



Vision for Leadership

Enabled Leaders position statement

*Impactful leadership
begins with shared beliefs*



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

Acknowledgement of Country

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) graciously acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, Bunurong, Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our offices and schools stand.

We honour the wisdom of families and Elders, as the first educators of the children on these lands; emulating the significance of children at the heart of our commitment to education.

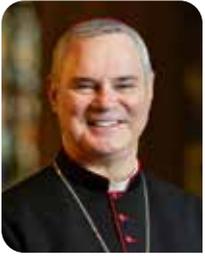
We wholeheartedly commit to reconciliation and continuous learning as we walk alongside Kulin Nation peoples, lighting the path for our children, rich in the embodiment of First Nations cultures.

Respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of Knowing, Being and Doing, we support our flourishing learners to thrive academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually, forming lives of faith, hope and love.

‘Education and leadership are not merely closely related. In fact, education is always also leadership.’

Reverend Friedrich Bechina FSO





Archbishop Peter A Comensoli

Catholic leadership is centred on the person of Jesus Christ. We journey with him as a community of disciples called to proclaim good news. That good news – the Gospel – animates our whole lives in a world deeply in need of God’s love.

Our leaders are called to embody Christ’s heart, head and hands within their communities. In so doing, they witness to a distinctively Catholic approach to leadership – one rooted in Gospel truths and directed towards human flourishing. How we model and witness to the love of God shown in Christ is the ultimate test to our fidelity in Christian leadership.

The Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) *Vision for Leadership* and *Leadership Profiles* have been developed to support all leaders in the sacred mission of Catholic education.

I highly recommend *Vision for Leadership* as an inspirational guide for all leaders as they anchor their work in the life and teachings of the Lord.

To our leaders, I express my profound gratitude for your continued dedication. As trusted stewards, your witness and wisdom plant the seeds of faith that grow to nurture the next generation, sharing the light of Christ with the world.

Most Reverend Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne



Dr Edward Simons, Executive Director

Our MACS 2030 strategy emphasises the need to reimagine Catholic leadership in a rapidly evolving landscape. *Vision for Leadership* and the accompanying *Leadership Profiles* help us to do this. They provide clear aspirations for all leaders, grounded in Catholic tradition, and shaped by our leaders and the realities of contemporary education.

Vision for Leadership intentionally aligns with our *Vision for Instruction* and *Vision for Engagement*, guiding how we lead change and helping to ensure that Catholic leadership remains central to all we do.

We are committed to enabling all leaders to realise their God-given potential. By accessing quality leadership formation and development resources, leaders will be enabled to have a profound impact on their communities, creating the best opportunities to form lives to enrich the world in keeping with our MACS 2030 strategy

I would like to sincerely thank the many people responsible for developing *Vision for Leadership*. I am confident that it will be transformative for current and future leaders in our system, equipping them with the insight and direction to lead with excellence.

Dr Edward Simons
Executive Director



Natalie Harper
Director, People and Culture

Vision for Leadership and the accompanying *Leadership Profiles* clearly articulate our vision of effective leadership at MACS.

We encourage you to integrate *Vision for Leadership* into personal reflection, prayerful discernment, coaching conversations, position descriptions, goal setting and professional development activities.

Your commitment to embodying and embedding *Vision for Leadership* will strengthen our capacity to serve and enrich the communities entrusted to our care.

Vision for Leadership emerged through rigorous research and extensive consultation with MACS leaders via surveys, discussions and committee dialogue. This evidence-based, synodal approach ensured our leadership framework addressed genuine needs while maintaining validation from practitioners and experts

We invite you to take the first step today by making *Vision for Leadership* an essential part of your growth and formation as Christ-centred leaders called to serve Catholic education.

Natalie Harper
Director, People and Culture

Forming
whole leaders:
faithful,
relational
and excellent

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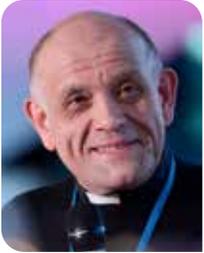
The



Why

Now more than ever,
we need leaders who are
present, calm and grounded
in faith – people who see
goodness, inspire hope and
believe in education's power
to transform lives.

Foreword



Education and leadership are not merely closely related. In fact, education is always also leadership. It is about accompanying and guiding young people on their way to developing their personalities and all the talents they have received from God as gifts and tasks.

Education and leadership in a Catholic context mean 'walking together', as expressed by the Greek word 'synod'. A 'synodal Church' is therefore not a new concept, but a path that the Church has been following since the journey of the disciples to Emmaus on Easter morning; a path that they walk together and, above all, with their Lord Jesus Christ. Education and leadership are therefore essential to a Church on the move, an outgoing Church.

With her more than 200,000 schools around the globe, the almost infinite diversity of institutions and their distribution in most countries, the Catholic Church is the only real 'global player' in the world of education that deserves this name. This makes the responsibility of those who, on behalf of the Church, are called to leadership for individual schools, and even more so for entire Catholic school systems, all the greater. Their responsibility is not only to the students entrusted to them, the parents and families, the political community or society at large. We acknowledge we are accountable to God, in whom all true authority is founded and in whom all gifts and charisms to his Church and her members have their origin.

Good Catholic education, like leadership, requires the highest level of professionalism as well as a living faith, identification with the Gospel and the intention of sharing this joy with others. A good leader in the field of Catholic education must therefore be a true CEO, a 'chief evangelisation officer'. This requires a realistic view of the current challenges as well as clear orientation: in other words, a 'vision'.

This document offers such a vision of leadership, and helpful points of reference for leaders and potential leaders. *Vision for Leadership* orients all of us on the 'common path' of education and leadership. It combines educational excellence with a clear Catholic profile. It is intended to contribute to the development of young people in the many Catholic schools into genuine personalities who are aware of their value, dignity and responsibility.

