning	<b>2.3.2</b> Implement agreed recommendations from the Early Learning Working Party	
	<b>DOMAIN PRIORITY 3</b> <b>Enhanced teacher quality</b>			
	<b>2.4</b> Culture of collaborative learning	<b>2.4.1</b> Continue and strengthen opportunities for staff to meet in professional learning teams to focus on the specific areas of need		<b>2.4.2</b> Evaluate the progress of the Professional Learning Community process use across system schools
	<b>2.5</b> High quality and contemporary pedagogical practice that engages students in their learning	<b>2.5.1</b> Support the implementation of quality pedagogical practices that engage and motivate students resulting in overall improvements in literacy and numeracy		
	<b>2.6</b> A renewed vision of the school library	<b>2.6.1</b> Implement the agreed set of recommendations of the working party in relation to the role and nature of the school library and its impact on contemporary teaching and learning		

# 3. Domain Statement - Leadership

Leadership development seeks to prepare and support capacity-building in present and future school and system leaders. John Hattie's (2015) <sup>1</sup> research states:

"The greatest influence on the student progression in learning is having highly expert, inspired and passionate teachers and school leaders working together to maximise the effect of their teaching on all students in their care." (p.2)

Viviane Robinson and her colleagues endorse Hattie's research. They conclude that there are five leadership domains with significant effect sizes on student achievement. These are:




1. Establishing goals and expectations (0.42)
2. Resourcing strategically (0.31)
3. Ensuring quality teaching (0.42)

4. Leading teacher learning and development (0.84)
5. Ensuring an orderly and safe environment (0.27) <sup>2</sup>

The Catholic Schools Office strives to develop, in current and future leaders, these capacities that will create and sustain vibrant and dynamic faith and learning communities. This plan enhances positive, proactive and collaborative leadership that aligns with current system priorities and leadership standards.

Leadership is a key component of the System Strategic Plan. The Objectives and Strategies that follow identify engagement with this domain.

1. Hattie, J. (2015) *What Works Best in Education: The Politics of Collaborative Effort*, London: Pearson  
 2. Robinson V. *Leading Learning: Centred Leadership* (p.9) Bossey – Bass 2011

DOMAIN	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES		
		2017	2018	2019
<b>3</b> <b>Leadership</b>	<b>DOMAIN PRIORITY 1</b> <b>Leaders capacity</b>  <b>3.1</b> Renewed leadership formation opportunities that enhance the capacity of school and system leaders	<b>3.1.1</b> Implement for beginning and emerging leaders in faith and other leadership domains  <b>3.1.2</b> Provide professional learning to develop, implement and enhance the use of PLC and coaching in and between schools	  	<b>3.1.3</b> Formal evaluation of the impact of PLC and coaching in schools
	<b>DOMAIN PRIORITY 2</b> <b>Leader Wellbeing</b>  <b>3.2</b> A system-wide approach to principal wellbeing	<b>3.2.1</b> Implement a suite of strategies to respond to the identified wellbeing needs of principals		
	<b>DOMAIN PRIORITY 3</b> <b>Accreditation of staff</b>  <b>3.3</b> Teacher and leader accreditation processes in schools	<b>3.3.1</b> (Secondary) Prepare teachers to meet BOSTES accreditation requirements by providing information sessions and other professional learning activities  <b>3.3.2</b> Develop strategies of engagement with the standard and profiles to achieve accreditation	<b>3.3.3</b> (Primary) Prepare teachers to meet BOSTES accreditation requirements by providing information sessions and other professional learning activities	



The Catholic Schools Office supports schools to provide excellence in education to the communities they serve. The provision of service is maintained through consistent and professional contact and support across each Service Area. Systemic priorities have been formulated in relation to

- f Engagement and partnership with parents and the wider community
- f Planning for growth and organisation of schools
- f Efficient financial systems and practices
- f Strategic recruitment, performance review and management of human resources
- f Information technology architecture that enhances student learning and school operational effectiveness
- f Stewardship of natural and built environments
- f School governance processes
- f Engagement and partnership with parents and the wider community

