catholic education south australia

Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence

Revised Edition

SEPTEMBER 2015

1936 - 1996

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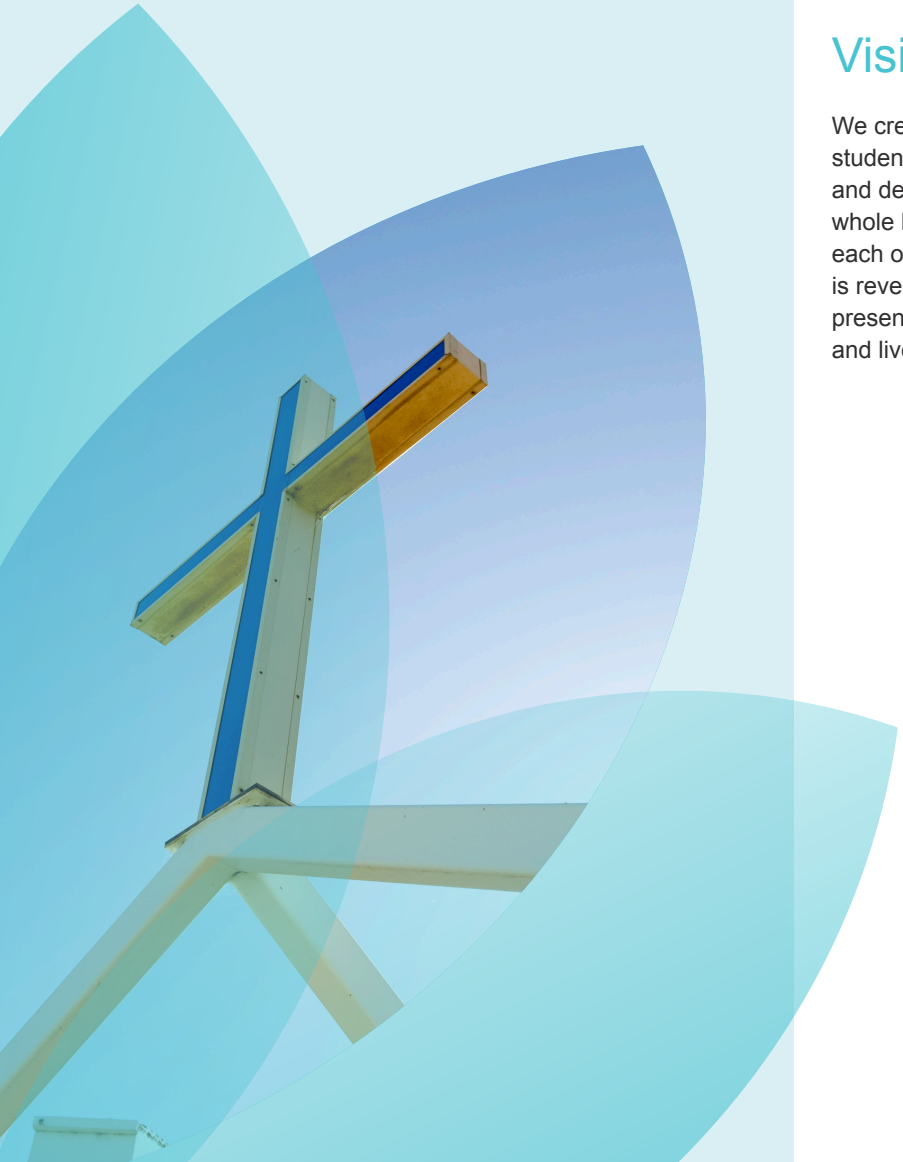


Mission

Animated by our Catholic faith and in partnership with families, our schools are communities which create opportunities for encountering life to the full – in all its personal, religious, political, ecological and cultural richness.

Values

We value:

- openness to God's Spirit at work in our midst
- all creation's interconnectedness
- respect for the dignity of each person
- commitment to processes of learning that are informative, challenging, engaging, life-long and life-wide
- inclusivity of those at the edges
- sensitivity, justice and compassion

Vision

We create an educational environment which matters to students and their families and which resonates culturally and deeply for them. In each learning area, across the whole life of the school, and in partnership with families, each of us discovers in the Spirit, the love of God which is revealed in Jesus Christ, proclaimed by the Church, presented in the scriptures celebrated in the sacraments and lived by all people of good will.

Purpose

Catholic education in South Australia is a living expression of the mission of the Catholic church and the partnership of schools with families and parishes to create opportunities for encouraging life to the full in all its personal, spiritual, social, ecological and cultural dimensions.

The 103 schools in Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) deliver high quality education to approximately 20% of all school students in South Australia. CESA is committed to excellence in its provision of education to students and their families.

CESA is faced with the essential challenge of ensuring the ongoing excellence of its educational provision, in the context of significant demographic and economic changes facing the wider South Australian society and economy, arising from the changing demography of the South Australian population and changes to the state's economic and employment base. These changes in turn have impacts on families and social services, including the profile and numbers of students attending South Australian schools.

CESA must develop new solutions to meet new challenges, whilst maintaining its commitment to educational excellence for students and their families. The structures and systems of the past are insufficient to meet the challenges of the future.

A decision not to act is tantamount to a decision to go backwards.

The *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* demonstrates the commitment of CESA to engage with governing bodies, parishes, school leaders, teachers and parents in determining how best to serve the needs of children and students in a changing world. The Strategy reflects CESA's commitment to base decision-making on consultation and the analysis of research and evidence.

The Strategy uses the nomenclature 'Catholic education in South Australia' or at times just 'Catholic Education' to refer to all Catholic schools within the state, including both diocesan and non-diocesan schools in the Archdiocese of Adelaide and the Diocese of Port Pirie, and also the Catholic Education Offices in Adelaide and Port Pirie.

The *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* presents the key initiatives that the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) will progressively introduce to strengthen, transform and promote Catholic education in South Australia and outlines the actions it will undertake to implement the initiatives during 2015 to 2025.

The *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* presents:

- the commitment to strengthen and transform the presence of Catholic education in South Australia as an accessible, viable and real option and choice for all children and students and their families in the full range of communities
- the commitment of CESA to provide all children and students from all communities with excellence and successful pathways in their learning
- the commitment of CESA to support principals in nurturing excellence, expertise and commitment in their staff
- the commitment to ensuring that CESA continues to recognise its partnership with parishes and families and, where possible, to build synergies and joint action with the New Directions renewal initiative for parishes in the Archdiocese and similar work in the Diocese of Port Pirie.

