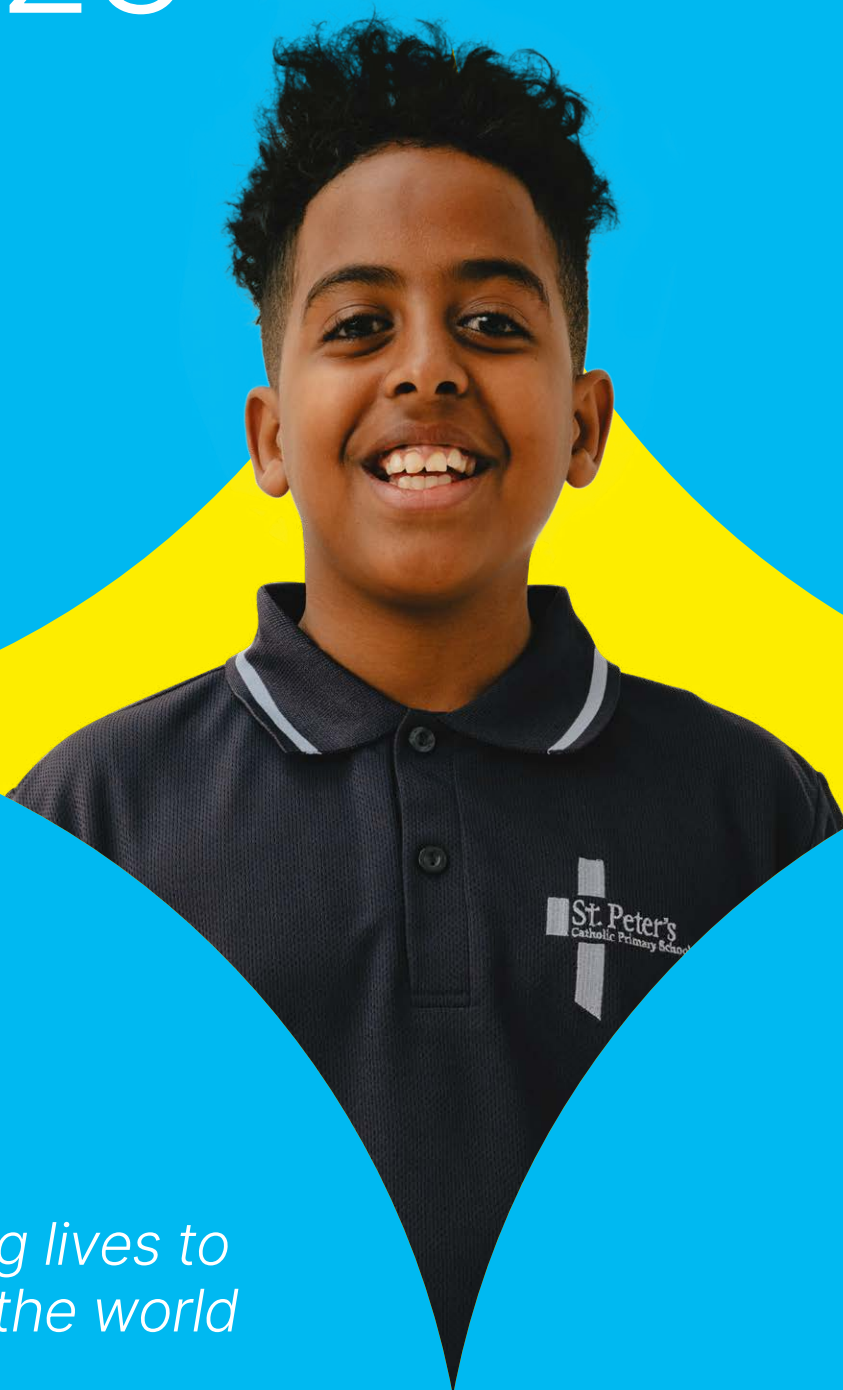




Melbourne Archdiocese  
Catholic Schools

# Annual Report 2023



*Forming lives to  
enrich the world*

Helping growing minds  
discover futures filled  
with purpose, for lives  
that make an impact.

# From Growing





Helping grow  
discover future  
with purposes  
that make a

# To Thriving



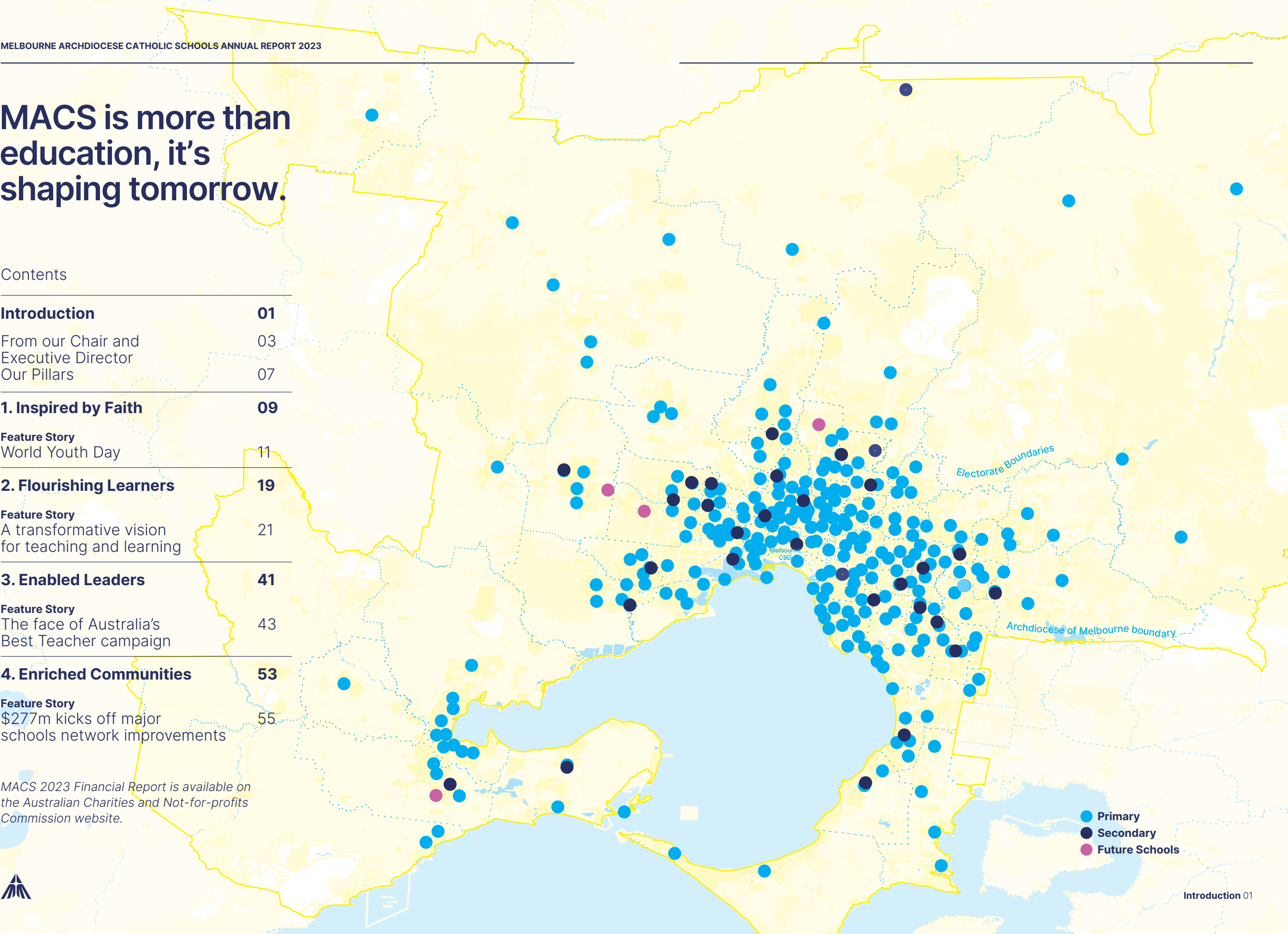


# MACS is more than education, it's shaping tomorrow.

Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>01</b>
From our Chair and Executive Director	03
Our Pillars	07
<b>1. Inspired by Faith</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>Feature Story</b>	
World Youth Day	11
<b>2. Flourishing Learners</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Feature Story</b>	
A transformative vision for teaching and learning	21
<b>3. Enabled Leaders</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Feature Story</b>	
The face of Australia's Best Teacher campaign	43
<b>4. Enriched Communities</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Feature Story</b>	
\$277m kicks off major schools network improvements	55

MACS 2023 Financial Report is available on the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission website.



