

# **Review** of All Saints' College, Maitland

## Executive Summary

Prepared by

Dr Dan White and Ms Terry O'Brien

on behalf of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

Following the implementation of the recommendations from the Study into the Provisions of Secondary Education for the *Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle* in 2015-16 a decision was made to conduct a review in 2022, into the transition of All Saints' College, Maitland.

In response to a request from staff and the IEU and after discussion between the Director of Schools and the Chief Executive Officer of the Diocese, a decision was made to move the anticipated 2022 College review to 2021, in order to facilitate the long-term strategic planning of All Saints' into the future. The diocese engaged the independent professional services of Dr Dan White (former Executive Director of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Sydney) and Ms Terry O'Brien (Former Government School Principal) to undertake this review.

The diocese commissioned a Reference Group, under the chair of Mr Brian Lacey, the Assistant Director responsible for All Saints' College, to oversee the review process and developed the following Terms of Reference:

The review was tasked with:

1. Assessing and evaluating the transition of All Saints' College, Maitland from two separate schools in 2016 into one College, dual campus identity in August 2020. A specific focus was to identify and build on the strengths of this transition over the last five years.
2. Engaging in extensive consultation with a selection of students and parents, all staff, relevant clergy and other stakeholders, as determined by the Reference Group and Review Team, in relation to the College providing the best quality Catholic education for the wider community and against diocesan expectations.
3. Assessing the comparability of the outcomes achieved by the students at All Saints' College, Maitland against other similar government and Catholic schools.
4. While acknowledging current structures, processes, resourcing and staffing operations, evaluating and reviewing the four key pillars of the College:
  - i. Student Outcomes
  - ii. Team Culture
  - iii. Internal School Structures
  - iv. LeadershipThese four pillars were to be evaluated and assessed against the foundational pillar of the Catholic Mission and Identity of Diocesan schools.
5. Providing monthly updates to the Reference Group on the progress of the consultation.
6. Considering any possible financial or resourcing implications for All Saints' College that may impact on the system budget in the short (two to three years) and potential long term (five to ten years).
7. Identifying recommendations to enhance the operation and identity of All Saints' College as a viable and successful Catholic secondary school for the young people of Maitland and the wider Chisholm parish.

8. Considering the manner in which any revised structures for All Saints' could further complement and/or enhance the delivery of Catholic education in the broader Maitland and Hunter Valley region at both Primary and Secondary levels.

In accord with the Terms of Reference, over the past three months the Reviewers initiated an Appreciative Inquiry Model (SOAR), that sought to initially identify the strengths and opportunities for growth within the current 'One College: Dual Campus' model. After the first phase of inquiry, the Review focused on exploring alternative suggestions and options for the future development of the college and conducted a detailed risk assessment on the various proposals under consideration. As required by the Terms of Reference the Reviewers instigated a comprehensive engagement process which has featured:

- Two Listening Assembly gatherings with key stakeholders spread over ten workshops;
- Twenty-five designated focus group meetings including teachers, administration and support staff, parents and students;
- Detailed analysis of two previous surveys (Tell them from Me; Staff Wellbeing)
- Over fifty individual interviews;
- Over thirty written submissions;
- Seven case studies of multi-campus colleges;
- Three neighbouring schools visits;
- Five meetings with IEU representatives;
- Two Educational Data workshops with key college leaders;
- Six meetings with the Reference Group; and
- Five meetings at the Diocesan or Catholic Schools Office level.

A fundamental premise of the review process was the critical importance of discerning what structures and processes will best serve the young people within the Catholic community of Maitland, not just in the current context of the college, but long into the future. Whilst the viewpoints and aspirations of the current and past members of the parish, staff, parent and student communities were deeply respected, the development of a comprehensive plan that will guide All Saints' College into a vibrant faith-filled and educationally rich future, was of paramount importance.

## Key Findings

### **I. Commitment and Dedication of the Leadership and Staff:**

The All Saints' community is truly fortunate to have a team of very dedicated and committed leaders and staff members. The student body spoke highly of the quality of their educational experiences at ASC and the passion demonstrated by their teachers and support staff in assisting them with their academic endeavours while guiding their emotional, social and spiritual growth. The key challenge however is that, across each campus, staff are committed to differing and sometimes contrasting models of 'service delivery' to their students.