The *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* presents how CESA will build on the work already begun and, by thinking collectively and acting collaboratively for the common good, will achieve new levels of excellence through faith, vision and innovation.

Development of Strategy

The *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* is integral to the commitment of the Commission to strengthen and transform Catholic education in South Australia so it continues to provide excellence in student learning and wellbeing.

The Strategy is derived from the existing CESA Strategic Plan (2010-2014) and its statement of the mission, vision and values that are at the core of Catholic education in South Australia.

The *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* has been developed and has evolved through the following processes:

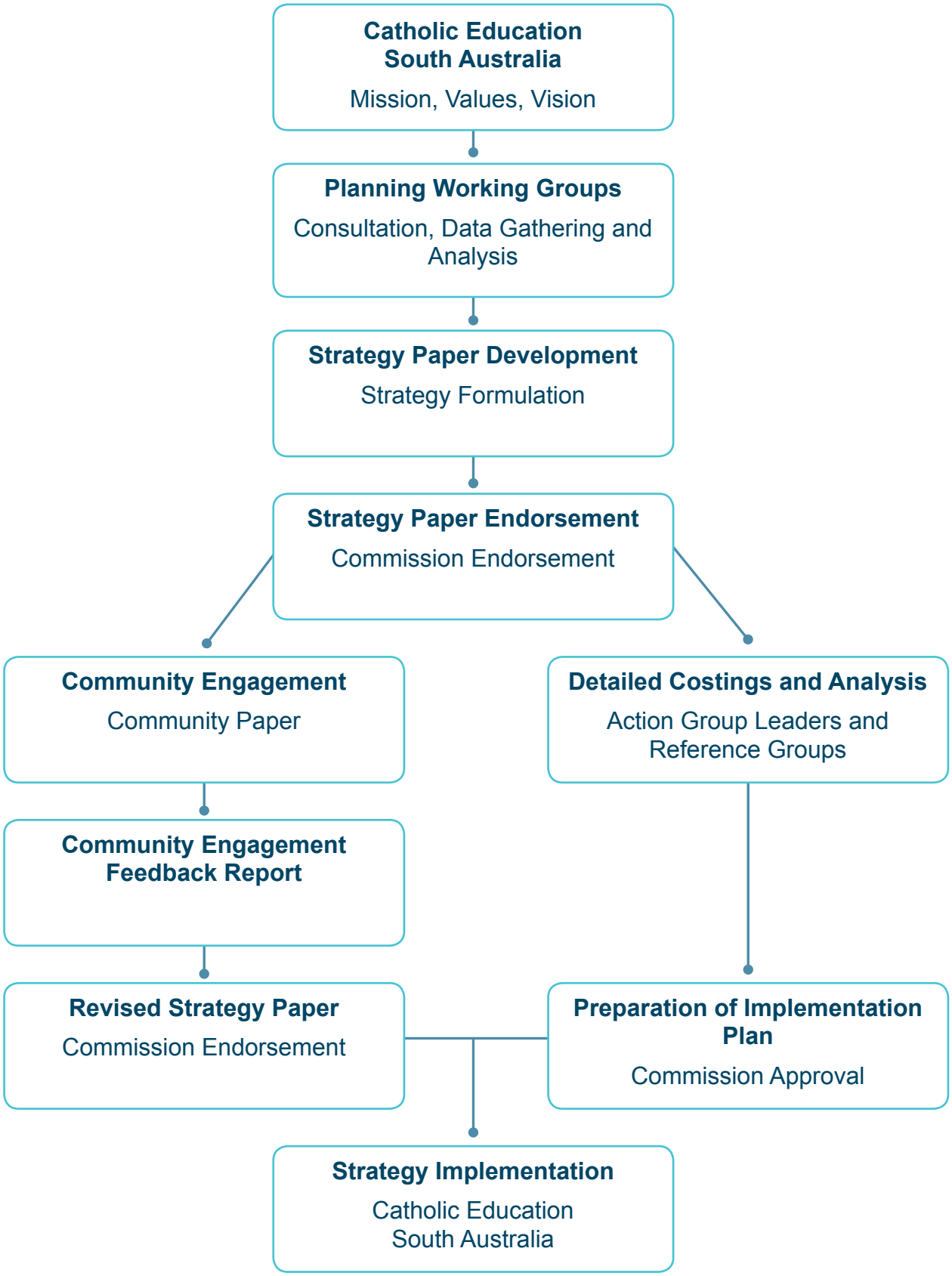
- data gathering and analysis: consultation, research and information gathering via planning working groups made up of principals and key stakeholders
- strategy formulation: ongoing consultation with Catholic school leaders, key stakeholders and education experts in the formulation of the draft version of the Strategy
- endorsement of the draft Strategy by SACCS as the basis for widespread community engagement and the preparation of a business case and risk analysis of the Strategy
- preparation of the Strategy Community Paper for use in the engagement process
- wide-ranging community engagement with Dioceses, governing authorities and other key stakeholders through three state-wide forums held for school principals, school board chairs, and parish priests, where over 170 participants from 64 schools reviewed the Strategy and its implementation
- preparation of the report presenting community comment and advice on the Strategy
- preparation of *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence,* post community engagement taking into consideration the results of the wide and varied community commentary
- detailed costings and analysis (quantitative and qualitative data) as the basis for the development of the draft implementation plan for the Strategy
- consolidation of the strategy implementation plan including a full business case and risk analysis
- presentation to the Commission of the:
  - revised *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* that incorporates community feedback and advice – for Commission endorsement
  - implementation plan for the Strategy for Commission approval
- implementation of the Strategy across CESA

The system-wide implementation of the *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* will be directed towards the achievement of the Strategy's overarching goal, defining principles, initiatives and actions.

CESA will use the *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* to guide the development and review of its Strategic Plan.

CESA will maintain its commitment to ongoing research and analysis and maintain consultation and engagement with Catholic communities and key stakeholders throughout the implementation phases of the *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence.*

The following diagram presents the key phases in the development and implementation of the *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence.*


Catholic Education South Australia
Mission, Values, Vision
Planning Working Groups
Consultation, Data Gathering and Analysis
Strategy Paper Development
Strategy Formulation
Strategy Paper Endorsement
Commission Endorsement
Community Engagement
Community Paper
Detailed Costings and Analysis
Action Group Leaders and Reference Groups
Community Engagement Feedback Report
Revised Strategy Paper
Commission Endorsement
Preparation of Implementation Plan
Commission Approval
Strategy Implementation
Catholic Education South Australia

Strategy Goal

Strengthen and transform the presence of Catholic Education in South Australia

The goal of the *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* is to strengthen and transform the presence of Catholic education in South Australia.