Reverend Friedrich Bechina FSO

Former undersecretary for the
Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education





The challenge

The first Melbourne Catholic school opened in 1839 near St Francis' Church on Lonsdale Street.¹ Mass was celebrated in a small roofless building. It was a time of growth, opportunity, challenge and hope for Catholic education.

Since those pioneering days, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) has grown into a network of almost 300 schools, built on the foundation laid by founding priests, religious sisters and brothers, and lay leaders.

Today's challenges differ markedly from 1839.

Catholic educational leaders face teacher shortages, workload pressures, mental health crises and rapid technological change. These challenges reflect broader social and global struggles.

'In this our time,' said Pope Leo XIV, 'we still see too much discord, too many wounds caused by hatred, violence, prejudice, the fear of difference, and an economic paradigm that exploits the Earth's resources and marginalises the poorest. [We need] to build a new world where peace reigns!'²

As Australian society wrestles with complex questions of equity and social cohesion, MACS leaders have a unique chance to bring peace and opportunity to their communities. This involves walking alongside others with empathy, staying centred on the story of Christ's death and resurrection, and leading with faith, hope and love.

Christ's resurrection is a source of transformative hope.³ It reveals that God can bring life from death and so create possibilities for flourishing where none seemed to exist.

In *MACS 2030: Forming Lives to Enrich the World*, we commit to empowering leaders and reimagining Catholic leadership. *Vision for Leadership* establishes this foundation for developing exceptional leaders who will transform our schools and enrich our communities.

Our intent

We aim to establish Australia's leading Catholic teacher and leader formation and training infrastructure.

The MACS 2030 strategy emphasises the need to empower and enable leaders through three essential priorities:

1. Effective leadership selection and evaluation processes
2. Enhanced professional learning and development opportunities for all staff
3. Reimagined Catholic leadership for contemporary contexts.⁴

Vision for Leadership and its accompanying *Leadership Profiles* address these priorities by providing clear, comprehensive descriptions of effective leadership for all MACS leaders.

The position statement creates a shared understanding of leadership and guides the development of practical resources, including tools for self-reflection, leadership development and goal setting. Through this approach, we will cultivate a leadership culture that enables staff, students and communities to flourish.



Scan or visit
www.macs.vic.edu.au/About-Us/our-strategy

Our two goals for leadership development



Goal 1 – Excellence:

All MACS leaders are united by a Christ-centred vision of leadership.

We are committed to developing exceptional faith-filled leaders who share a common vision for leadership. Centred on the person of Jesus, and grounded in the virtues of faith, hope and love, this unified commitment drives our culture and maintains our dedication to excellence and equity.



Goal 2 – Impact:

MACS leaders access exceptional leadership formation and development resources that empower them to transform lives.

We are committed to enabling all leaders to realise their God-given potential. By accessing quality leadership development and formation resources rooted in Catholic tradition, leaders will have a profound impact on their communities, creating lasting positive change that enriches the world.

Catholic principles for education and leadership at MACS

Vision for Instruction established five foundational Catholic principles for education.⁵ Adapted for leadership, these principles underpin our *Vision for Leadership*.

1

We build our communities of faith, hope and love in the light of Jesus Christ.



Jesus Christ is our inspiration as Catholic educators and leaders. We aspire to be the salt and light to those we lead (Matt 5: 13–16). Everything we do is illuminated by the light of Jesus Christ. MACS schools and offices are sacred spaces where leaders are called to enable all members of their community to encounter the transformative power of Jesus Christ.

2

We are collaborative, inclusive, faith-filled communities.



God's love for every person encourages relationships to be at the centre of Catholic education. Leaders are called to build a collaborative partnership between families, staff and students to promote unity, common vision, mission and purpose.

3

We recognise the inherent dignity of every person as being created in the image of God.



The sacred dignity of each person is honoured at MACS. Leaders are called to respect and nurture the unique gifts of each member of their community. Students are safe within our communities. When students, staff and others are known and valued, they can genuinely flourish.

4

We are part of the Catholic intellectual tradition which emphasises the pursuit of knowledge and excellence.



MACS draws from the deep intellectual heritage within the Catholic Church – a body of knowledge, beliefs and practices that have developed over centuries. Leaders are imbued with this rich tradition and employ it to inform, inspire and invite others into a Christ-centred vision for their community.

5

We are inspired by the Gospel to act for a just society.