### **II. Clarity of Vision and Mission:**

The decision to formally amalgamate St Peter's and St Mary's schools into one cohesive and fully integrated 7-12 College is strategically affirmed and endorsed. However, the vision and mission for an integrated 7-12 college, is fragmented and is in need of significant clarification and review, especially within the staff community.

### **III. Catholic Identity and Mission:**

Broadly, across the entire All Saints' community, the maintenance and promotion of the Catholic Identity and Mission of the College was both endorsed and supported. That said, as the Covid 'lock-down' restrictions of the past two school years begin to ease, there are real challenges and opportunities for ASC to revitalise and enhance a number of strategies that will positively impact upon the mission of Catholic education within the College community and beyond.

### **IV. Quality of Learning and Teaching:**

All Saints' College is fortunate to have a vibrant mix of talented and experienced teachers. The students and parents of ASC spoke highly of the quality of the pedagogical instruction and educational outcomes that have been achieved over many years. In particular, a recent analysis of NAPLAN data indicates a very commendable and sustained lift in standards both against state and diocesan norms. Similarly, the sustained performance of ASC in the Vocational Education domain is highly commendable. However, whilst recent HSC trend data has been variable, partly due to the retention of Year 12 at St Joseph's Lochinvar, an 'in-depth' analysis of recent HSC trend data at ASC, indicates a number of potentially significant areas

for growth and improvement. These include the more effective application of performance bands and grade descriptors, the value of a Years 7-12 skills continuum and the diagnostic use of data.

### **V. Diverse Learning:**

All Saints' College, in its various iterations over multiple generations as comprehensive Catholic school communities, has a wonderful and powerful commitment to reaching 'out to the margins' and embracing the needs of students who require additional support and encouragement. The 'Emmaus Centre' and the inclusive cultural outreach to the Indigenous community have been exceptionally noteworthy. The challenge, moving forward, is in developing a cohesive, yet flexible 7-12 approach to accommodating students with 'special needs' as they progress and mature throughout their secondary education. At the other end of the learning spectrum, the aspirations and strategies to cater for the more highly academic students also needs to be thoroughly investigated and addressed so that all students can utilise and fulfill their God-given gifts and potential.

### **VI. Student Wellbeing:**

Overall, the welfare and emotional wellbeing of students is one of the college's highest priorities. Significant evidence was provided as to how and when the college had implemented a variety of strategies and initiatives to address wellbeing issues. That said, it has been discerned that the current tutor program within the college could be updated 7-12 and refined to more systematically address a range of contemporary student wellbeing issues. In addition, further attention could be given to nurturing a culture that values and recognises success, enhancing student engagement and providing greater opportunities for student voice.

### **VII. Staff Wellbeing:**

The care and wellbeing of all staff should always be of paramount importance within a Catholic school community. However, since the formal amalgamation of the two campuses into one college four years ago, it is evident that the morale and sense of community experienced by all staff has declined. The differing viewpoints about the long-term vision and overall structure of the college have been a source of tension, the lack of opportunities for genuine consultation and collaboration, combined with a professional and

pastoral disconnect between the college executive team and the wider staff community, needs to be addressed and resolved.

### **VIII. Overall College Structure:**

A key aspect of the current review was an analysis of the overall structure, size and campus composition of All Saints' College (ASC). In particular, the review panel through the consultation process identified three key questions, namely:

- i. Should ASC continue to operate as one, fully integrated college?
- ii. Should ASC be physically restructured so as to enable the school to operate more effectively on a single campus?
- iii. If the dual campus model was to continue, what would be the most appropriate campus configuration?

The response to these questions from the All Saints' community was diverse and, at times, passionate. After weighing up all the options, and whilst acknowledging the many positive features of both past and present models of operation, the Review panel concluded that following a Master Planning exercise in 2022, for the strategic long-term benefit of all current and future students and staff it would be ideal for All Saints' to be situated on one, fully integrated and cohesive Year 7-12 campus as early as possible and no later than 2026.