CESA represents the commitment to a physical, social and spiritual reality within the various educational communities of the Archdiocese of Adelaide and the Diocese of Port Pirie.

CESA is the face of the Catholic church expressed through its educational and schooling ministry:

- It is characterised by relationships with parents and parishes, educational practices where the dignity of every person, the commitment to inclusion, a preferential option for the marginalised, a passion for learning, and a sense of hope and wonder, are evident.
- It is the irrefutable knowledge that all people are gifted with great potential for growth to reach fullness of life and joy, and are each worthy of respect.
- It is the responsibility for a local environment and world where each person, free from any discrimination and free from all barriers to life, can express their full potential and know the reality of God's love: 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10).

The goal of the *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* is to strengthen and transform Catholic Education as a living expression of the mission of the Catholic church in partnership with schools and families to create opportunities for encouraging life to the full in personal, spiritual, social, ecological and cultural dimensions (Catholic Education SA Strategic Plan 2010-2014).

Strategy Defining Principles

Strengthen and transform the presence of Catholic Education in South Australia	
for all children, students and families in all communities	as a system of schools and early years services

The *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* is based on two fundamental principles that define the key initiatives and actions that CESA will use to achieve the goal of the Strategy:

- Catholic education seeks to be an option of first preference for Catholic families along with all families from the full range of backgrounds in our community who seek a Catholic education for their children.
- CESA operates as a system of schools and early years services working in partnership for the common good as this is understood in Catholic social teaching.

PRINCIPLE ONE: Catholic Education seeks to be an option of first preference for Catholic families along with all families from the full range of backgrounds in our community who seek a Catholic education for their children.

The focus of CESA is to present an accessible, viable and real option and choice for all children and students and their families in the full range of communities:

a) CESA continues to operate as a community of schools in which students, staff and families are educated in the light of the Catholic faith and contribute to each other's growth.

b) CESA continues to recognise its essential relationships with families and the broader church.

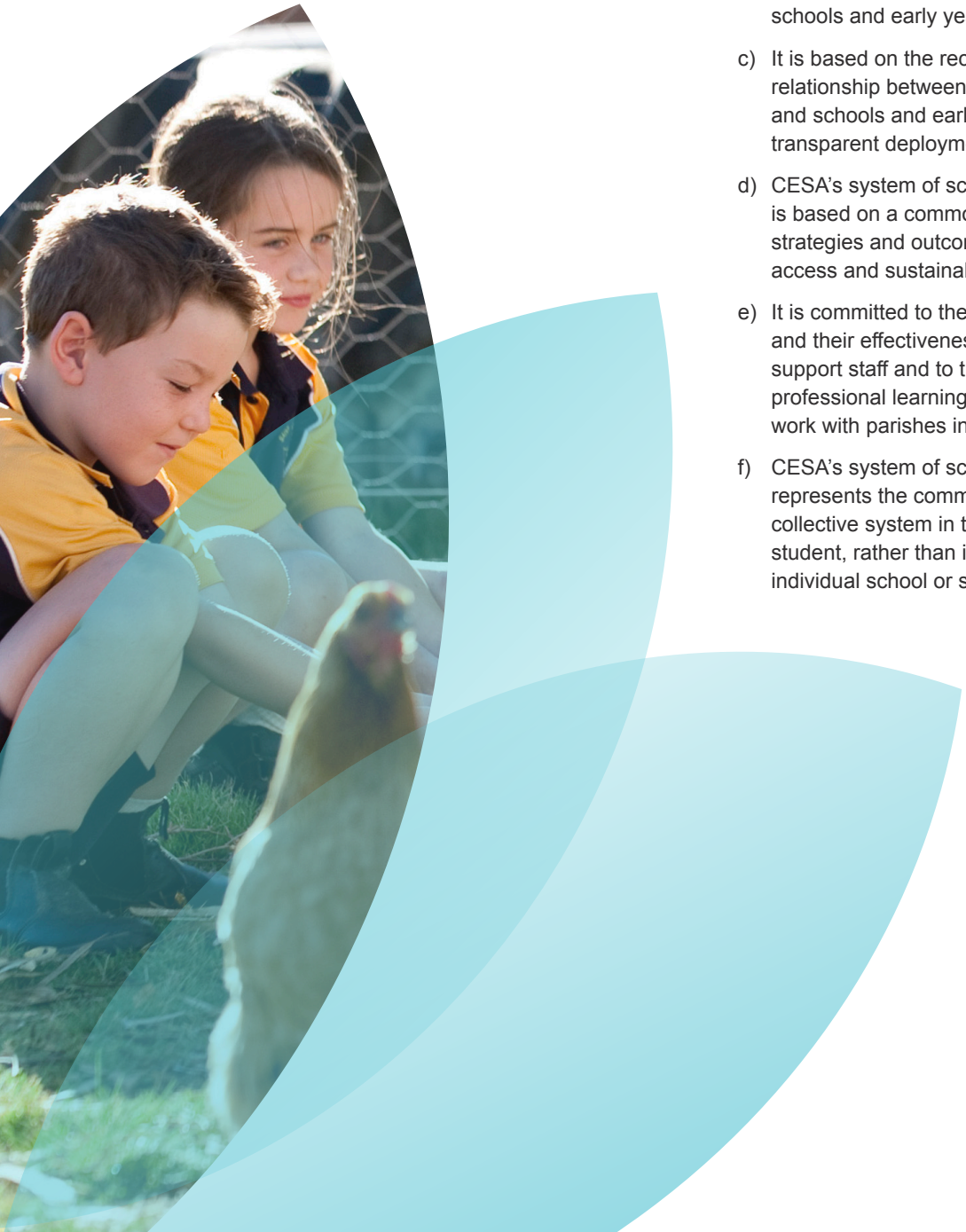
c) It continues to be committed to building life-long relationships between schools, families and the Catholic church, including local schools' relationships with local parishes.

d) CESA also strives to be a system of choice for students and families from the full range of communities.

e) It is committed to the uniqueness and worth of all individuals and to the value of learning and education in their lives.

f) It is committed to the development of every individual and to providing each with pathways that assist their transition into future opportunities both during school and beyond school.

g) CESA is committed to supporting the professional learning and the personal and spiritual formation of all its staff so that the commitment to students and families can be met to the full.