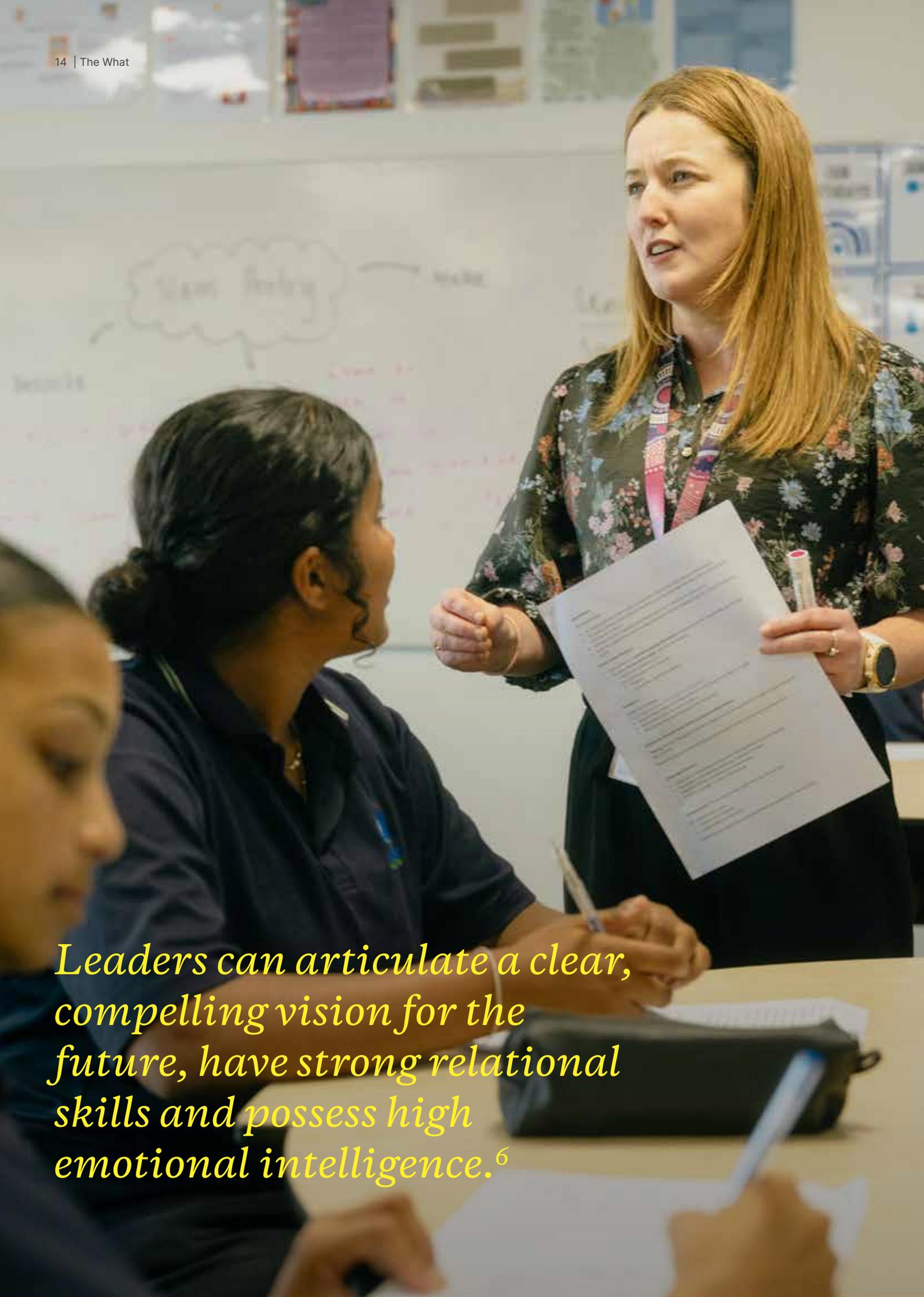
MACS leaders strive to develop a compassionate model of leadership which seeks the common good and the good of each person. Leaders foster a deep sense of social responsibility and moral awareness through justice, peace and integral ecology.



The What

Vision for Leadership defines clear expectations for all leaders across our organisation. It helps to support and inspire leaders in their growth and spiritual formation.





Leaders can articulate a clear, compelling vision for the future, have strong relational skills and possess high emotional intelligence.⁶

Defining leadership

Leadership is the ability to positively influence others to achieve a shared vision.⁷

At MACS, we are fortunate to share a sacred vision: to form lives of faith, hope and love in the light of Jesus Christ. The primary image of leadership that informs *Vision for Leadership* is the self-giving life of Jesus Christ through whom all Christian leadership finds its meaning and purpose. Achieving this vision requires well-formed leaders who embrace the Catholic ethos and pursue professional excellence.

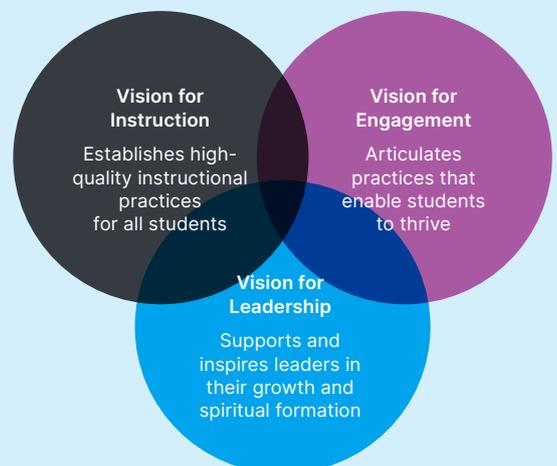
To develop leaders capable of achieving this vision, we have identified eight essential leadership capabilities grounded in one precondition: a Catholic way of being.

The eight leadership capabilities are:

- **Leading Catholic mission**
- **Developing self**
- **Growing others**
- **Enabling wellbeing**
- **Cultivating learning, development and engagement**
- **Enhancing change**
- **Managing resources**
- **Engaging community.**

Vision for Leadership is built on four foundations: Catholic leadership literature, educational leadership literature, MACS strategic planning and MACS leader insights. The position statement also complements the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Australian Professional Standard for Principals by covering the same leadership capabilities while distinctively integrating Catholic identity, faith, spirituality and wellbeing – all essential for sustainable leadership in Catholic education.