● Primary  
● Secondary  
● Future Schools



# Vision and Focus

From our Chair and Executive Director

From left: Gerard Dalbosco, Chairman and  
Dr Edward Simons, Executive Director.



**We're delighted to report on a year of indelible change, as we embarked on the first full year of our MACS2030 strategy Forming Lives to Enrich the World.**

This 2023 Melbourne Archdiocese of Catholic Schools (MACS) Annual Report captures our progress and first material strides towards our inaugural vision.

In 2023, we implemented key initiatives, set future priorities, and agreed on benchmarks that will drive transformation in the years ahead. This report highlights our early achievements and milestones against the four pillars of our strategy.

With strong leadership recognised by the Board as a vital pillar, alongside faith, learning and community, it was with great enthusiasm that we welcomed Dr. Edward Simons as the new Executive Director of MACS in March 2023.

In accepting the role, he called it both an 'enormous privilege' and a 'huge responsibility' – a view shared equally by the Board, as we embark together on our bold and ambitious mission to transform Catholic education, and lives along with it.

Other key appointments to our MACS leadership team across the year included Director People & Culture, Vicki Garniss, Director Finance & IT, Anthony O'Shannessy, Director Catholic Mission & Identity, Dr Nigel Zimmermann, and Chief of Staff, Tim Udorovic.

The Board believes we are well positioned to deliver on our vision for a Catholic education system that nurtures students through our whole of child curriculum, and prepares them to positively impact the world, inspired by faith, hope and love.

The safety and wellbeing of the 120,000 students in our care is a fundamental responsibility of Catholic education and is our highest priority. We know that safety underpins each child's ability to learn and to flourish, and we continue to strengthen and embed a child-safe culture across our system.

In 2023, a cornerstone of our Flourishing Learners program was the development of a transformative Vision for Instruction. The launch in early 2024 signalled our system-wide move to explicit instruction; it will embed our fundamental goals of excellence and equity and ensure that every child is enabled to flourish, regardless of background or circumstances. This will further underpin the comprehensive resources and materials developed and rolled out to teachers in 2023, contributing to the twin objectives of greater staff wellbeing and excellence in education.

**Offering a strong connection to our faith while providing contemporary educational opportunities is at the heart of our approach.**

Catholic education in Victoria was strengthened in 2023 with the successful separation of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) from MACS. As a major undertaking in our Enriched Communities pillar, MACS worked closely with CECV to redefine the key roles played by each organisation and deliver system-wide improvements. From this enhanced platform, we can work to advance Catholic education and ensure greater collaboration and efficiencies that benefit all our school communities.

Offering a strong connection to our faith while providing contemporary educational opportunities is at the heart of our approach. In 2023, that included a complete reimagination of our Digital Ambition. Through comprehensive consultation with students, teachers, staff and families, and based on extensive research, we mapped out how we want to leverage the power of technology to support our MACS 2030 Vision with a solution that is fit for purpose. We kicked off the work to transition from legacy IT platforms in preparation for a program of works beginning in early 2024.

In response to the major milestones and work undertaken during 2023, we would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank students, parents, parish priests, and all our MACS school and other staff for their resolute effort and dedication during such a unique period in the history of Catholic education in Melbourne. Thanks also to our many stakeholders and partners for their support as we built the early foundations of our MACS2030 strategy Forming Lives to Enrich the World.

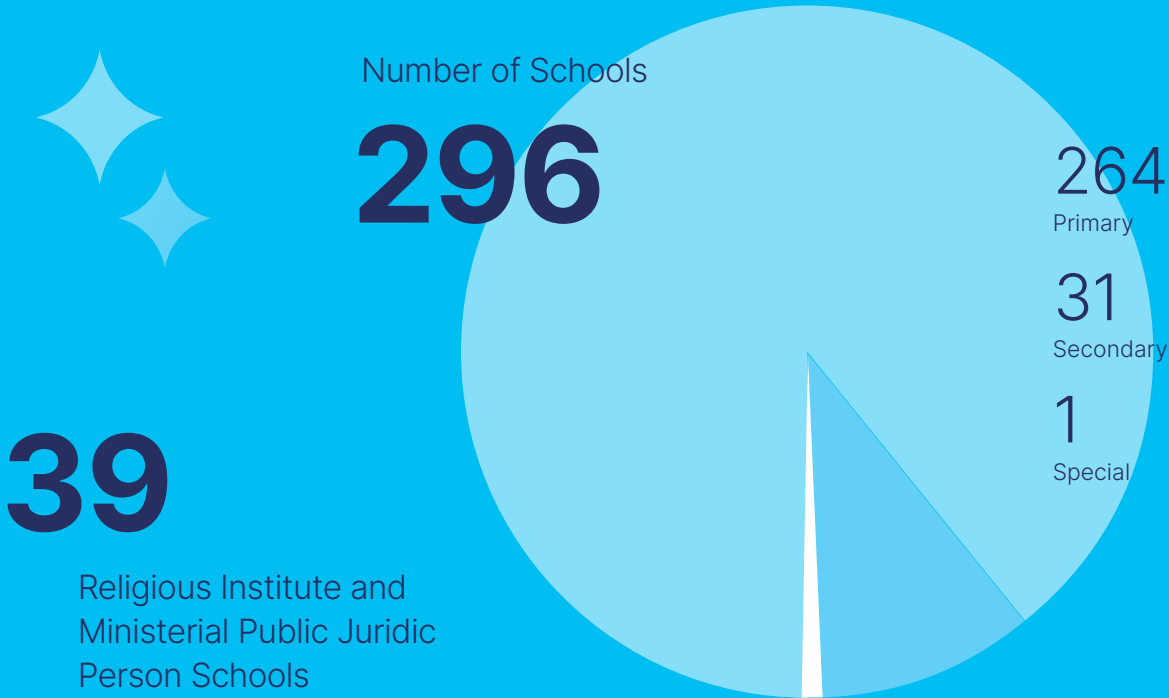
Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerard Dalbosco'.

**Gerard Dalbosco**  
Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Simons'.

**Dr Edward Simons**  
Executive Director



Number of Students

**114,399**

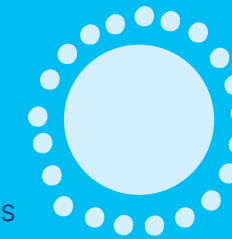
77,225 Primary      37,174 Secondary



**690**

Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Students

492 Primary      198 Secondary



**130**

First languages other than English

19,112 Primary Students      6,123 Secondary Students





# In 2023, we set out with a clear view to help each MACS community become stronger.

**It’s our role to ensure our dynamic and growing Catholic network can best serve families, communities, and the futures of our students.**

In 2023, we began with getting the fundamentals right for school and church leaders, and the families they serve. Our focus was on strengthened systems, standardised educational benchmarks, improved infrastructure – and through inspiring initiatives, to grow our people, pupils and leaders, to ensure we deliver educational excellence.

Our results reflect our ambitions for every school and student. As we set along the road to MACS 2030, our strategy, Forming Lives to Enrich the World, guides our efforts.

This report outlines our progress in 2023 against our strategy, and what we delivered through our four strategic pillars.



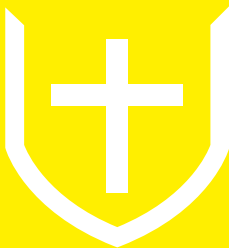
## Our MACS 2030 Strategy

### Purpose

Forming lives of faith, hope and love in the light of Jesus Christ

### Vision

Every student is inspired and enabled to flourish and enrich the world



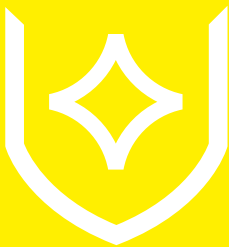
#### Inspired by Faith

To become a system of schools where students and staff grow in virtue, supported by an outstanding Religious Education curriculum that is executed with impact, in an environment that enables faith to flourish.



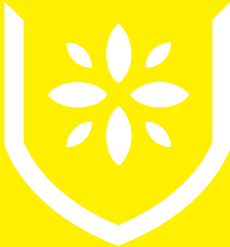
#### Flourishing Learners

To become the benchmark for excellence in teaching and learning through a coherently integrated, academically competitive and distinctly Catholic educational offering.



#### Enabled Leaders

To become the employer of choice in the Victorian education sector, and to have Australia’s pre-eminent Catholic teacher and leadership formation and training infrastructure, developed in collaboration with others.