The Maitland-Newcastle system of schools is undergoing

substantial growth and development. In recent years there have been major reviews that have provided recommendations for action and informed direction for the system in the short and longer terms. These are:

- f The provision of secondary education across diocesan schools
- f School improvement and compliance processes
- f Renewal and upgrading of information technology requirements for learning and for school administration
- f Human Resource Management/Schools Information or learnpw ActualTe



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Service & Governance  
Continued

<p>4.2 Integrated governance, risk management and compliance framework that addresses the legislative requirements</p> <p>4.3 School and CSO management practices aligned to policies and procedures for legislative compliance</p>	<p>4.2.1 Ongoing enhancement of policies, procedures and guidelines for AEA, NSWEA Sect83C, ACNC and BOSTES requirements</p> <p>4.2.2 Strengthen the integration of processes and systems for governance and compliance</p> <p>4.3.1 Further educate responsible persons to embed management and compliance practices</p> <p>4.3.2 Ongoing development of risk management processes</p> <p>4.3.3 Continue and strengthen audit programs in schools and CSO for legislative compliance</p>	<p>→</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p>	
<p><b>DOMAIN PRIORITY 3</b></p>			
<p><b>Growth &amp; development of schools</b></p>			
<p>4.4 The approved recommendations from the Provision of Secondary Education</p>	<p>4.4.1 Plan/implementation of St Bede's Catholic College, Chisholm</p> <p>4.4.2 Planning of Medowie Catholic Secondary School</p> <p>4.4.3 Investigate an alternate secondary school setting</p> <p>4.4.4 Planning St Mary's Gateshead 7-12/St Joseph's Lochinvar 7 – 12</p> <p>4.4.5 Investigate cluster relationships in ASC, Newcastle</p> <p>4.4.6 Planning for enrolment boundary guidelines</p> <p>4.4.7 Planning for equitable access to curriculum in all secondary schools</p> <p>4.5 Future school sites and facilities for enrolment growth and development</p>	<p>4.4.8 Implement Year 7 classes</p> <p>4.4.9 Implement alternate secondary school setting (flexible learning centre)</p> <p>4.4.10 Implement Year 11 classes</p> <p>4.4.11 Formalise enrolment boundaries</p> <p>4.4.12 Investigate the provision of secondary education, Cessnock</p> <p>4.5.1 Develop plan to cater for current and projected growth in diocesan schools</p>	<p>4.4.13 Implement Year 8 classes</p> <p>4.4.14 Implement Year 12 classes</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p>
<p><b>DOMAIN PRIORITY 4</b></p>			
<p><b>Information systems</b></p>			
<p>4.6 Quality ICLT systems and services that align with other strategic priorities to improve student outcomes and staff/school wellbeing</p> <p>4.7 ICLT infrastructure and service delivery which includes leveraging of local and shared services as appropriate</p>	<p>4.6.1 Ensure operation of the ICLT Governance Standing Committee to strategically align, coordinate and manage information, communication and learning technology related activities in the diocese</p> <p>4.6.2 Ongoing implementation of new payroll/human resources system</p> <p>4.6.3 Develop planning resources for the CeSIS/CeFMS project, and lead and support the implementation of the project</p> <p>4.6.4 Support the ongoing activities of the MNConnect project to build a quality digital learning environment</p> <p>4.7.1 Review and replace wireless connectivity across all secondary schools and the remainder of primary schools</p>	<p>4.6.5 Lead and support the implementation of the CeSIS/CeFMS project</p> <p>4.7.2 Review and renew network connectivity and system capacity across non-dark fibre connected sites</p>	<p>→</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p> <p>4.6.6 Review the MNConnect Project and revise and renew outcomes</p> <p>4.7.3 Review and renew network connectivity and system capacity across all wide area networks</p>



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