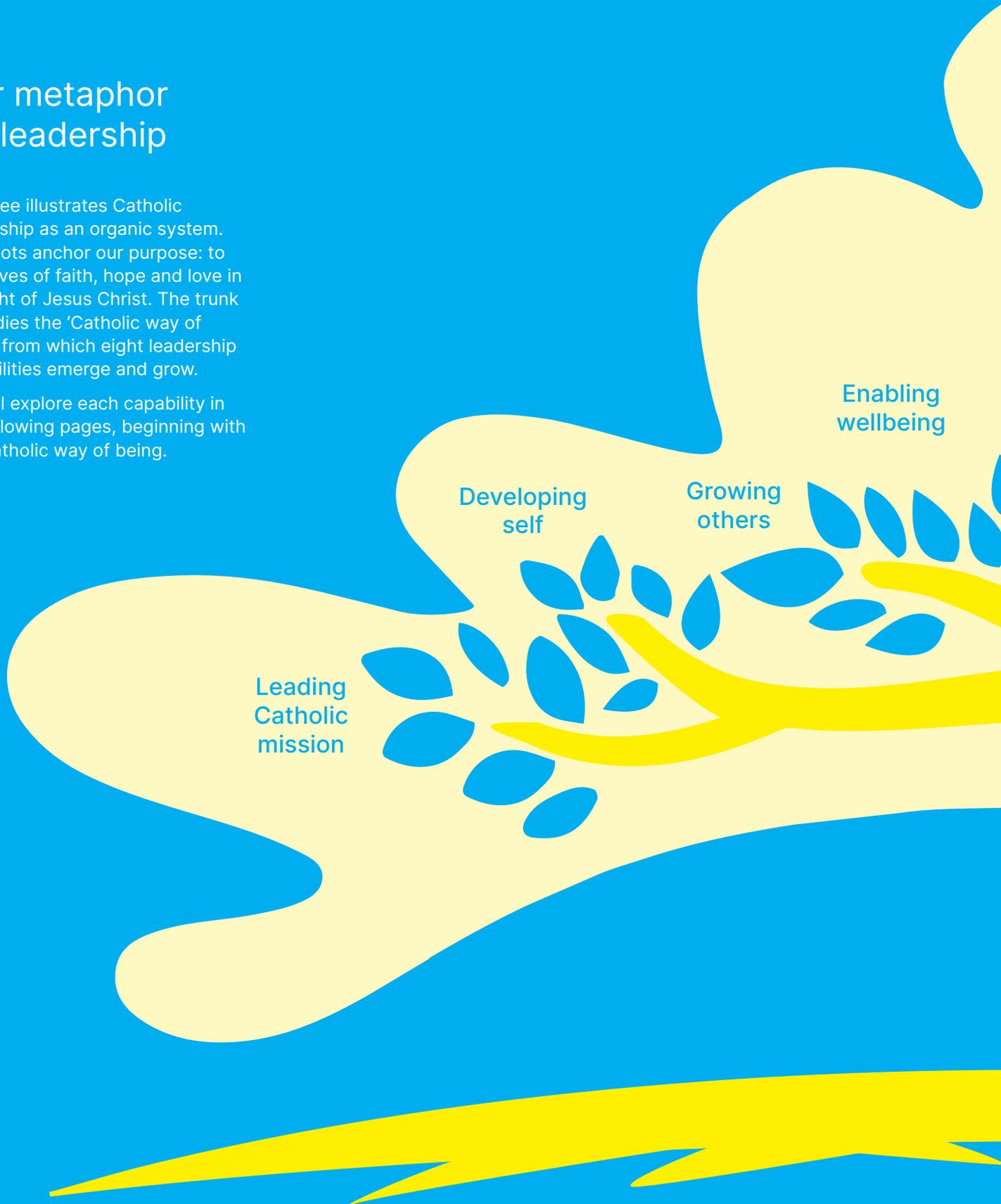
Vision for Leadership integrates the insights of *Vision for Instruction* and *Vision for Engagement*. Leadership sits at the heart of our strategic vision. When leaders are effective, they drive both instructional excellence and genuine engagement throughout their educational communities.



Our metaphor for leadership

This tree illustrates Catholic leadership as an organic system. The roots anchor our purpose: to form lives of faith, hope and love in the light of Jesus Christ. The trunk embodies the 'Catholic way of being' from which eight leadership capabilities emerge and grow.

We will explore each capability in the following pages, beginning with the Catholic way of being.



Cultivating learning,
development
and engagement

Enhancing change

Managing
resources

Engaging
community

*‘Blessed are those who trust
in the Lord and whose hope
is the Lord. They will be like
a tree planted by the water
that spreads out its roots to
the stream.’*

Jeremiah 17: 7–8

**Catholic
way of
being**

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



'It is an honour and a great privilege to lead a faith community, and support students and staff on their journeys.'

MACS leader

Precondition

A Catholic way of being

MACS leaders are dedicated to fostering communities that form lives of faith, hope and love in the light of Jesus Christ. Leaders are called to collaborate with others to create a faith-filled education community which honours the sacred dignity of all, strives for excellence and equity, and is founded on the values of care, reconciliation and justice.

Catholic leadership is distinctive. It grows from the soil of faith, hope and love in the light of Jesus Christ, drawing from Christianity's central belief that it is 'Jesus Christ who, by his death and resurrection, reveals and communicates to us the Father's infinite mercy'.⁸ This foundational belief shapes how we lead. Here, we refer to it as a Catholic way of being. Its core aspects are outlined below.

- **Leaders in Catholic education form communities** where God's vision of 'faith, hope and love' is alive and active (1 Cor 13: 13). They are part of the evangelising mission of Catholic education which aims to communicate 'the central message of God's unconditional love'.⁹
- Following the example of Jesus, **leaders strive to embody the fruit of the Spirit:** 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control' (Gal 5: 22–23). These qualities guide how we lead. They shape our daily interactions with students, staff and families.
- **Leaders in Catholic education are informed by a deep understanding** of Scripture, the Catholic tradition, and the lives of Our Lady, the saints and other great Catholic leaders. Our leaders are intentionally Christ-centred and Trinitarian: embracing the Father's love, life of the Son and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
- **Leaders understand that Catholic leadership is both sacramental and ecclesial.** They see God's presence in everyone and everything, while working within the Church's mission to reflect divine love and truth which transform our world.
- In the context of Catholic schools, **leaders are faith witnesses to students and families.** Steeped in the school's culture and charism, leaders seek to extend an open invitation to all members of the community to participate in the liturgical and spiritual life of the school. Prayer is an essential part of a leader's spiritual growth, and central to their discernment and decision-making.
- **Leaders ground their actions in the Catholic understanding of the human person** as made in the image of God (Gen 1: 26). They respect the dignity of each person and make this evident in every interaction every day.
- **Leaders regard the difference of others as a strength** and embrace a synodal approach to leadership. They prioritise understanding others and working with them in a spirit of dialogue and mutual understanding.¹⁰

In addition to our Catholic way of being, there are eight key leadership capabilities that flow out of this approach. These are outlined in the following pages.