#### Enriched Communities

To provide best-in-class support services for principals and their schools, working closely with parish priests.

# Inspired by Faith

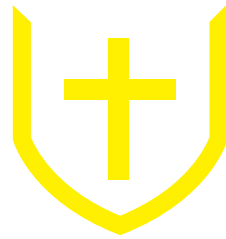
01





## From pathways to purpose

Whole-of-child education  
to inspire lives of purpose  
and faith



We're helping students discover a path, lit by faith, for lives led with purpose and impact.

Our whole-of-child education is anchored by faith, as we connect students with the Catholic values that help shape them, and the communities they'll serve.

With a strong sense of belonging and spiritual guidance, we engage them as people and citizens, Inspired by Faith, in line with our 2030 strategy.

Throughout 2023, our programs have continued to connect academic excellence, personal endeavour and community spirit through our faith framework.



# 530 Pilgrims inspired by faith at World Youth Day





# In a life-changing event for many, 2023 saw over 530 young people from across the Archdiocese of Melbourne travel to Lisbon for World Youth Day 2023.

Now in its 30th year, the invitation was extended by Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli to those aged 16-35, across the Archdiocese to join him in Portugal, in presence of Pope Francis.

Through the experience together, they returned to Melbourne strengthened in faith, and ready to share their encounter with the local Church.

"I saw the three words – recognition, illumination, joy – recurring among many of the 600 young people from our Archdiocese who recently went to WYD," said Archbishop Peter A Comensoli about the experience.

"They were illumined by the Lord's presence and filled with an overwhelming joy. It was beautiful to see."

The experience also informed work for 2024 and beyond, with the introduction of the 'Inspired to Lead' program commencing in March 2023, the Udisciple Podcast, grants, retreats and more.



**"What I want to take back to my school is that God loves us so personally and that when he gives us a gift, it's not just for us but it's for us to share with others."**

Andrea Collier, a teacher from St Theresa's Primary School in Essendon

## 525

Pilgrims travelling with the Archdiocesan Pilgrimage

## 35

Catholic Schools

## 80

Teachers and emerging leaders

## 120+

Student pilgrims







## Catholic Education Week strengthening faith

Catholic Education Week was held during 12-19 March in 2023, as part of MACS ongoing effort to help students discover lives lit by faith and led with purpose.

With the theme of ‘Forming lives of faith, hope and love in the light of Jesus Christ’, we celebrated our Catholic identity, with over 2000 students and their teachers participating in the Mass of Saint Patrick, the annual Art Show, the Concert in the Park and the Young Speakers Colloquium.

St Peter’s Cathedral live streamed the Catholic Education Week Mass for those unable to attend.



## The spirit of working together in mission

By embracing the MACS Working Together in Mission Charter and the Catholic spirit, St Francis Xavier school Principal Mary Jones and Father Tony Kerin, together with School Advisory Council Chair Chathu Da Silva, have truly united a thriving school community.

Together, they answered the call of the Charter to provide the best possible Catholic education, through teaching excellence and pastoral care.

The removal of employment contracts from his remit freed Father Tony to focus on his pastoral role, but it was in collaboration that the biggest impacts were being made.

***“By opening up to the spirit, we can often be surprised about how much better things can be than we might have planned ourselves.***

***“Everybody improves, everybody gains, because the expertise in the school is able to be used in the parish and vice versa.”***



## My Faith Diary encouraging faith formation

The My Faith Dairy 2024 initiative launched in 2023 to creatively enhance faith formation by connecting students to each week’s Sunday liturgy in age-appropriate ways.

As a visible expression of Catholic identity, it was designed to engage families in faith-bonding at home through conversations and deepened understanding of the Catholic faith in their sacramental preparation.

A message from Archbishop Peter A Comensoli welcomed all readers to take encouragement from the knowledge that they are created and loved by God and take courage and hope from the words of Jesus that “the kingdom of God belongs to them” (Luke 18:16).

Based on initial success of the project, MACS plans to continue the initiative into 2024.

## Driving excellence in Religious Education

Professor John Haldane continued work on the Religious Education Curriculum Review in 2023, along with supporting broader strategic efforts by MACS to deliver RE excellence.

At the request of the Archbishop Peter A Comensoli, Prof Haldane led a review into Catholic education, in collaboration with others.

More than 150 MACS leaders and teachers, and 40 clergy took part in virtual sessions with Prof Haldane to provide feedback and ask questions about the report.

In Nov 2023, Archbishop Comensoli accepted the extensive Review of Religious Education Curriculum report. A Reference Group will oversee next steps in development of the RE Curriculum.

MACS made a commitment to support Principals, RE Leaders and RE Teachers as work gets underway in developing the curriculum, based on recommendations of the report.

## Faith leadership through emersion

Delving into the beginnings of Christianity in ancient Rome and following its journey through the Middle Ages, The Crusades, the Renaissance and the Reformation were all part of an immersive faith leadership experience in 2023.

As one of many Catholic leadership formation opportunities, we continued to provide educators and aspiring leaders with a deeper knowledge of how religion and politics have been entangled in Western history, and shaped law and democracy.

Our aim is to offer Australia’s pre-eminent Catholic leadership formation and training infrastructure, through unique and empowering programs, like those delivered in 2023, including the:

- Religious leadership formation program, which focused on the missionary spirit of Australia’s first saint, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop in a 5-day SA pilgrimage
- ACU student leaders program, which took Year 11 Catholic school leaders to Rome and London for a 3-week immersion in the Catholic tradition.







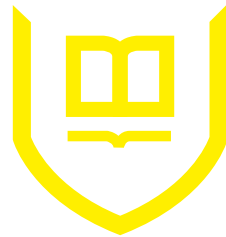
# Flourishing Learners

02



## From curiosity to development

Helping our schools capture  
the minds and spirit of  
today's learners



We're growing minds and futures by embedding  
teaching excellence at every MACS school.

Our ambition for Flourishing Learners under our  
2030 strategy is to help each child walk a path  
of great meaning, that enables them to shine.

Our whole child curriculum sets our teaching  
framework apart – and in 2023, we benchmarked  
our efforts alongside a transformative program for  
truly preparing MACS students through enriched  
education programs.



# A transformative vision for teaching and learning





Years of global research on how students learn best, together with studies and analysis of the most successful teaching methods at our own schools have been part of a transformative vision for MACS education.



Work undertaken in 2023 set out to ensure our Vision for Instruction would benefit all MACS students through consistency in teaching practices, improved resource allocation, networks to inform best practice, and by setting a foundation for continuous improvement.

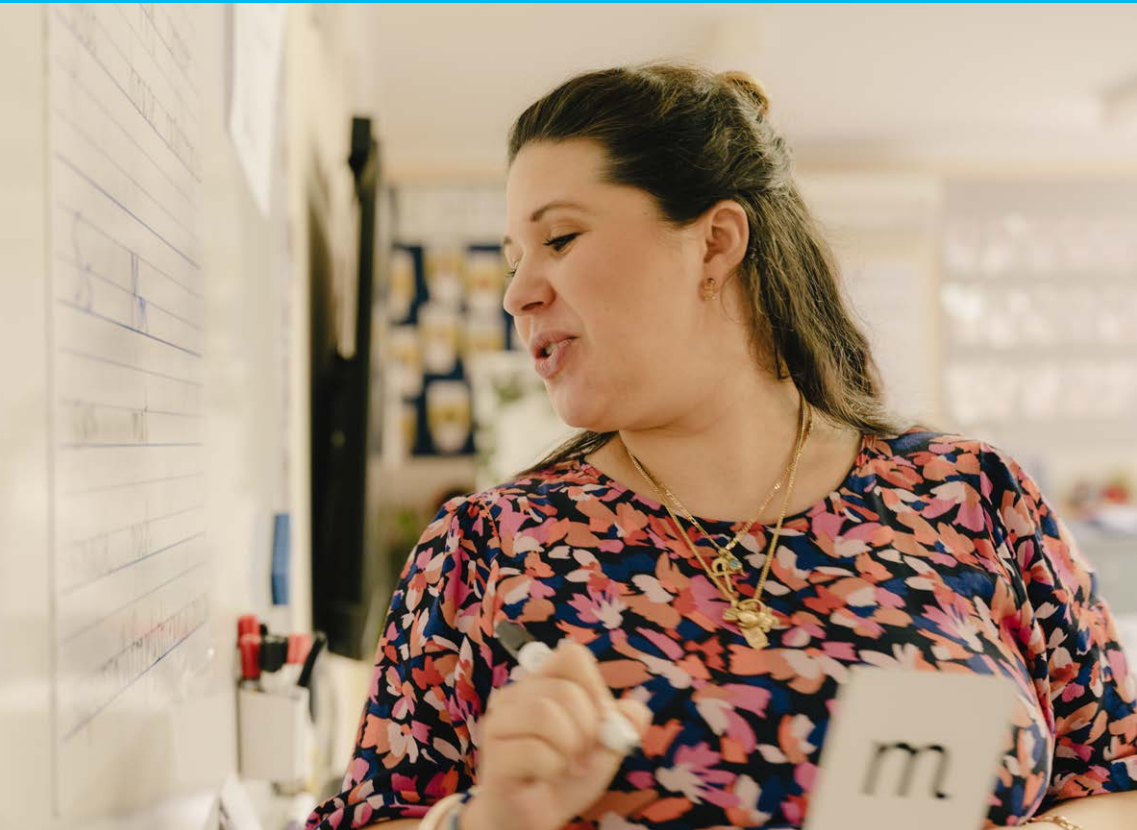
The Vision for Instruction identifies twin fundamental goals of excellence and equity, as a key part of our MACS 2030 strategy, to enable every child to flourish and enrich the world, regardless of background or circumstances.