PRINCIPLE TWO: Catholic Education South Australia operates as a system of schools and early years services working in partnership for the common good.

CESA is based on the collaboration of individual Catholic schools working in close partnership with a shared vision, purpose and commitment to the common good, as this is understood in Catholic social teaching, and one which is characterised by the commitment to interdependence, reciprocity and mutuality:

a) Catholic schools and early years services strive to meet the needs of each child and student in South Australia through a shared vision, a unity of purpose and commitment to the common good.

b) CESA's system of schools and early years services is based on collaborative relationships between individual schools and early years services.

c) It is based on the reciprocal and mutually respectful relationship between the Catholic Education Office and schools and early years services and the fair and transparent deployment of resources.

d) CESA's system of schools and early years services is based on a common understanding of directions, strategies and outcomes that promote equity, justice, access and sustainability.

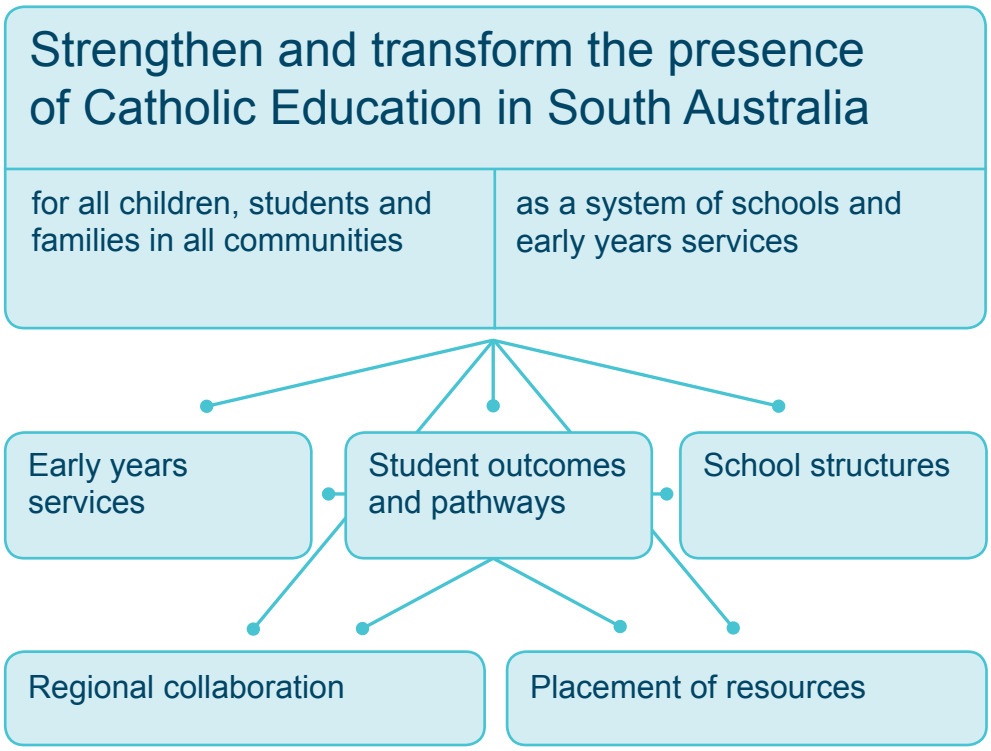
e) It is committed to the development of its own people and their effectiveness as leaders, teachers, carers and support staff and to the provision of opportunities for professional learning at system and regional level and to work with parishes in this common endeavour.

f) CESA's system of schools and early years services represents the commitment to think and act as a collective system in the interests of each child and student, rather than in the exclusive interests of an individual school or service.

Strategy Initiatives

The Strategy goal of strengthening and transforming the presence of Catholic education in South Australia through the two defining principles will be achieved through the implementation of the following initiatives:

- Clear pathways and transitions for children and students
- Expansion of early years services
- School structures that meet the learning needs of students
- Regional collaboration between Catholic schools and early years services to best meet the needs of families and communities
- Placement of resources where the need is greatest



Strategy Initiative One: Student outcomes and pathways

CESA will work as a system of schools and early years services to build identifiable pathways with clear transition points for every child's and student's achievement of excellence, starting in the early years and continuing throughout their years of schooling and into their post-school pathways.

The initiative will be achieved through activities that include the following:

a) The building of collaborative arrangements between early years services and schools at the regional level to create birth to year 12 pathways for children and students where they do not exist in individual early years centres or schools.

b) The progressive expansion of early years services into Catholic schools to provide a continuum of learning for children in the early years and a pathway into Catholic schooling that assists their progress in achieving excellence in their learning.

c) The commitment to minimise the number of entry points into the years of schooling and the progressive movement towards reception and year 7 as the main entry points in ways that respect educational value and the history of preceding arrangements.

d) The development of consistent enrolment policies and processes across the Catholic system of schools and early years services, including the development of regional enrolment statements and policies that enhance clearly defined pathways and choices for the birth to year 12 experience of Catholic education in South Australia.

e) The development and provision of promotion and marketing materials for use at local and whole-of-system levels that highlight the Catholic commitment to learning excellence and successful pathways for children and students and to promote Catholic schools and early years services as centres of choice for families.

f) The commitment to ongoing processes of consultation, engagement and communication to achieve Catholic Education's focus on improvement in learning outcomes and clear pathways for each child and student across its system of schools and early years services.

Strategy Initiative Two: Expansion of Early Years Services

CESA will progressively introduce early years services into Catholic schools to contribute to the achievement of excellence in learning outcomes and the wellbeing of children and to provide a continuum of learning for children in the early years, and a pathway into Catholic schooling.

The initiative will be achieved through activities that include the following:

a) The commitment to include early years services in Catholic schools to provide continuity in transition for children and families and a service from the perspective of the child through relationships, systems and culture.

b) The development of an early years services framework to outline and define the principles, services and structures that underpin the early years services provided by CESA.

c) The identification of strategic relationships with other providers of early years services and other allied services that highlight the Catholic presence and commitment to provide service to families, including exploration of parish involvement via venues and personnel.

d) The development of a business case that identifies the establishment and recurrent costs of progressively expanding early years services into Catholic education in South Australia.

e) The development of an implementation plan based on a staged and flexible implementation process and timeframe that recognises the needs of families, parishes and local communities, that focuses on the delivery of excellence in learning outcomes and the wellbeing of all children, and that addresses the capacity of schools to introduce early years services.

f) The commitment to ongoing processes of consultation, engagement and communication to assist the implementation process.

g) A commitment to staff development in the early childhood education area.