Capability 1



Leading Catholic mission

Lead the mission and identity of the organisation.

Competencies:

- » Catholic beliefs
- » Catholic witness
- » Prayer and liturgy
- » Catholic mission
- » Catholic curriculum
- » Catholic connection

Leaders in Catholic education engage in the mission of the universal Church and are called to bear witness to the Gospel. They are significant witnesses to Catholic faith and values, called to lead authentically in both word and action. Their leadership encourages communities to explore a relationship with God through word, service and prayer.¹¹

- **Leaders seek to develop their knowledge and understanding of Catholic beliefs.** They are increasingly skilled in applying a Catholic understanding of Scripture and theology to their work, championing ways to make that understanding accessible to all. In the school context, this includes the integration of Catholic teaching within the curriculum, policies and programs.
- **Leaders in Catholic education cultivate prayerful communities,**¹² inviting all to participate in the Eucharist, other sacraments, and other communal liturgies and prayers. They are committed to their own spiritual growth through prayer, retreats and other spiritual opportunities.¹³
- **Leaders in Catholic education are outward-looking.** They seek to work with and develop communities which explore and enrich the world. They act with justice and compassion, and actively develop policies and programs which engage with Catholic social teaching related to social justice and integral ecology.¹⁴
- **Leaders view their work within the broader parameters of Catholic education,** and support MACS policies and procedures. In the context of schools, principals and school leaders work together with parish priests to ensure that their school is actively 'embedded in the life of the local parish',¹⁵ enabling their school to be a place of encounter with God's love. Similarly, in organisational contexts, leaders partner with their teams to ensure that the values of Catholic education are woven into office culture.

'As Catholic teachers and leaders, we can witness to how Jesus lived and so be role models of what living the Gospel might mean in a modern context.'

MACS leader

Capability 2



Developing self

Manage yourself and your personal and professional goals.

Competencies:

- » Emotional intelligence
- » Strengths
- » Discipline
- » Active listening
- » Clear communication
- » Reflective practice

Leaders in Catholic education are reflective practitioners committed to an ongoing journey of formation. They dedicate themselves to personal, professional and spiritual development. They are 'willing to learn and develop knowledge and be open to the renewal and updating of methodologies, but open also to spiritual and religious formation and sharing'.¹⁶

- **Leaders find ways to develop emotional intelligence:** to exercise calm and patience, and to pause and respond rather than react.¹⁷ Leaders possess the capacity to move between vision and action, and do not get caught up in crisis.¹⁸ Leaders remain stable and focused in adversity.
- **Leaders model self-development.**¹⁹ They dedicate themselves to strengthening their skills and deepening their self-knowledge. Leaders are self-aware. They know what they are feeling, and reflect on gaps between their emotions and reality.²⁰ Self-awareness can lead to insight about how leaders impact others and, as a result, leaders reflect on and change their behaviour to produce better outcomes.²¹
- **Leaders know how to identify, use and develop their strengths in service of the common good.** They seek opportunities to be formed in faith, hope and love, recognising the fragility and imperfections of our human condition. They are confident in their ability to influence outcomes and to achieve goals which have been developed collaboratively with others.²²

'A leader who develops others should be self-aware and self-assured. They demonstrate emotional intelligence during difficult conversations with stakeholders.'

MACS leader

Capability 3



Growing others

Develop the capacities of others, individually and in teams.

Competencies:

- » Collaboration
- » Supporting others
- » Sharing information
- » Feedback
- » Forgiveness
- » Team development

Leaders in Catholic education support the personal, professional and spiritual growth of those they lead. They find ways to support a 'culture of dialogue, encounter and mutual recognition' which encourages the full flourishing of each person.²³

- **Leaders embrace a synodal approach to leadership**, working with and through others by walking alongside them in a spirit of mutual listening, dialogue and discernment.²⁴ Effective leaders grow others. They understand their limits and develop their teams to help them achieve shared goals.²⁵ They build the capacity of others and enable them to lead.²⁶
- **Leaders are good at building motivated teams.** They establish an environment where team members can openly share perspectives, ensuring that decisions are made with comprehensive information.²⁷ By promoting a culture of knowledge sharing, leaders can eliminate redundant work, preventing multiple team members from independently developing similar resources when well-crafted solutions already exist.
- **Effective leaders bring out the best in others.** They encourage colleagues to take appropriate risks and learn from mistakes.²⁸ They create a culture of learning and forgiveness.²⁹ This does not mean licensing failure; it means working hard to create a speak-up culture where strengths and weaknesses are addressed, and errors are acknowledged and learned from. Participation in formal and informal professional learning is promoted, and progress is regularly monitored.
- **Effective leaders model feedback, seeking and providing feedback with care and candour** to bring out the best in their team.³⁰ The capacity to receive feedback well, and deliver it with grace and accuracy, is vital. Team members perform at their best when they receive feedback from expert colleagues that can improve their performance.³¹ Effective leaders provide opportunities for others to grow by advocating for them and integrating them within the team.

'A leader who develops others well is marked by a commitment to nurturing their team's growth and potential. They actively invest in their team members' professional development, providing regular feedback, guidance, and opportunities for learning and advancement.'

Capability 4



Enabling wellbeing

Enhance the wellbeing of self and others.

Competencies:

- » Self-care
- » Mental health literacy
- » Resilience
- » Vocation
- » Social intelligence
- » Compassion (pastoral care)

Leaders in Catholic education prioritise the wellbeing of each person they interact with, viewing their educational communities as places for 'encounter and promoting participation'.³² They develop policies and relational practices that honour each person's dignity, ensuring all staff and students are safe, known, valued and able to flourish.