The commitment to delivering educational excellence for all our students will significantly change how reading, writing and mathematics are taught, and will be based on explicit instruction methods, which is shown to be the most successful.

The Vision for Instruction Position Statement is the outcome of many months of work involving teachers, leaders and educators across the Archdiocese and around the world. It was circulated for consultation to MACS schools in November 2023, prior to its release in 2024.

Contributors

- Dr Jennifer Buckingham
- OAM, Director of Strategy and Senior Research Fellow at MultiLit, and the Five from Five project
- Elena Douglas, CEO of Knowledge Society
- Dr Ben Jensen, CEO Learning First
- Katie Roberts-Hull, CEO Think Forward Educators
- Dr Mary Ryan, Executive Dean Education, Australian Catholic University (ACU)
- Professor Pamela Snow, La Trobe University
- Professor Dylan Wiliam, Emeritus Professor of Educational Assessment at University College
- MACS Flourishing Learners Principal Teacher Reference Group and MACS staff
- Education, Strategy and Policy Board Committee (ESP)



# Maths resources that add up to better results

A push to elevate maths performance at all MACS schools was launched in 2023 to enhance teaching and learning outcomes, that add up to better results for all.

The Maths Uplift initiative included expert consultation and the delivery of new comprehensive teaching and learning programs, including:

## 1. Building stronger foundations for early learners

A comprehensive program of F-2 Mathematics resources and professional learning support to educators, in recognition that foundation years learning is critical to overall academic success. A new MACS-Ochre website was launched on 16 October 2023, releasing the first suite of curriculum and on-demand professional resources, designed for F-2 Mathematics Term 1 and 2, 2024. *Partners: Ochre Education and Teach Well.*

## 2. Enabling teachers to make an impact

Ongoing professional evidence-based learning for leaders is a key part of MACS Maths Uplift success – with the first Teaching for Impact in Mathematics (TIMs) series being launched in February 2024.

## 3. Mastery in Mathematics 7-8 project

Our Mastery in Mathematics initiative offers a suite of curriculum, teaching and learning resources, specifically tailored for Year 7-8 Mathematics. A fully scoped and sequenced curriculum for years F-Year 8 is under development and set for release by end of 2024. *Partners: National Catholic Education Commission and other Catholic dioceses*

“System wide access to high quality, rigorous and well sequenced lessons gives an incredible foundation to hone in on another high impact lever, which is teacher improvement.”

PTRG member



The system-wide Maths Uplift initiative comes on the back of research late in 2022, which revealed the majority of MACS teachers wanted more high quality, evidence-based resources to help deliver the F-10 Victorian Curriculum, to ensure the best results for students.

Over 80% said they mostly created units of work and lesson plans themselves, but would like access to comprehensive units of work, instructional materials, texts, lesson samples and quality assessment tasks.

A review of NAPLAN data for 2023 further reinforced the need for improvement in numeracy in MACS primary schools, particularly in Year 3 and Year 5.

The Maths Uplift project was presented to the Flourishing Learners Principal Teacher Reference Group (FL PTRG) in September 2023, and was met with positive feedback from the group.



# New academic benchmarks set for MACS schools

In a bid to deliver the highest academic and wellbeing standards at all MACS schools, new standardised performance tools were implemented across our network in 2023.

It followed a decision in 2022, to ensure The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) would be in use at all MACS schools by 2024.

The ACER PAT assessments provide for teaching excellence, with standardised benchmarked assessment for Years 2-10 – with tracking against Australian year-level norms.

The assessment also allows MACS to target resources more effectively, to support teacher efficacy and student achievement.

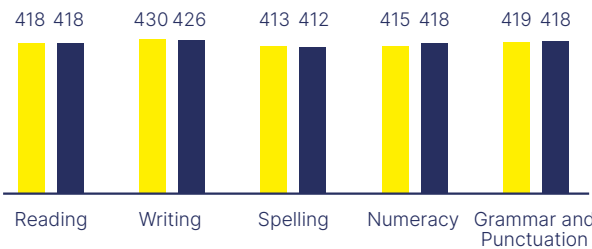
With 92% of MACS Schools already holding an active ACER account, major progress was made in 2023 – with 97% of schools participating in PAT assessments in Maths and English.

## Goals and objectives

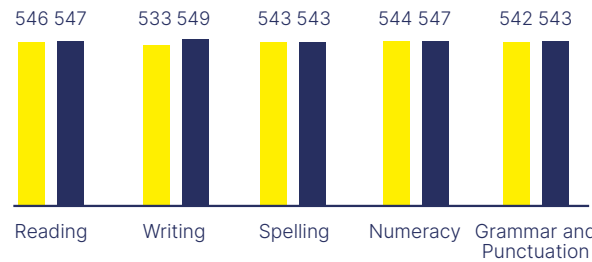
- 1. Improved student outcomes
  - Compared to ACER Australian Norms
  - Improved Maths and Literacy results
- 2. Improvement in teacher assessment practice
  - Increase in alignment and consistency of assessment across all MACS schools
  - Increased teacher professional development participation
- 3. Improved explicit teaching using formative data

## NAPLAN Mean Scale Score MACS and state wide comparisons

### Year 3



### Year 5

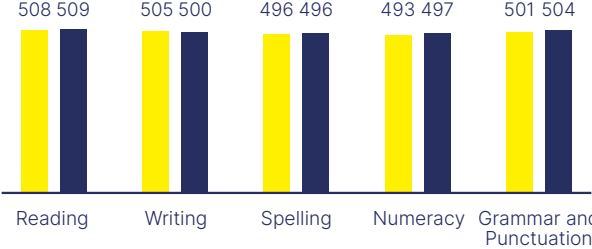


### Year 7

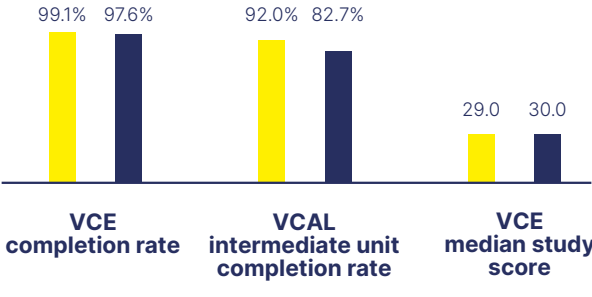
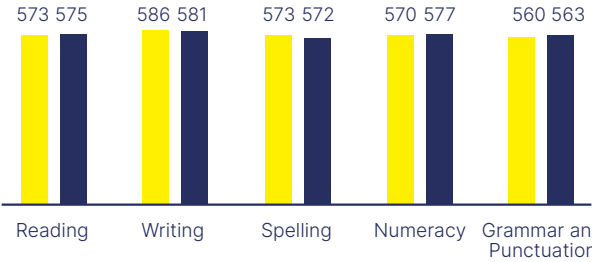


MACS State wide

### Year 9



### Year 10







# Embracing emerging digital technologies

**MACS made news headlines for encouraging engagement with AI tools for teaching and assessment at a time when the Victorian Education Department placed a temporary ban on its use at state schools.**

MACS executive leadership made an early call in 2023 not to block or ban ChatGPT or other large language models, but instead encouraged teachers to safely lean in and learn.