In addition, it may be practically and educationally beneficial if, as an interim measure, the Master Planning exercise also considers whether or not the Year 10 students should be relocated to the St Mary's campus from 2023 in order to facilitate the expansion of the St Peter's site.

### **IX. College Policies and Practices:**

Over the past four years, the transition of All Saints' College from two semi-autonomous campuses into one integrated college, has been hindered by three contentious policy issues. These are: differing timetables for the senior and junior campuses due to the flexible learning day structure that exists on the senior campus; the lack of time and opportunities for combined staff meetings and professional learning sessions across both campuses; and sustainable workforce and career planning via access and opportunities for all staff to Cross College Teaching across the entire Year 7-12 spectrum.

Once again, key stakeholders expressed a diverse range of well-argued and competing viewpoints.

Following a period of intense discernment, the review panel came to an appreciation that the incompatibilities caused by current organisational frameworks were significantly inhibiting the strategic growth and development of the college. In particular, the underlying desire, shared by all stakeholders, to enhance student learning outcomes and to provide a rich and inclusive spiritual environment within the Catholic tradition were hindered by the current timetabling, meeting and staffing policies and structures. In this context, a major recommendation to discontinue the 'flexible learning day' and formulate a common five-day timetable for the whole college that includes some Stage 6 flexibility, has been made.

### **X. College Leadership Structure:**

When All Saints' was formally amalgamated, a new college leadership structure was established and appointed from the start of 2018. Whilst the executive leadership model was theoretically appropriate for a dual campus school, it has struggled to effectively connect with staff and to some extent students, within the current configuration of the college. In particular the panel noted that the opportunities for close collaboration and shared decision-making with the Middle Leaders in the college could be substantively enhanced. There were also challenges associated with role clarity, access to key personnel, the nature and level of consultation processes and across college communication channels. Other issues raised include decision making processes, change management, relational trust and human resource management processes.

### **XI. Administrative Structures and Processes:**

As All Saints' commenced its transition into the single college structure, it appears insufficient attention and/or resources were directed into a number of administrative areas of the college. Whilst additional personnel were appointed to support the executive team, insufficient attention was paid to collaboratively reviewing the roles and accountabilities of established support staff. In addition, despite the nearly four-year transition period that has occurred there are still a significant number administrative resource projects that need to be addressed. Notable examples include: integrating the Share-Point data base; a whole of college phone system; common across campus security and keying systems; single school fee accounts; and the efficient purchase and coordination of school-based services.

## Overarching Recommendations

In order to provide a comprehensive, strategic 'roadmap' for All Saints' College, the Review Panel has made 65 specific recommendations across nine key dimensions of the Report. The following twelve overarching recommendations are presented to reflect the major findings of the Report.

### **Recommendation One:**

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#### **Renewing the Vision and Mission Statement so as to affirm the 'one college' identity**

It is recommended that, in light of this review, the strategic intent of All Saints' College to operate as one cohesive, integrated college is reaffirmed, enhanced and celebrated. In particular, in association with other recommendations included in the report, the Vision and Mission Statement of the college be collaboratively revised in association with all stakeholders and especially with the staff community.

### **Recommendation Two:**

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#### **Conduct a detailed Master Planning study into the location of All Saints' onto a single campus**

It is recommended that, following a detailed Master Planning study, the ideal, long-term configuration of All Saints' College is for it to be situated on a single campus by no later than 2026, utilising the current St Peter's campus site, and supplemented by appropriate land purchases and associated major capital works.

### **Recommendation Three:**

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#### **An interim move of Year 10 to the St Mary's campus**

It is recommended that, whilst the ideal, long-term configuration of All Saints' College be situated on a single campus, the Master Planning exercise considers whether, the Year 10 cohort could be relocated to the St Mary's campus on an interim basis so as to facilitate the transition and planning processes.

### **Recommendation Four:**

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#### **Common five-day timetable and meeting schedule**

It is recommended that from 2023, All Saints' College discontinues the 'Four-day' week and the associated 'flexible learning day' for Stage 6 students and teachers

and operates with one, common five-day college timetable and meeting schedule across both campuses with all staff eligible to be allocated classes at any stage level.