- **The ability to manage your wellbeing and the wellbeing of others is a key leadership trait.** Leaders who practise self-care have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of their employees, modelling these practices for those they lead.³³
- **Effective leaders are socially intelligent.** They are attuned to the needs of their employees and able to influence, inspire and promote their growth. A socially intelligent leader notices when others are experiencing challenges and can respond with compassion.³⁴
- **Mental health literacy is a key capability for contemporary leaders.** This involves actively promoting help-seeking and challenging the stigma associated with mental health conditions.³⁵ Leaders create a safe environment where employees feel comfortable sharing mental health concerns affecting their work.
- **Leadership is a challenging and rewarding job that requires resilience** – the ability to sustain positive functioning when under stress.³⁶ We encourage our leaders to find ways to grow from challenge and help others to develop resilience.
- **Leaders who cultivate a strong sense of meaning and purpose** can mitigate the negative impact of a demanding environment and are less likely to experience burnout.³⁷ A Catholic leader confidently aligns their meaning and purpose with the building of a community characterised by faith, hope and love in the light of Jesus Christ.

'Leaders remain calm under pressure, handling stress with resilience and maintaining a balanced work-life integration.'

MACS leader

Capability 5



Cultivating learning, development and engagement

Support others to strive for excellence in instruction, development and engagement.

Competencies:

- » Mission-focused instruction
- » Excellence
- » Evidence-based resources
- » Equity
- » High-impact pedagogies
- » Connected autonomy

Leaders in Catholic education are open to new learning. They 'are inspired by the Gospel ... formed in Christian pedagogy, in tune with Catholic schools' educational project'.³⁸ Leaders foster an environment where students and staff achieve excellence and embrace lifelong learning. They build strong and positive pastoral relationships which provide the conditions for flourishing.

- **In the context of schools, leaders who focus their efforts on teaching and learning excellence aligned with the curriculum,**³⁹ along with the growth and development of their staff, have a significant impact on student achievement.⁴⁰ Leaders exemplify excellence by demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of how students learn and how teachers develop.⁴¹ They partner with the MACS system to implement evidence-based practices and set high standards for all.
- **Effective leaders establish clear goals for staff, promote and participate in formal and informal professional learning,** and regularly monitor progress while offering coaching and feedback to maintain high-quality practices. In the context of schools, the establishment of clear instructional goals through a framework (*Vision for Instruction*) enables teachers to 'direct their efforts more purposefully, focusing on areas that directly contribute to the overall goals of the school'.⁴² This contributes to increased teacher efficacy and job satisfaction.⁴³
- Likewise, outside the classroom, **effective leaders champion a culture of learning excellence by meticulously integrating evidence-based resources** in their approach to staff development.⁴⁴ Through intentional mentorship, leaders inspire innovative thinking, and collaborate to design sophisticated strategies that simultaneously enhance individual capabilities and organisational effectiveness.⁴⁵

'An exemplary leader has a knowledge of faith.'

MACS leader

Capability 6



Enhancing change

Improve outcomes by inspiring thoughtful change activities.

Competencies:

- » Modelling change
- » Rigour and improvement
- » Consultation
- » Vision and influence
- » Participation
- » Change agent

Leaders in Catholic education prioritise human dignity in all change processes, consulting those most affected by change and empowering local decision-making through subsidiarity.⁴⁶ This synodal approach emphasises authentic dialogue and co-creation, working with rather than for people.⁴⁷

- **Leaders who effectively lead and manage change encourage deep thinking and are open to feedback.** They actively participate in change activities and communicate transparently.⁴⁸ Leaders actively prevent change-fatigue by ensuring collective energies are focused on improvement, not just change for its own sake.⁴⁹

The 4E model described in *Vision for Instruction* provides an effective framework for leading change in schools and offices.⁵⁰ We have adapted and outlined its key components below.

Exploring

When leading change, it is critical to consult with those impacted by the change. By actively listening to and consulting with stakeholders, leaders gain crucial insights into the context and potential impact of proposed change. This increases the likelihood of others using their energies to implement the change.⁵¹

Experimenting

Effective leaders take thoughtful risks, learning from their mistakes, staying adaptable and persevering through challenges. As agents of change, effective leaders experiment with new ideas and implement them when they believe there is a strong likelihood they will lead to improvements.⁵² Innovative and authentic leaders embrace transparency, openly sharing successes and failures so that a culture of learning is created.

Expanding

Successful leaders understand the importance of a powerful vision and creating a shared sense of purpose alongside the vision. In the context of Catholic education, leaders ensure the educational vision, mission and values are strongly aligned, with carefully planned actions.⁵³

Embedding

A truly effective change process is participatory. Team members are active contributors rather than passive recipients. When leaders genuinely involve others in the change process, they build commitment and collective energy. By valuing diverse voices, leaders create a sense of shared ownership and understanding.⁵⁴

‘They were a visionary thinker who was able to have a strategic focus and clear vision for implementing change and progress within the school.’

MACS leader

Capability 7



Managing resources

Use resources effectively, prioritising safety, and acting ethically and sustainably.

Competencies:

- » Safeguarding
- » Ethical stewardship
- » Accountability
- » Risk and compliance
- » Effective decision-making
- » Strategic acumen

Catholic educational leaders recognise that all resources – material, human, spiritual, environmental – are God’s gifts and require faithful stewardship. They manage assets with integrity and transparency, and pay particular attention to those who are most disadvantaged when making resourcing decisions for their communities.