Strategy Initiative Three: School structures that meet the learning needs of students

CESA will progressively introduce consistent organisational structures across the Catholic system of schools and early years services that best serve the learning needs of children and young people and their families.

The initiative will be achieved through activities that include the following:

a) The operation of consistent organisational structures across the Catholic system of schools and early years services.

b) The commitment to move progressively towards a school structure across the Catholic system of schools that is based on years R-6 and years 7-12 in ways that respect educational value and the history of preceding arrangements.

c) The commitment to minimise the number of entry points into the years of schooling and the progressive movement towards reception and year 7 as the main entry points.

d) The development of consistent enrolment policies and processes across the Catholic system of schools and early years services.

e) The development of a business case to identify the establishment and recurrent costs of moving to a years R-6 and years 7-12 school structure across the Catholic system of schools with respect to the financial impact on families, existing regional arrangements, human resource implications, capital, financial and infrastructure implications, transition arrangement, and risk management.

f) The development of an Implementation Plan for moving to a years R-6 and years 7-12 school structure across the Catholic system of schools based on a staged and flexible implementation process and timeframe that recognises the needs of families, parishes and local communities, that focuses on the delivery of excellence in student pathways and learning outcomes, and that addresses the capacity of schools to introduce the new structures.

g) The commitment to ongoing processes of consultation, engagement and communication to assist the implementation process.

h) The commitment to proceed cautiously and in parallel with the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD).

Strategy Initiative Four: Regional collaboration between Catholic schools and early years services to best meet the needs of families and communities

CESA will build regional networks of collaboration between Catholic schools and early years services to strengthen the presence of Catholic education in local communities and to provide successful pathways and transitions for each child and student.

The initiative will be achieved through activities that include the following:

a) The development of collaboration protocols for regional arrangements across the Catholic system of schools and early years services including, where appropriate, staff development initiatives.

b) The development of cluster arrangements in regions to provide best pathways and transition points for children and young people in the Catholic system of schools and early years services.

c) The development of regional enrolment statements and polices that enhance clearly defined pathways and choices for children and students and that possess elements common to all regions as well as elements that are particular to the circumstances in different regions.

d) The alignment of Catholic technical colleges and registered training organisations with schools through arrangements that assist student pathways within and across regions.

e) The development of guidelines that enhance mutual responsibility amongst colleges and parish schools within a region with regard to their communication materials around enrolment processes and pathways.

f) The commitment to ongoing processes of consultation, engagement and communication to strengthen the relationships between early years services and schools within a region and the families and communities of the region.

Strategy Initiative Five: Placement of resources where the need is greatest

CESA will make the best use of available resources across the Catholic system of schools and early years services to achieve the best outcomes for each child and student.

The initiative will be achieved through activities that include the following:

a) The provision of expanded/new Catholic schools and early years services in areas of confirmed growth.

b) The development and use of protocols for the amalgamation and/or cluster arrangements between schools where the new structures will improve the pathways and transition points for children and young people and the combined arrangements will lead to the most effective management of human and financial resources and the improved provision of Catholic education in South Australia.

c) The development and use of protocols for the closure of Catholic schools where a decline in student enrolments and/or over-servicing within a region may diminish the educational value of an individual school's program to existing students.

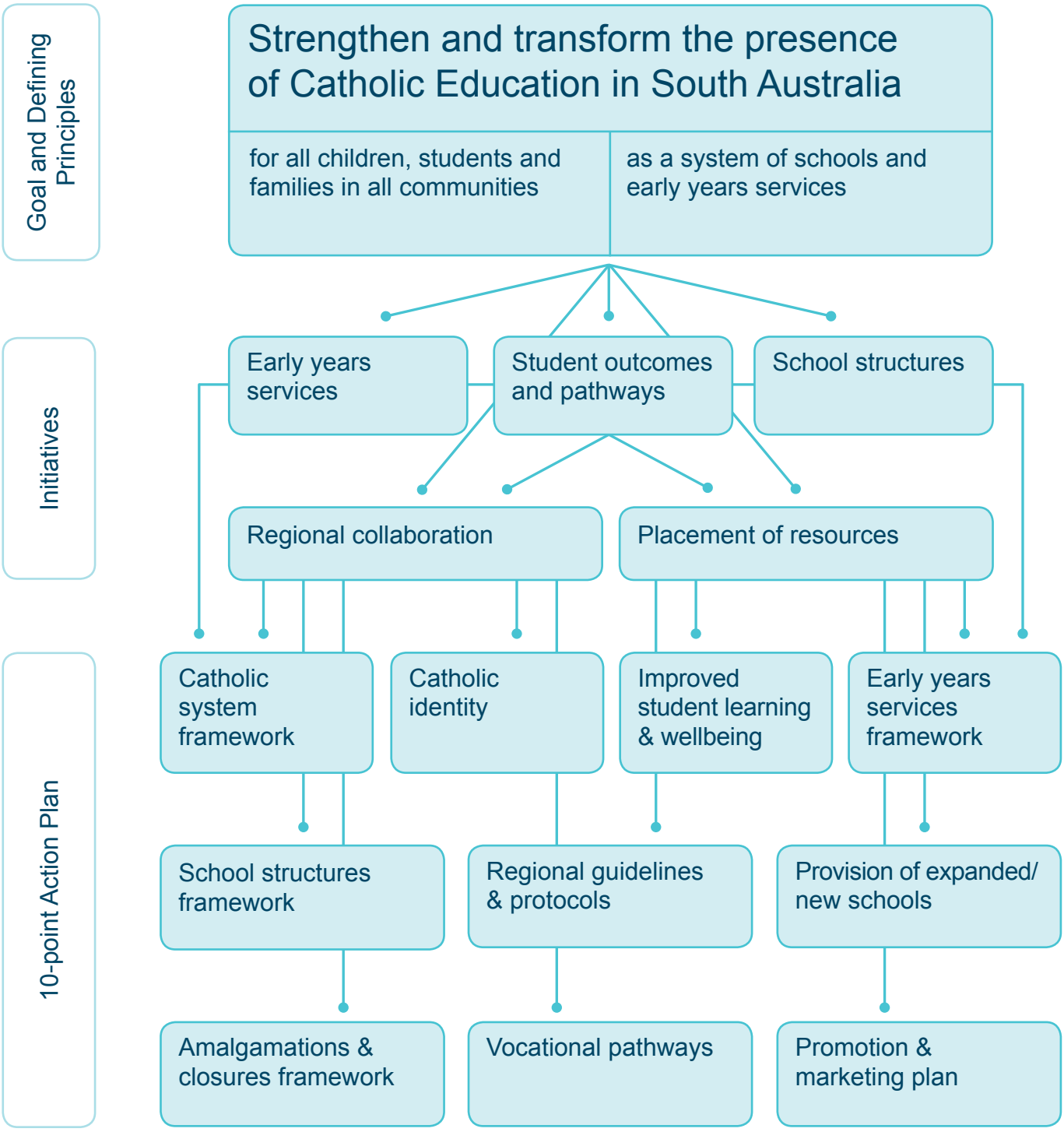
d) The redefinition of the services provided by Catholic Education Office and the realignment of resources allocated for the provision of these services.