### **Recommendation Five:**

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#### **Foster staff morale through the full implementation of the recommendations**

It is recommended that, in accord with the recommendations of the report, the college leadership and staff should progressively and collaboratively restructure and normalise a range of major administrative structures and processes, so as to facilitate the restoration of staff morale and wellbeing in the operation of ASC as one united, systemic Catholic educational community. In particular: the integration of the college's academic timetable; the valuing of 'cross-college' teaching; the clarity of role descriptions and associated accountabilities; and the creation of multiple and meaningful opportunities for staff to meet collaboratively and have a real voice and ownership of the strategic direction of the college is essential.

### **Recommendation Six:**

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#### **Transition to a refined Whole of College Leadership model**

It is recommended, that as All Saints' College transitions to a single campus, the 'whole of college' leadership structures and processes be revised to respond to the emerging needs and challenges as outlined in the Report. Supported by greater mentoring, supervision and professional development, the College Leadership Team should strive to address issues such as staff morale, role clarity, access to key personnel, consultation processes, across college communication channels, decision making processes, change management, relational trust and human resource management.

It is further recommended that the model and philosophy of the *College Leadership Team* be broadened to recognise, appreciate, respect and embrace the critical role of Middle Leadership positions and the pedagogical and faculty leadership expertise that they bring in shaping and implementing the strategic teaching and learning priorities and operational principles of the college.

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**Recommendation Seven:****Clarify role descriptions and key accountabilities**

It is recommended as a matter of urgency that the role descriptions of all leadership and administrative personnel should be collaboratively workshoped and updated, such that individual and collective team accountabilities are clearly established and workloads appropriately balanced. In addition, lines of delegation and appropriate communication protocols should also be clarified.

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**Recommendation Eight:****Establish a Catholic Identity and Mission Team**

It is recommended that, under the leadership of the AP: Faith and Mission with the strong and visible support of the College Leadership team, the college establishes a *Catholic Identity and Mission* team, who would meet on a regular basis and assume collective responsibility for driving the implementation of the Review recommendations. In particular, the team would oversee: the development of a Strategic Mission Plan; the promotion of the dual college Charisms; the adoption of the new Diocesan Religious Education committee; and expanding the opportunities open to students to nurture their spirituality and connections to their parish communities.

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**Recommendation Nine:****Establish a Curriculum and Assessment Committee**

It is recommended that, under the leadership of AP: Learning, a *Curriculum and Assessment* committee be established who would meet on a regular basis and assume collective responsibility for driving the implementation of the Review recommendations that focus explicitly on lifting the learning outcomes of all students. In particular, the committee would oversee a range of specific issues, notably in the areas of: assessment policies and protocols; the use of educational data; the creation of Year 7-12 skills continuums; and the development of 'Plus one more mark' initiative.

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**Recommendation Ten:****Staff morale and Establish a Staff Wellbeing Committee**

It is recommended that a *Staff Wellbeing* committee be established and entrusted with the task of suggesting and, when appropriate, directly facilitating a range of community building and staff wellbeing activities. The committee would also be empowered to meet regularly, at least once per term, with the College Principal and Campus Heads to reflect upon and provide feedback on a range of staff morale and wellbeing issues on behalf of their staff colleagues, particularly with respect to nurturing a greater sense of trust, transparency and respectful dialogue amongst all stakeholders.

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**Recommendation Eleven:****Wellbeing of students**

It is recommended that under the leadership of the AP: Wellbeing and Engagement, the *Leaders of Wellbeing and Engagement* team are tasked with developing a coherent planned response to a range of student wellbeing issues which include the development of a 7-12 tutorial program/curriculum for progressive implementation, strategies to further recognise effort and success, facilitating student voice and increasing the level of engagement for students who are disconnected from learning.

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**Recommendation Twelve:****Establish a Review Implementation Committee**

It is recommended that, under the leadership of the nominated CSO Assistant Director, a representative Implementation Committee be established, with clear Terms of Reference, to oversee and monitor the systematic implementation of the Review recommendations. In particular, the committee would be tasked, in close partnership with the College Executive team, with developing a comprehensive implementation plan to assist the college transition to a new educational model over the next four years.