- **Effective leaders engage in resource management in an ethical and sustainable manner.** By prioritising equitable distribution, leaders ensure that resources reach those with the most critical needs.⁵⁵ This approach goes beyond mere allocation, embedding principles of social justice and ethical procurement. Transparent processes, anti-slavery safeguards and a commitment to sustainability ensure effective and ethical stewardship.⁵⁶
- **Leaders proactively establish clear objectives, precisely define roles and decision-making boundaries,** and systematically track progress towards measurable outcomes.⁵⁷ Rather than deflecting responsibility, they embrace full ownership of results, viewing challenges as opportunities for collective learning and improvement.
- **Leaders model a commitment to educational policies and governance standards.**⁵⁸ They proactively manage institutional risk, comply with the *Code of Conduct for MACS Staff* and champion professional standards. This includes adhering to the Child Safe Standards, maintaining registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching and upholding accreditation standards for staff in Victorian Catholic schools.
- **Leaders cultivate a strategic understanding of educational trends and potential threats.**⁵⁹ They develop skills such as strategic planning, risk management and marketing to ensure the viability of schools and the Catholic education system. They align budgets, resourcing and operational functions to their strategic objectives which connect their local school vision to wider MACS objectives.

‘They showed unwavering integrity, making decisions that were both ethical and fair, even in challenging situations.’

MACS leader

Capability 8



Engaging community

Connect with community members in a spirit of solidarity.

Competencies:

- » Enabling community
- » Parent/guardian partnership
- » Inclusion and social justice
- » Respectful engagement
- » External engagement
- » Building networks

Catholic educational leaders are responsible for the creation of communities characterised by ‘a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity’.⁶⁰ This occurs when leaders foster thriving communities where all are invited to participate in a spirit of hospitality and solidarity.⁶¹

- **Catholic school leaders recognise that parents are the ‘first and foremost educators of their children’,⁶²** and so seek to engage parents and guardians in all aspects of the school’s educational program. Parental engagement has been shown to have a significant impact on students’ learning, attendance and success, and is welcomed and celebrated.⁶³
- **Catholic leaders create communities of faith, hope and love** which are genuinely inclusive.⁶⁴ They strive ‘to build bridges through dialogue and encounter, joining together as one people’.⁶⁵ Leaders embrace the linguistic and cultural diversity of their communities, recognising these differences as valuable resources. In particular, leaders actively promote deep understanding and genuine respect for First Nations’ histories, cultures and languages.⁶⁶
- **Leaders also recognise that Catholic schools are ‘actively embedded in the life of the faith communities** of the local Church,⁶⁷ and so work with families, parish priests and others in the faith community in the shared mission of Catholic education.
- **Leaders nurture community responsibility and solidarity.** They challenge structural injustices, offer hope and provide outreach for their local communities. In this context, leaders prioritise practical support for community members experiencing complex challenges and disadvantage.⁶⁸

‘Understanding the community is the first step towards creating a sense of community.’

MACS leader

The H

Developing as a leader is a unique journey of formation that unfolds over time. It requires personal reflection and discernment about who you are called to be and how your strengths can be developed to meet your community's needs.⁶⁹

How



Developing leaders

We encourage leaders to see their leadership as a vocation.⁷⁰ Vocation is 'that nourishing sense that we are meant to be doing what we are doing; that our work is of inherent value to others and to us'.⁷¹

Each person's leadership journey is unique. A deputy principal might work in a school for several years, serve as an educational consultant in the office and return to a school as a senior leader. A finance leader may never work in a school, but remain in an office environment supporting schools in their work. Each path offers valuable opportunities for growth, personal fulfilment and service to Catholic education.

We contend that leaders can be developed via three interconnected paths: (1) self-directed development, (2) leader-supported development and (3) MACS system support. Working hand in hand, these three approaches ensure leaders experience continuous growth throughout their careers, and are well equipped to lead and support others.

Self-directed development

Self-directed development comprises independent initiatives undertaken as part of one's continuous formation and development. This may include activities such as volunteering for leadership positions, observing effective leaders, or pursuing Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School. Additional components include:

- Engaging in prayer, self-reflection and discernment to deepen your relationship with God
- Volunteering to lead tasks as an expression of service
- Participating fully in parish life and the broader Catholic community
- Completing a Catholic school leadership program or professional development course
- Developing your expertise as good stewardship of your talents
- Engaging in coaching, mentoring or spiritual direction to support your vocational journey
- Coaching and mentoring others as an act of Christian witness and accompaniment.

Beyond self-development, your team leader or line manager can also support your leadership formation and growth in several ways.

Leader-supported development

Leaders and managers support their staff in different ways. They model a Catholic approach to leadership through their behaviour or witness. They actively promote team member development-seeking opportunities for those they lead. They can also provide:

- Quality feedback through frequent one-on-one meetings that focus on development, discernment and growth
- Goal-setting assistance that aligns personal growth with mission
- Performance review opportunities focused on professional competence and spiritual formation
- Critical friend/mentor recognition and accompaniment
- Network sharing and speaking opportunities within Catholic educational communities
- Professional learning opportunities to develop your expertise
- Pastoral support during challenging leadership moments.

Alongside leader support, the MACS system can also facilitate individual leadership development.

MACS system support

MACS supports leadership development through faith formation programs, sponsored university study and leadership programs for all levels. Our regions facilitate vibrant peer networking communities, creating collaborative spaces for mutual support. Other MACS leadership development opportunities include:

- Faith formation and accreditation renewal opportunities
- Spiritual leadership programs, including retreats and pilgrimages overseas
- Leadership programs for emerging, middle and senior leaders
- Access to digital content through online leadership development programs
- Teacher excellence certification emphasising instruction and engagement.

To further support leadership growth, we have created profiles for various leadership roles. These profiles articulate the behaviours that leaders should develop as they progress from emerging to middle and senior levels.

Leadership Profiles

We support all leaders to develop their leadership capabilities. To aid this growth, we have identified the unique characteristics of leaders at three distinct levels: emerging, middle and senior. We call these levels 'Leadership Profiles'.