e) The operation of a funding formula across the Catholic system of schools and early years services that delivers the fair and transparent deployment of resources.

f) The commitment to ongoing processes of consultation, engagement and communication to ensure the deployment of resources achieves the best outcomes for every child and student.

Strategy 10-point Action Plan

The following 10-point Action Plan will be used to achieve the Strategy's goal, defining principles and initiatives.



ACTION ONE

Framework for Catholic system of schools and early years services

Significance and purpose of Action One

CESA is comprised of schools that are governed by dioceses, religious congregations and a number of new ecclesial entities. Some are systemically funded, some are individually funded, and those schools vary according to these governance and funding arrangements. However they share a common Catholic identity and mission and operate as a community of schools under the leadership and direction of SACCS.

The goal of strengthening and transforming the presence of CESA and the key principle of building identifiable pathways with clear transition points for each child and student will be achieved most effectively by CESA operating as a system of schools and early years services.

The term 'system' in this context is derived from systems-thinking theory and practice that emphasises the interconnections and interdependencies of parts of a system and describes how they can best operate in relation to each other to achieve shared and common outcomes.

By working as part of the CESA system, each school and provider of early years services will demonstrate Catholic Education's identity and core values and contribute to the common good.

Action commitment

a) The Strategy goal of strengthening and transforming the presence of CESA and its key principle of building identifiable pathways with clear transition points for each child and student challenges all schools to consider what it means to work as part of a 'system' of Catholic education.

b) The Catholic Education Office, in collaboration with its key stakeholders, is to prepare for the Commission's consideration a framework for defining the Catholic system of schools and early years services.

c) The framework is to address, amongst other things, the following:

   i. The governance relationships between the Catholic Education Office, regions and individual schools and individual schools and early years services.

   ii. The reciprocal responsibilities that operate between Catholic Education Office and individual schools and early years services, including the services provided by the Catholic Education Office.

   iii. The primary role of families in their children's education and the principles for enhancing the partnership between schools and families.

   iv. Principles for the development of leaders, teachers, carers and support staff in the individual schools, early years services and the Catholic Education Office.

   v. Principles for enhancing mutual responsibility amongst colleges and parish schools.

   vi. Principles for the development of enrolment policies and communications across Catholic schools and early years services.

ACTION TWO

Enhancing Catholic identity

Significance and purpose of Action Two

There is a unique identity of a Catholic school which seeks to bring faith, life and culture together in a way that matters and is meaningful for students, their families and staff.

Catholic identity distinguishes a Catholic school from other schools – in the particular way the unfolding Catholic tradition nourishes and inspires the school in its participation in the world.

Enhancing Catholic identity is an ongoing task. The ever new challenge for Catholic schools in South Australia is to describe and live out that which makes them unique and enter into dialogue with their families about faith in partnership with the parish.

The purpose of this action is to enhance Catholic identity across Catholic education in South Australia. The action seeks to support and build the capacity of leaders to discern, strengthen and actively promote Catholic identity and mission, in partnership with the local church, to discern the 'signs of the times' and re-contextualise Catholic faith in new expressions which are meaningful to all members of school communities.

The action draws upon international research on Catholic identity from the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium, Australian research, surveys and practice from Victorian Catholic Education Commission, and similar research and practice from at least ten percent of CESA schools over the last three to four years.

Action commitment

a) The Catholic Education Office calls for expressions of interest from and supports CESA school leaders for their school communities to research their Catholic identity by accessing relevant data, either from the SA profile data collated from the CESA schools previously involved in the Leuven Project, and/or by utilising the survey and analysis tools mentioned above.

b) School leaders undertaking this action will become part of, and will be supported by, the CESA School Leaders Catholic Identity Network together with the Catholic Education Office's Religious Education Team, Leadership Development Team and Principal Consultants.

c) The Religious Education Team and Leadership Development Team in collaboration with other leaders is to develop tools and processes to assist schools with evaluating and planning in Domain One, 'Catholic Identity', of the CESA Continuous Improvement Framework.

d) The Catholic Education Office is to investigate and enter into strategic partnership with other formation providers to assist with capacity building of leaders in enhancing Catholic identity and realising the revised SACCS policy Religious Leadership in Catholic Schools and the SACCS Statement: Religious Leadership and the Catholic Identity of Schools.

ACTION THREE

Improved student learning and wellbeing

Significance and purpose of Action Three

CESA is strongly committed to each student enrolled in a Catholic school or early learning centre achieving excellence in their learning and wellbeing.

The commitment to excellence is achieved through the quality of leadership and teaching programs in our Catholic schools. It is expressed through the assistance that school leaders, the Catholic Education Office and the local church provide to teachers to foster excellence in their teaching.

The commitment to improve each student's learning outcomes and wellbeing is directly dependent on the relationship between teachers and their students and on the partnerships between schools and families and parishes.

The commitment to assist each student achieve their full potential in all its intellectual, spiritual, physical and social dimensions is evident in Catholic schools' development of new and innovative ways to build their capacity to improve the learning and wellbeing of students.

It is evident in the monitoring of students' progress in their learning and the use of quality assurance processes to review, analyse and improve practices at the level of each individual school and across the Catholic system of schools and early learning centres.