The decision was the result of work undertaken by MACS Learning Technologies to establish a ‘Safety First, Learning Always’ position on the use of emerging AI technologies.

It aligned with work by the Vatican, United Nations and other NGOs over the past five years, to ensure AI is developed responsibly – to create a future where “digital innovation and technological progress serve human genius and creativity and not their gradual replacement” (Rome Call, 2020).

The position was further affirmed late last year with the release of the federal government’s Australian Framework for Generative Artificial Intelligence in Schools by Minister for Education Jason Clare.

MACS also engaged students on its eSafety policy by setting up student reference groups in 2023, with students considering the impact of generative artificial intelligence (AI) on learning.

Advice and recommendations were collated into new resources shared with all schools.

# STEM Making a difference for more learners

**An annual highlight, the STEM MAD National Showcase once again celebrated STEM excellence in Catholic education, exploring the theme of Making A Difference (MAD) in the world in 2023.**

Sponsored by Catholic Network Australia and hosted by MACS, this year’s event saw 240 students from 14 dioceses Australia-wide gather in Melbourne – where the nation’s best Catholic primary and secondary student teams showcased innovative projects to other students and the community.

STEM MAD was first launched by MACS in 2018 and expanded nationally with our online awards programs in 2021 and the Showcase program in 2022.

**Major learning outcomes from the initiative have included:**

**More girls** with STEM career aspirations, and increases in girls continuing with the STEM disciplines into senior years

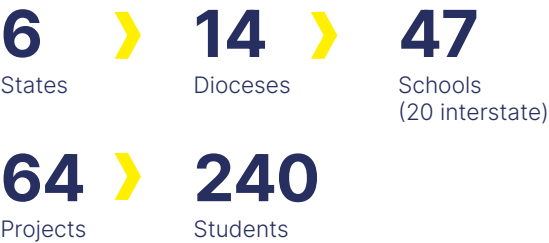
**Increased understanding** of science and maths concepts – and a willingness to pursue learning in these areas.

**Improved learning** experiences for students needing extension opportunities, including gifted and neuro-diverse students

**“Each one of the projects is designed to help others, and to help the natural world and the environment – we’ve got hundreds of students answering the call Pope Francis gave to make a difference.”**

MACS Executive Director Dr Edward Simons

## STEM (MAD) Australia-wide









# Celebrating success: Our award winners

MACS continues to help students find what makes them shine, by opening doors to inspiration, and rewarding results.

Through innovative learning, academic endeavour, competitive spirit, technological exploration, hands on skills and personal passion – we're giving every child the chance to flourish.

Together, our schools and teams also help students to find purpose and passion, to impact their community, and the whole world around them.

The results in 2023 were remarkable outcomes for schools and students across all our learning disciplines.



St Monica's College, Epping – Record-breaking SACCSS Athletics Champions.

## Academic

### Premier's VCE Honour roll – Top all-round VCE achievers

#### Nathanial Louey

Mazenod College, Mulgrave

Awarded for study scores of 46 or higher in at least five VCE studies, in 2022.

### Australian Teacher Aide of the Year Awards

**Schools: MacKillop Catholic Regional College, Werribee; Nazareth College, Noble Park North**

Education support staff from MACS schools were recognised in the 2023 Australian Teacher Aide of the Year Awards. The learning support officer (LSO) team at MacKillop Catholic Regional College was a finalist, while the Nazareth College Learning Diversity team LSOs were highly commended.

## Arts

### Top Arts 2023, National Gallery of Victoria's Ian Potter Centre

#### Amy Seymour

St Francis Catholic College, Melton  
Selected for exhibition, for extraordinary folio work and outstanding results in VCE Art/Studio Arts.

### Christian Media and Arts Australia – People's Choice Award

#### M22 (band)

Padua College, Mornington  
Awarded to Yr12 students Siala Maelasi, Alannah Gouvas, Kelly Godfrey and 2022 graduate Jordan Gioskos.

### Society of the Holy Childhood drawing competition

#### Peter, Yr 4

Galilee Regional Catholic PS, South Melbourne

Awarded Australia-wide winner. Entries from children around the world will be presented in a book to Pope Francis.

## Vocation

### Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) award

#### Hayley Dupas

Padua College, Mornington

Awarded for outstanding completion of her school-based apprenticeship/traineeship.

## Citizenry

### Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize

#### Devansh Attrey

Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, Braybrook

Awarded selection to join a trip to Türkiye to retrace the steps of the Anzacs, from entries of Victorian students years 9-12.

### School Volunteer of the Year

#### St Therese's School, Essendon

The ResourceSmart School Award was awarded to the Parental Environmental Action Committee at St Therese's School, which was first started by a group of dads who instigated new sustainability practices at the school and help raise awareness of environmental issues.

## Environment

### 2023 Learning Environments Australasia Awards

#### Ethan Ajeesh and Gurmaan Singh

Avila College, Mount Waverley; St Gabriel's School, Reservoir  
Ballygriffin, the senior learning centre at Avila College, Mount Waverley, was the overall winner of the Victorian / Tasmanian chapter of the awards, and also won the award for new building/s or facilities (small). St Gabriel's School, Reservoir, won the award for modernisation (small) with its new learning spaces for contemporary learners.

### Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria Tidy Towns and Cities Sustainability Award

#### St Anne's School, Sunbury

St Anne's School Pollinator's Corridor project has won a Sustainability Award for a commitment to increasing local biodiversity.

### Victorian Schools Garden Program Awards

**Resurrection School, Keysborough; St Mark's School, Dingley; St Paul Apostle North School, Endeavour Hills; St Louis de Montfort's School, Aspendale; Bethany Catholic Primary School, Werribee North**

The VSGP Awards recognise the gardening achievements of students and school communities. In 2023, we won Best Edible Garden Awards at Resurrection School, St Mary's and St Paul Apostle North. Regional awards went to St Louis de Montfort's and Bethany Catholic PS.

## Innovation

### Global Innovator of the Year Awards

#### Ethan Ajeesh and Gurmaan Singh

St Monica's College, Epping

Honourable mention 2nd place in the global competition with 40K entries, for their social enterprise app Food Support.

### National Kids in Space champions

#### Our Lady of Good Counsel School, Deepdene

Year 6 students were joint winners of the national final of The Andy Thomas Space Foundation 'Kids in Space' program – for a project on growing healthy food in space, in low or zero gravity environment.

## Sports

### School Sport Australia's Cross-Country Championships

#### Andi Mole

St Francis de Sales Catholic PS, Lynbrook

Placed Second nationally at the Australian cross-country championships, after success at state level.

### State Soccer and AFL champions

**St Patrick's School, Geelong West; Holy Family School, Mount Waverley; Our Lady Star of the Sea School**

The Year 6 St Patrick's School girls team won the soccer state championship for the second consecutive. In boys soccer, the Holy Family School team scored 30 goals and conceded just seven to win. Our Lady Star of the Sea School's team of Year 5 and 6 students won 17 matches in a row to clinch the AFL championship.

### Record-breaking SACCSS Athletics Champions

#### St Monica's College, Epping

For the first time in the event's 40 years, St Monica's College, won all individual age group championships, and all aggregate boys and girls awards. St Monica's College also won the Division 1 Senior Boys titles in basketball, football and Australian Rules: the first time in the history of SACCSS that a college has held all three titles concurrently.





## A matter of the heart

**From horrors in Afghanistan at the hands of the Taliban, a small 12 year old boy and his family dreamt of safety.**

With help of Sacred Heart School in Fitzroy, Hewad's family was able to find a home, work and school community to settle in – to make that dream a reality.

"When I saw the trams, it was like a future world ... and when I saw the school, everyone is smiling and happy and I told my dad, I want to join that school," Hewad said.

Principal Matthew Shawcross said it was not only matters of the head but matters of the heart that got his team out of bed each morning, to change lives.

"I think the reason that kids love coming to this school, they would say, is that we live our vision – to be a united community of faith and learning, where love, hope and welcome flourish."

## A new life success

**Arriving as a refugee from war-torn Syria in 2014, Saad's life changed when given a scholarship to Catholic Regional College Sydenham.**

In just 2 years, he went from not speaking English to becoming school Dux with an ATAR of 96.65.

Today, he is a TEDx Speaker, Humanitarian Worker, Messenger of Peace Award recipient, Bachelor of Biomedicine graduate – and in 2023

he graduated with a Doctor of Medicine from the University of Melbourne.

"I was overwhelmed and so pleased to accept the scholarship. It was actually a really amazing experience. You see other perspectives and learn so much from the Catholic faith."