These *Leadership Profiles* complement *Vision for Leadership* by providing detailed descriptions of effective leadership practices for emerging, middle and senior leaders in both schools and offices. Our *Leadership Profiles* can be used to enhance self-reflection, guide coaching conversations, inform professional learning and support meaningful career development.

Emerging leaders

School: Leaders aiming for or recently appointed to their first leadership role.

Office: Staff aspiring to lead; staff leading a small project or initiative.

Middle leaders

School: Team leader in a key area of school life.

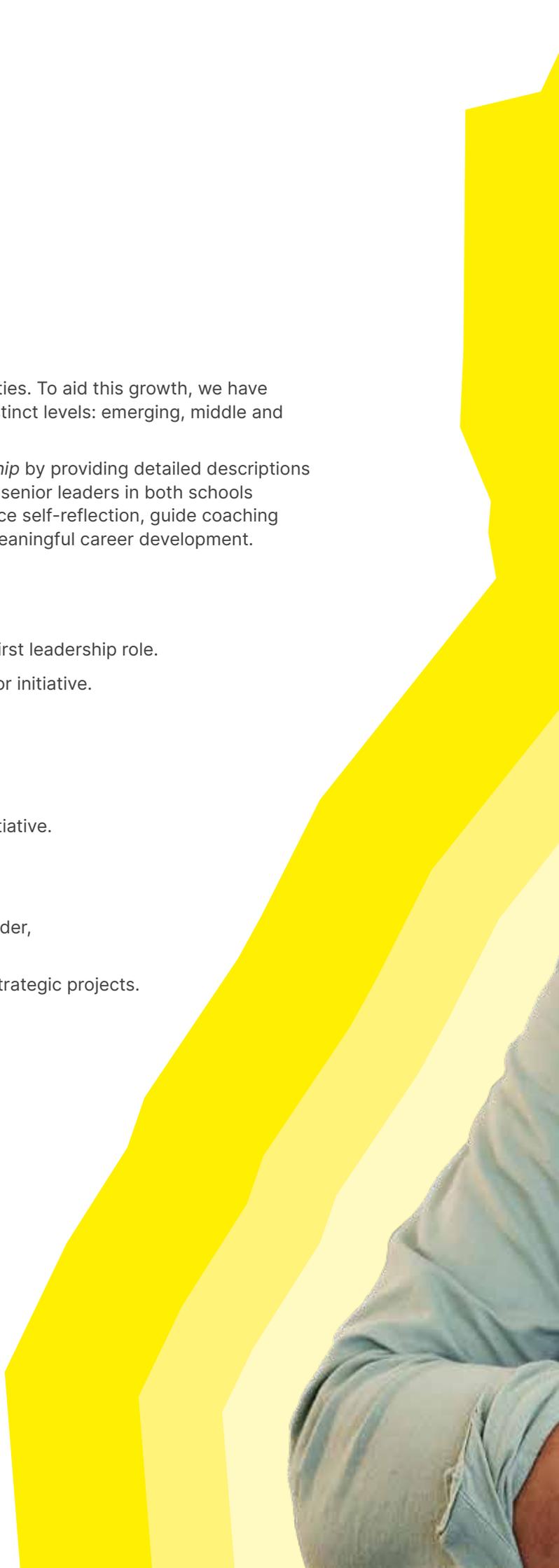
Office: Manager and/or leader of a significant strategic initiative.

Senior leaders

School: Principal, deputy principal, Religious Education leader, faith and mission leader, member of the executive team.

Office: Senior leaders managing multiple teams or major strategic projects.

The accompanying *Leadership Profiles* help leaders further investigate their leadership through self-reflection, professional learning, coaching and mentoring.





1 Exploring

Familiarise your staff or team with *Vision for Leadership*

Identify how it could be applied in your context

Reflect on your leadership aligned to your profile

3 Expanding

Designate 'early adopters' as implementation champions

Document what works and what doesn't

Develop examples showing the positive impact of *Vision for Leadership*

Implementing *Vision for Leadership*

Vision for Leadership requires the support and engagement of all MACS leaders. As with *Vision for Instruction*, success depends on leaders knowing what needs to change and how best to support that change.

We use the 4E implementation process to guide successful change. The four stages in this process are: Exploring, Experimenting, Expanding and Embedding. The process is empathetic, human-centred and grounded in our Catholic way of being. It prioritises collaboration and the active participation of those impacted by change.

Specific actions are suggested to ensure leaders successfully implement *Vision for Leadership*. These are relevant to both school and office contexts.

As *Vision for Leadership* is implemented across the system, we encourage leaders to engage in the 4E implementation process, with MACS providing additional resources to support leaders in sharing *Vision for Leadership*.

2 Experimenting

Connect *Vision for Leadership* to your team's vision, mission and values

Identify evidence to determine the best way to experiment with it

Pilot specific elements of *Vision for Leadership* such as personal reflection

4 Embedding

Integrate *Vision for Leadership* into regular learning and development initiatives

Align performance reviews with our *Leadership Profiles*

Align recruitment processes with profiles and job descriptions



By implementing Vision for Leadership, you are helping to develop a coherent leadership culture that honours our Catholic traditions and embraces competencies to prepare us to serve future generations.



Endnotes

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Contributors

- Reverend Friedrich Bechina FSO, former undersecretary for the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education
- The MACS People and Culture Committee
- The Learning and Development Steering Committee
- The Learning and Development Reference Group
- MACS staff

Schools featured

- Galilee Regional Catholic Primary School, South Melbourne
- St Monica's Primary School, Moonee Ponds
- Marymede Catholic College, South Morang

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Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd
James Goold House, 228 Victoria Parade
East Melbourne VIC 3002
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Correspondence to:

The Executive Director
Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd
PO Box 3
East Melbourne VIC 8002
T: 03 9267 0228
E: execdirector@macs.vic.edu.au



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Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

228 Victoria Parade
East Melbourne VIC 3002
www.macs.vic.edu.au
03 9267 0228