Action commitment

a) The Catholic Education Office, in collaboration with school leaders and their communities, is to develop a public statement of the learning commitment that CESA makes to each student enrolled in Catholic schools.

b) The Catholic Education Office, in collaboration with school leaders and their school communities, is to analyse and adapt for CESA the use of improvement strategies and systems that lead to demonstrable improvement in student outcomes.

c) The Catholic Education Office, in collaboration with school leaders and their school communities and local parishes, is to focus on leadership development programs that strengthen the strategies that schools use to improve student learning outcomes and wellbeing.

d) The Catholic Education Office, in collaboration with school leaders and their school communities, is to investigate and introduce systems that strengthen the capacity of principals and teachers to analyse and interpret the student achievement data for their school in relation to their School Improvement Plan and in relation to sector, state and national benchmarks.

e) The Catholic Education Office and Catholic school leaders are to work collaboratively to implement the Continuous Improvement Framework for Catholic Schools and the alignment of strategies that assist its effective operation.

f) The Catholic Education Office and Catholic school leaders are to work collaboratively in the development of a quality assurance process that analyses and strengthens the relationship between improvement initiatives at the Catholic school and system levels and the corresponding improvement in student learning outcomes and wellbeing.

ACTION FOUR

Framework for Catholic early years services

Significance and purpose of Action Four

The cohesive, coordinated and strategic provision of early years services creates the capacity for CESA to provide greater continuity in transition for children and families. The provision of early years services will work towards further strengthening a family-centred church in South Australia.

CESA is committed to progressively expanding the early years services into Catholic schools. A growing body of research stresses the importance of the early years in children's personal, cognitive and social development and on their future learning. There is a range of educational, social and strategic factors that affirms the value of expanding early years services into Catholic schools.

The commitment of CESA to introduce the early years services requires a Framework that defines the scope of the services, clarifies their purposes and identifies the associated human, financial and physical resource dimensions.

The commitment of CESA to further services requires an Implementation Plan that identifies the scope, sequence and timing of the phased introduction of the services.

Action commitment

a) CESA is to create a system of early years services for children 0-6 years with a focus on two distinct groups: 0-3 year olds and 3-6 year olds. It proposed that the focus of the first phase of this initiative should be children aged 3-6 and that this system should be part of an overarching focus on continuity and transition.

b) CESA is to plan for the strategic location of services so that they are best located in areas that address the needs of families and recognise issues of affordability and accessibility. It may be desirable to locate the services in schools that have the space and existing facilities to accommodate the program or where they can collaboratively serve several Catholic schools.

c) CESA is to consider the role that parishes might play in partnership with schools in the delivery of early years services:

- it may be possible for parishes and/or parish clusters to be actively involved in contributing volunteers or offering their facilities on a sessional basis
- school/parish collaboration via early years services could help families stay connected to church on a regular basis, especially if playgroup, for example, offers an opportunity for parents to connect, to seek advice and to witness high quality relational learning in progress.

d) It is intended that all schools may choose to participate, either individually or in clusters, in the provision of early years services through play groups, long day care and occasional care programs that offer opportunities for transition and continuity of learning.

e) The Catholic Education Office is to develop a framework for early years services in Catholic schools, with particular attention to:

- continuity and transition as the overarching principles of the Framework
- the initial focus on play groups, long day care and occasional care programs in Catholic Education's provision of early years services
- guidelines and criteria for the identification of Catholic primary schools to provide early years services
- criteria for service agreements
- the development of policies and procedures for the governance and management of the early years services in Catholic education
- the investigation of possible partners in the provision of early years services in Catholic education
- an implementation plan that identifies the scope, sequence and timing of the phased expansion of early years services in Catholic education
- planning for the ongoing professional learning in early childhood education for all staff

ACTION FIVE

Framework for Catholic school structures

Significance and purpose of Action Five

The organisational structures of primary schooling and secondary schooling are intended to address students' developmental and learning needs.

The structures also affect students' transition points and pathways during their years of schooling.

CESA is committed to minimising the number of entry points in the years of schooling and to maximising the success of students' pathways.

The commitment leads CESA to consider how the organisational structures of primary and secondary schools can be strengthened by the move towards more consistent transition points and the minimisation of entry points.

Given the structure of the Australian curriculum and for consistency with other states, it is proposed that the entry points for CESA should be reception and year 7 (for colleges that do not have a primary offering). Year 7 would become the year at which middle schooling commences in an R-12 school wherever this is possible and desirable and contributes to the overall strength of the sector.

Action commitment

a) The Catholic Education Office is to manage an engagement strategy with key stakeholders to identify and address issues of importance to them in relation to the proposed structural arrangement for year 7.

b) The Catholic Education Office is to develop the Framework for Catholic School Structures, with particular attention to:

- the educational rationale and key principles for Catholic school structures
- the balance between a consistent whole-of-system approach and specific regional arrangements, particularly where they already exist, such as in the south west region or in other regional circumstances
- differential operational issues for country and metropolitan locations
- factors identified as critical to the implementation of the new structure
- alignment with other school sectors
- acknowledgement of the role of parishes in the establishment of Catholic schools and the need to engage and communicate with them throughout the implementation of the Strategy
- communication and information priorities and processes

c) The Catholic Education Office is to carry out detailed financial modelling for the proposed structural arrangement for year 7 and to identify resource issues that must be addressed.

d) The Catholic Education Office is to develop an implementation plan that identifies the scope, sequence and timing of the phased introduction of the proposed structural arrangement for year 7, including particular attention to:

- input and feedback from key stakeholders
- key tasks and their timing
- transition arrangements
- differential implementation factors for country and metropolitan locations
- a suitable timeline for implementation.

ACTION SIX

Guidelines and protocols for regional models

Significance and purpose of Action Six

The Strategy initiatives of providing each student with clear pathways and transitions, the progressive introduction of early years services, the progressive implementation of effective school structures and the effective use of resources are all related to and dependent on collaboration between schools and early years services.

Experience demonstrates that this collaboration operates most effectively at the regional level.