"I'm really grateful for being given the opportunity. Despite all the difficulties, I was given a new life. I really wish I can pay it back one day."



## Community hub changing lives

**Helping children thrive goes well beyond the school gate at St Anthony's Noble Park, where 91% of students speak English as a second language (ESL).**

Breakfast club three times a week nourishes about 70 children to ensure they can participate fully in class, undistracted by hunger.

Support also extends to their families, and the wider community, through a Community Hub initiative, backed by local businesses, volunteers and an RTO.

Mothers can access language lessons, driving lessons, a playgroup, computer lessons, and health services through Monash Health – to improve life and participation as part of the school community.

One mother using the Hub found a pathway to employment. She is now Finance Manager at the school.







# Teachers co-learning expands language program

**An innovative effort to expand language programs across MACS primary schools has seen significant growth in 2023.**

Established to address language teacher shortages, the Teachers as Co-Learners initiative has been designed for teachers to learn and teach alongside students, with a focus on high-frequency exposure to increase language proficiency.

The Teachers as Co-Learners initiative was first launched in 2017 with just 2 schools enrolled at the time. It has since expanded to 72 schools, with 48 new schools adopting the model in the past two years alone, and professional training sessions to support delivery of Auslan, French, Italian and Indonesian.





# A focus on diverse learning

We serve a dynamic student population across our schools network, with a focus on responsive education to meet the needs of every child.

Our schools have a rich cultural tapestry, including many children who speak English as a second language, and come from all manner of family backgrounds. Our Learning Diversity teams help kids with differing learning needs that may result from language, health, behavioural and cognitive differences. MACS schools provide a range of programs and approaches to allow students, and learning, to thrive.



**School**  
Christ the King Primary School, Braybrook

**No students**  
235

**Languages spoken**  
16

## Supporting new arrivals and English language learners

**In 2023, we continued to expand the capacity of staff to teach English to new arrivals with English as an Additional Language (ESL).**

Starting with the unique stories of each child, MACS schools undertook an audit to clearly understand the needs of students. We implemented high quality universal or tier 1 ESL rich teaching practices.

Staff capability was built through professional learning programs such as Teaching Young Children English in Multicultural Contexts (TYCEMC). Teachers learnt how to scaffold language learning, with better understanding of text types and planning for ESL learners.



**School**  
St Mary's Primary School, Thornbury

**No students**  
190

## Building culturally safe schools for all indigenous students

**Work was undertaken at St Mary's to ensure it could best provide for the unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, in line with Child Safety Standard 1 (CSS1).**

An extensive cultural perspectives program helped build staff understanding of first nation's history and build their capacity to continue the journey to becoming a Fire Carrier school.

An art project was also brokered, with a local indigenous artist to create a mosaic telling the local story of welcoming all people to the school, creation, as well as the school. It incorporated symbols from the local community, Wurundjeri spirituality and Catholic faith.



# Shining a light on even safer schools and thriving kids

Just as the sanctity of each person rests at the heart of the gospel and the mission of Jesus, our schools place child safety and wellbeing at the centre.



**The safety and wellbeing of each child is at the heart of everything we do at MACS, with the knowledge that safety and certainty underpins each child's ability to learn – and thrive.**

In 2023, we shone a spotlight on child safety, with a raft of new measures in place to ensure thriving school environments, with the safety and wellbeing of each child at the heart of all MACS schools.

Recognising it is a shared responsibility of students, educators, families, and school communities, our work began with strengthening leadership to drive our efforts forward.

We engaged best in class advisers to assess the current strengths and gaps, and work to strengthen system-wide improvements for MACS schools.

In 2023, we renewed our Child Safety and Wellbeing policy, Bullying Prevention policy, and implemented a new Bullying Prevention toolkit.

Safety matters relating to child absences were addressed, and new MACS protect protocols relating to teachers and other staff were also implemented.

Other key work for the year included:

- A new partnership with Mackillop Family Services in relation to sexual safety education program, Power To Kids, in 2024 and beyond (Child Safety Standard 3)
- Refreshed Child Information Sharing Scheme, working with Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (now the Victorian Catholic Education Authority – VCEA)
- Mandatory Reporting module for adult survivors of sexual abuse.

# Enabled Leaders

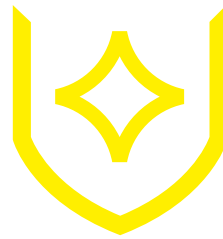
03





## From lessons to leading

Creating pathways to attract and grow educators and leaders



We recognise our investment in great educators is an investment in great futures for our students and schools.

With the power to inspire and shape the outlook of every child, creating Enabled Leaders is pivotal to our 2030 strategy and goals.

We continue to nurture growth and leadership opportunities – and in 2023, we looked to further reward and celebrate talent, in an effort to become the chosen employer of Victoria's most inspired teachers and school leaders.



## The face of Australia's Best Teacher campaign

Photograph by: Josie Hayden, Herald-Sun





When 50 of Australia’s Best Teachers were announced on May 6 in the Herald-Sun Sunday magazine, it was a MACS primary school teacher who featured prominently on the cover.

## MACS teachers recognised among Australia’s best

- Imogen McKillop, St Peter’s Primary School, Bentleigh East
- Claudia Stow, Emmaus College in Vermont South
- Sarah Reed, St Aloysius Primary School, Queenscliff
- Jarryd Bradford, St Gabriel’s Primary School in Reservoir

**110**  
MACS teachers  
nominated from

**30**  
MACS schools

Feature Story

MACS teachers also received significant coverage throughout the campaign, which looked to find Australia’s most inspirational and innovative teachers changing the way we view the role of educators, as voted by parents, students, and colleagues.

Partner: NewsCorp Australia







# Pathway to Principal

A total of 17 school leaders accepted substantive principal and deputy principal roles having completed MACS 2023 Pathway to Principalship program.

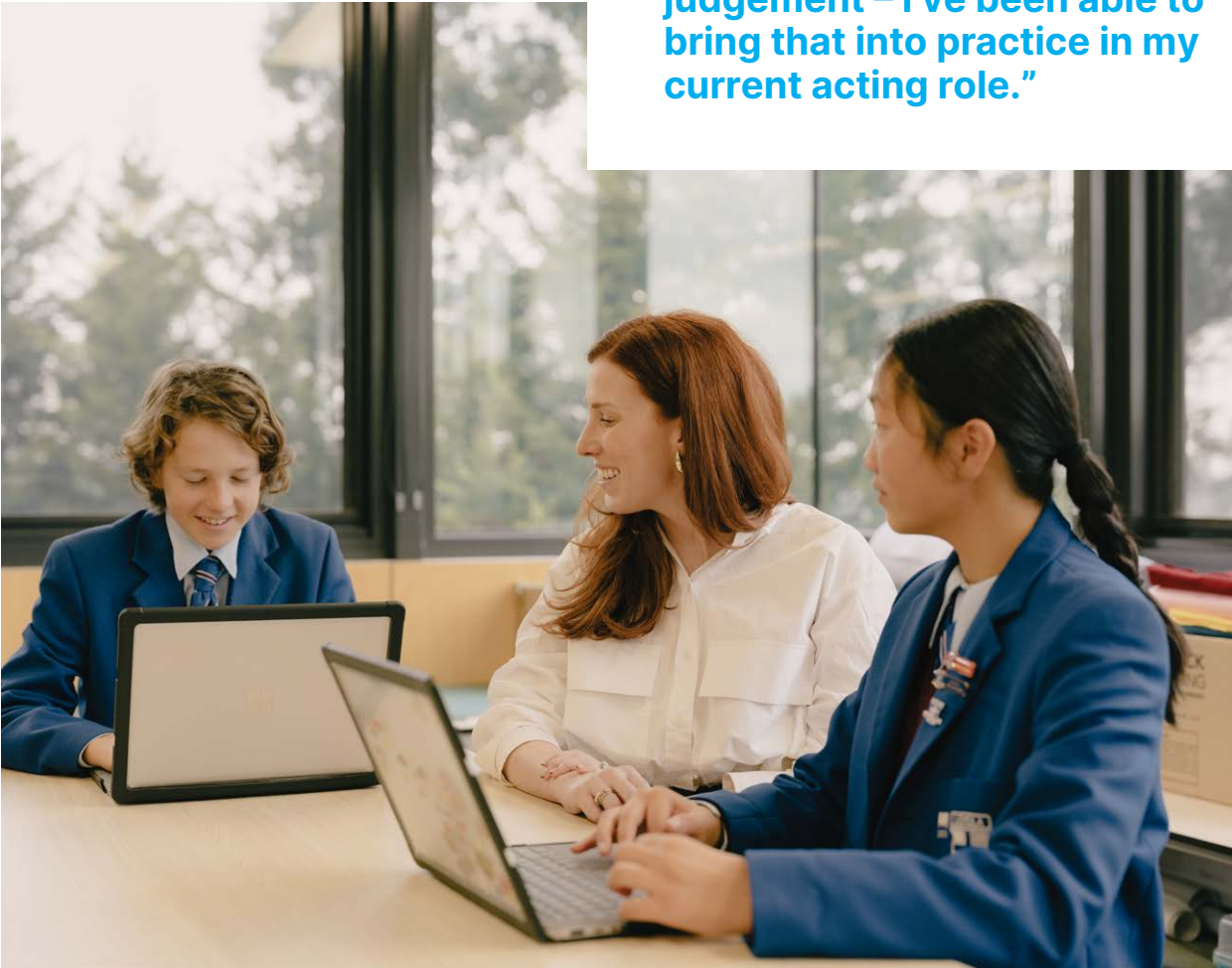
Established to ensure the quality of Catholic education across the Archdiocese through development of high-potential leaders, the program explores the way a Catholic principal leads a whole school community to thrive, as well as the readiness of individuals for the role.

In 2023, MACS established selection criteria, curriculum plans, assessments, resources and gathered participant feedback, to set out Year 2 program initiatives, such as work shadowing.

The program had a 98% attendance and engagement rate, with 97% of participants providing feedback.



“I have learned new skills to become a better leader – to listen, reflect and make good judgement – I’ve been able to bring that into practice in my current acting role.”



# Leadership performance programs

We’re shaping great staff to lead great schools, with programs that build system-wide capability, and inspired leadership at our schools. In 2023, the result was 495 leaders supported through our development programs:







# Increasing influence of Women in Leadership

**MACS’ research project into Women in Leadership (WIL) in Catholic education launched on International Women’s Day in March 2023, with results to be released exactly a year later on the same day of celebration.**

The research looked into women’s aspiration and participation in senior leadership in Catholic education, in recognition that women made up 81% of MACS workforce, and 51% of school Principal roles.

The hope of the WIL Research Project has been to increase the number of women fulfilling leadership roles, through assessment of the enablers, opportunities, and challenges for female leaders.

The report makes 10 recommendations to achieve greater diversity and an abundance of high-quality leaders in Catholic education into the future. It will be released on International Women’s Day 2024, and positions MACS to achieve its 2030 ambition to be the employer of choice in Victorian education.

# Fanning the flames for all MACS schools

**Participation in MACS Fanning the Flames religious education (RE) professional development program more than doubled in 2023.**

RE teachers and leaders are considered torchbearers who keep the flame of Catholic faith burning in schools.

Primary and Secondary RE Leaders and RE Teachers with 0-3 years’ experience had the opportunity to attend four, 50-minute formation sessions, focused on Art in the RE classroom, Bibliodrama, Creating Liturgical Spaces and Liturgical Music.



# Teaching accomplishment

Our educators are guiding academic excellence at our schools. In 2023, we were recognised among the best of the best.



**2023 Most Influential Educator**  
**Kylie Power**  
Deputy Principal, Iona College Geelong, Charlemont

Awarded by The Educator for instigating a whole-school approach to wellbeing using current science and embedding it into the school culture and community.



**Best Educators in Australia – Hot List**  
**Maria Sabo**  
Area Leader – Languages, Emmaus College, Vermont South

Awarded by The Educator for high achievement in Australia’s education industry.



**Best Educators in Australia – Hot List**  
**Rachael Patrick**  
Head of Learning – Humanities and Commerce Faculty, Loyola College, Watsonia

Awarded by The Educator for high achievement in Australia’s education industry.



**Best in Class (News Corp)**  
**Sarah Reed**  
Teacher, St Aloysius’ School, Queenscliff

Awarded by the Herald Sun as part of News Corp’s ‘Best in Class’ campaign, for a marine life and conservation program that teaches her students about ocean sustainability.



**Bell Shakespeare National Teacher Mentorship**  
**Daryl Marmion**  
Teacher, St Mary’s School, Williamstown

Recipient of 2024 National Teacher Mentorship from the Bell Shakespeare company, to receive specialist training in Sydney and ongoing support and mentoring for one year.









# Enriched Communities

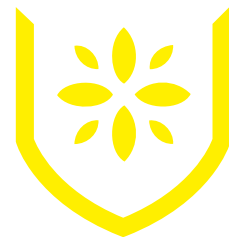
04





# From linked to connected

Connecting our  
schools network  
to better serve our  
communities



We've become a dynamic Catholic schools system under MACS, to build on our collective strengths and achieve more together.

With centralised support services, we're enabling our schools to focus on education, and the unique needs of students and families within our Enriched Communities, as part of our 2030 outlook.

We continue to build our system architecture – and in 2023, MACS further strengthened our networks, through investment, operational changes, by listening, and by creating change for an even brighter future.

**Growing with our Catholic school communities**

To make each MACS school stronger, we're investing across our network to meet the needs of our growing and changing school populations.

After a decade of significant transformation in Melbourne's educational demographics, we've set priorities and projects to grow alongside our communities.

By investing in new schools, upgrading infrastructure, and delivering change through growth corridors, we're serving the demands for Catholic education today, and into the future.

*Major Partners: Victorian Government, Australian Government, Catholic Development Fund*

*Partners: ClarkeHopkinsClarke Architect, Crosier Scott Architect, Law Architects, Newpol Construction, Commercial Industrial Construction Group (CICG), Magellan Projects*

**\$277m kicks  
off major  
schools network  
improvements**





## An ambitious capital works program was delivered in 2023, as we began efforts to realise major infrastructure improvements across our entire schools network.

At total of \$277m was invested at 57 schools, including the delivery of two new schools, with a \$23m second campus for Marymede Catholic College in Doreen, and \$6.9m development of St Teresa of Kolkata Catholic Primary School at Tarneit North.

Under the MACS Capital Plan 2030, Vision for Instruction and Forms Follow Faith, a total of 57 schools had learning spaces improved during 2023 – with priority placed on schools that needed it most.

Continued investment by MACS will now also be informed by the MACS School Provision Plan and Capital Plan, following Board approval.

MACS has identified a need for up to 38 new parish primary schools and 15 new secondary colleges in growing suburbs across the Archdiocese.

In 2023, we made the tough decision to close four small schools: St Bridget's Catholic Primary, Balwyn North; St John's Primary, Clifton Hill; St Joseph's Primary, Black Rock; and St Mary Magdalen's Parish School, Chadstone.



# \$64m + \$213m = \$277m

government funded

community funded

invested

# 18+39=57

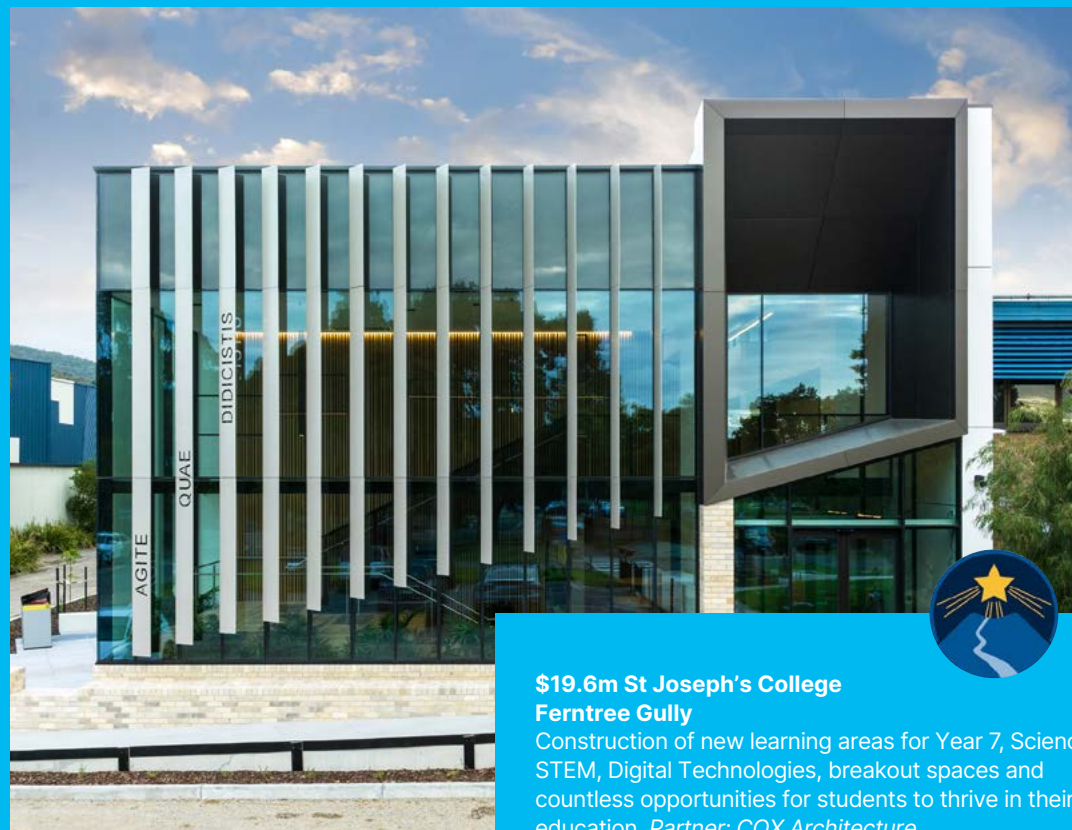
secondary colleges

primary schools

schools improved

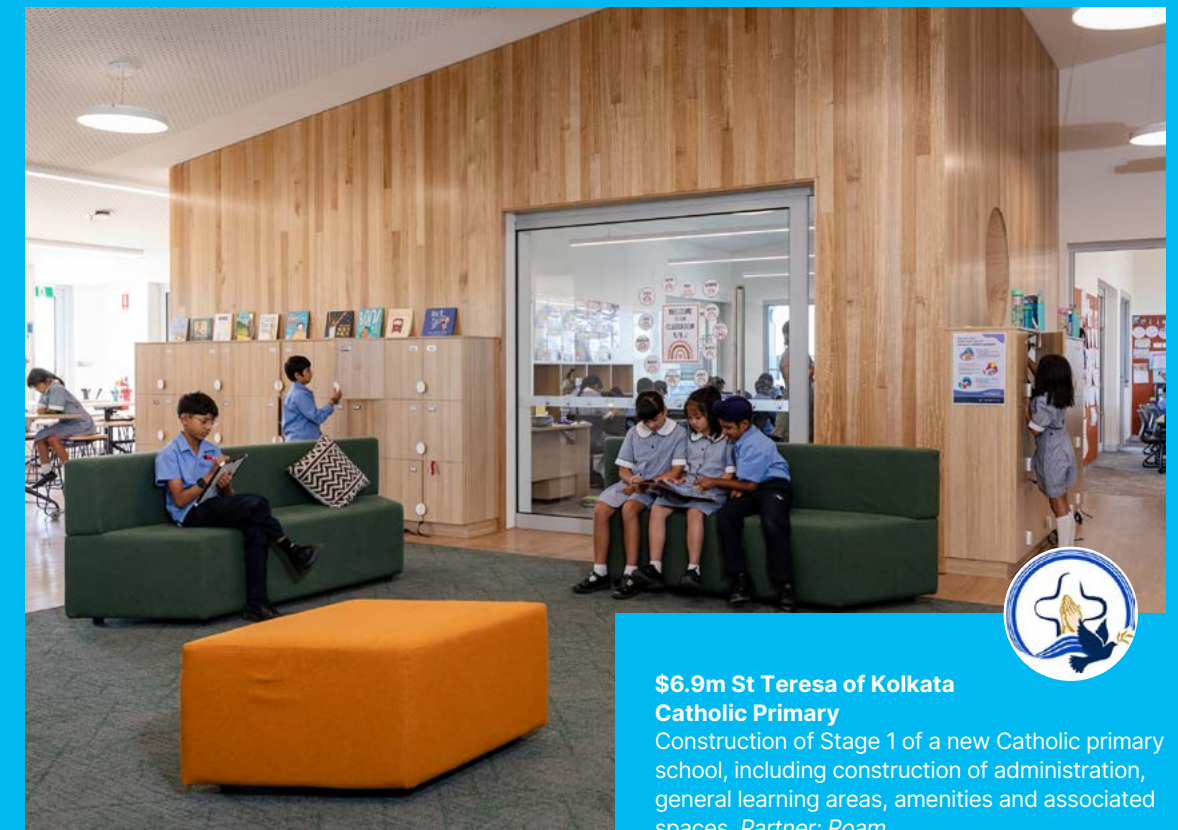
# \$1.5b

planned investment 2023 -2030



### \$19.6m St Joseph's College Ferntree Gully

Construction of new learning areas for Year 7, Science, STEM, Digital Technologies, breakout spaces and countless opportunities for students to thrive in their education. *Partner: COX Architecture*



### \$6.9m St Teresa of Kolkata Catholic Primary

Construction of Stage 1 of a new Catholic primary school, including construction of administration, general learning areas, amenities and associated spaces. *Partner: Roam*







## Major projects at a glance

New campus	St Francis Catholic College, Cobblebank
Prep renewal	St Thomas More School, Mount Eliza
New STEM Centre	Catholic Regional College St Albans
Performing arts centre	Galilee Regional Catholic Primary School, South Melbourne
New 2-storey Food tech and classrooms	John Paul College, Frankston
Learning and amenities upgrade	Mazenod College, Mulgrave
Food tech and STEM upgrades	Nazareth College, Noble Park North
Modular building	Penola College, Broadmeadows
Learning and amenities upgrade	Simonds Catholic College, Melbourne West
Learning and amenities upgrade	St Agnes' School, Highett
Learning and amenities upgrade	St Ambrose's School, Woodend
Classroom and admin upgrades	St Patrick's School, Murrumbeena
New campus	Marymede Catholic College, Doreen
Middleschool upgrades	St Jude's School, Langwarrin
New Prayer garden and amenities	St Louis de Montfort's School, Aspendale
General learning and amenities upgrades	St Mary's College, Seymour
New multi-level extension	St Michael's School, North Melbourne

## Feeding community spirit through service



**An inspiring partnership between MACS and FareShare, helped serve 530K meals to Australians in need during 2023.**

MACS staff volunteered to help pack meals for the non-profit organisation FareShare – which took up residence at the MACS Catholic Leadership Centre (CLC) while its premises were being renovated.

Over 18 Friday afternoons, 138 of our MACS staff packed a total of 11,236 meals, and by hosting FareShare at CLC since May 2023, we helped them to deliver hundreds of thousands of meals over the year.

The partnership forms part of our ongoing MACS effort to drive meaningful impacts for community through CLC, and our broader community outreach efforts.



## MACS Biggest Thanks heard across Melbourne

**A big shout out to MACS teachers echoed across Melbourne all summer 2023/24 as our Biggest Thanks campaign hit social platforms, billboards and TV and cinema screens.**

The heartfelt thanks of 700 students were shared on OOH billboards across Melbourne, and in a series of TV commercials.

The campaign drove strong MACS education brand awareness, with high visibility platforms capturing the hearts and minds of millions of viewers.

## Have Your Say driving positive change

**MACS annual 'Have Your Say' office staff engagement survey revealed results consistent with 2022, at a time of major transition.**

Despite the many changes resulting from the separation of the MACS from the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, overall engagement scores remained stable.

The results included the greatest movement from 'Agree' to 'Strongly agree' in response to the prompt 'I am proud to work at MACS' which was up 4% compared to the previous year.

## Digitisation for more efficient onboarding

**At the start of each year, MACS processes about 2600 new starter requests and 3800 transfers of staff between schools.**

Previously a manual paper-based system, requiring up to 10 forms to be completed per staff member, the entire system was digitised in time for the 2023 school year.

MACS launched its Payroll Improvement Program in March 2022 in preparation for the 2023 school year with simpler, faster, more accurate onboarding and payroll processes for school staff.





# Towards 2030

**As we move towards the ambitions of our MACS 2030 Strategy, we will continue, each year, to ensure we can deliver on our promise of Forming Lives to Enrich the World.**

Inspired by Faith, and focused on Flourishing Learners, Enabled leaders and Enriched communities, the four pillars of our strategy will set our uniquely Catholic education and schools apart.

Delivering more than education, our schools will shape tomorrow – through each student, and the difference they'll make, through lives of faith and purpose.

From setting the foundations for excellence in 2023, we're now focused on unlocking the potential of our renewed spirit and system, together as MACS.









First published August 2024

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Schools 2024

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