Action commitment

a) The development of effective regional arrangements provides the following benefits for the *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence:*

- the building of student enrolments and creating pathways for each child and student is enhanced by schools in regional proximity working together to provide the student and family with the pathway
- the progressive expansion of early years services will lead to schools working collaboratively to share access to early years centres and programs; the geographical proximity of the early years centres with the schools will be best served through regional arrangements
- the progressive introduction of new school structures and entry points, in particular the place of year 7, will build on the successful operation of the current arrangements for school structures that are predominantly regionally based
- the provision of new schools in areas of growth will affect other schools in the region and so collaboration is essential in the process; where enrolments are declining, schools can maintain their programs and provide pathways for students by working together through cluster or amalgamation arrangements
- the re-conceptualisation of the delivery of vocational education and training by the vocational colleges points to the necessity of the colleges and schools working together to provide vocational programs for students both within and across regions.

b) The Catholic Education Office is to identify effective models of regional collaboration and use these as the basis for the development of guidelines and protocols for use more widely across the system of Catholic schools and preschools. The guidelines and protocols are to include, amongst others, the following:

- the value of collaboration and flexibility rather than a one-size-does-fit-all approach
- the identification of effective cluster arrangements
- development of regional enrolment statements and policies that enhance clearly defined pathways and choices for children and students
- collaboration between colleges and parish primary schools regarding communication about enrolment processes and pathways
- the value of regular communication and sharing with local parishes about these matters, at a time when the Dioceses and parish communities are considering new way of being for new times.

ACTION SEVEN

Provision of expanded/new Catholic schools

Significance and purpose of Action Seven

Current analysis of updated census data and population and enrolments trends for South Australia suggest growth is substantially slower than anticipated in the Greater Metropolitan Area 30-Year Plan. While growth is still expected, the general slowing in growth rates will impact most in the previously identified industrial and residential growth areas.

These population and enrolments trends will have an impact on the historic areas of school growth, most noticeably the northern Adelaide areas.

It will be important for CESA to respond to the pattern of the state's growth in a prudent and strategic manner. The provision of new schools and services will require flexibility, innovation and the recognition that slower rates of growth may require a delay in developing some school infrastructure to avoid incurring expense prior to sustainable enrolment income.

Initial analysis has identified a number of areas where further population growth is likely to occur, in particular the northern suburbs, southern suburbs and Adelaide hills, and proposed options for how CESA might respond.

It is essential to monitor the future residential developments as well as the life cycle movements of suburbs in order to continue to assess the need for restructuring existing schools or opening new ones.

Action commitment

a) The Catholic Education Office is to proceed with further detailed planning with regard to the feasibility of the provision of new enrolment opportunities across the state, either through the development of new schools or the expansion of existing school sites, and that takes into account:

- areas of projected population growth and increases in the numbers of school-age children
- areas of projected population decline and decreases in the numbers of school-age children
- responding to demographic changes to ensure the educational offerings of Catholic education cater appropriately
- areas of strategic importance for the establishment and strengthening of the presence of Catholic education
- the capital works capacity of CESA
- the opportunity to explore new ways of identifying funds in support of capital infrastructure development
- a detailed assessment of the capacity for new enrolments within existing schools sites and exploring ways in which any identified capacity is best used to achieve an overall increase in enrolments across the sector
- a planned and coordinated response for the utilisation of existing infrastructure within regions and smaller zones based on the new guidelines for regional models.

ACTION EIGHT

Framework for amalgamation and/or closure of schools

Significance and purpose of Action Eight

In times when there is restricted or uneven growth in South Australia's population and school enrolments, CESA must ensure it makes the best use of its available resources to achieve the best outcomes for each child and student across the Catholic system of schools and early years services.

The commitment to maximise the effectiveness of available resources means that CESA must balance the provision of new schools with the need to take action where a decline in student enrolments diminishes the educational value of the school's program for existing students.

The amalgamation of existing schools or, where appropriate, the closure of an existing school, are possible options for the effective use of available resources. These scenarios need to take into account the key circumstances facing the schools.

The application of these options can create significant challenges for the schools affected and their students, families and communities.

A framework that addresses matters relating to school amalgamations and closures is essential to ensure that the values of CESA remain paramount throughout such a possible process, that the educational interests of students are at the forefront of decision-making, and that processes are consultative and transparent.

The Framework should clarify the distinction between school amalgamations – that is the arrangement where existing individual schools combine to form a new entity – and school clusters – that is the arrangement where existing individual schools work collaboratively to maximise student options and pathways while maintaining their separate identities and structures.

Action commitment

a) The Catholic Education Office is to prepare a discussion paper for the management of school amalgamations, including clarification of their relationship with cluster arrangements, that takes into account the views of the governing authorities, Diocesan governance, local communities including parishes, state government statutory requirements and, where appropriate, national policy directions.

b) The Catholic Education Office is to prepare a discussion paper with regard to the circumstances, key considerations, protocols and procedures for possible school closures, that takes into account the views of the governing authorities, Diocesan governance, local communities including parishes, state government statutory requirements and, where appropriate, national policy directions.

c) The Catholic Education Office is to prepare and disseminate a framework that addresses matters relating to the amalgamation and closure of Catholic schools.

ACTION NINE

Provision of vocational pathways

Significance and purpose of Action Nine

CESA is committed to providing every secondary student with a learning pathway that attends to their post compulsory schooling options and aspirations, including the opportunity to access relevant Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs. St Patrick's Technical College and Marcellin Technical College have provided students with specialist VET programs not normally available in mainstream secondary schools.

CESA faces the challenge of maintaining the benefits that St Patrick's Technical College and Marcellin Technical College have delivered to students while ensuring the financial sustainability of the Colleges' operations.

Action commitment

a) The Catholic Education Office, on behalf of the Archbishop, and in conjunction with St Patrick's Technical College and Marcellin Technical College and in consultation with families and communities, is to investigate further the feasibility of the following models to ensure the sustainability of the technical colleges:

- Maintain status quo with internal rationalisation
- Align the technical colleges with Catholic secondary colleges or congregational partners

b) The Catholic Education Office is to address the broader issue of VET across CESA through an investigation of the implications of continuously developing VET programs through all Catholic secondary schools by supporting and continuing to grow the capabilities of CESA trade training and skills centres, and the wellbeing and viability of the entities.

c) The Catholic Education Office is to address the broader issue of VET within CESA through the development of appropriate partnership arrangements with external providers to continue delivering positive outcomes for our students in all Catholic secondary schools.

ACTION TEN

Promoting Catholic Education South Australia and developing a marketing plan

Significance and purpose of Action Ten

The successful implementation of the initiatives and actions presented in the Strategy requires the clear and effective communication of CESA's identity and core values, as well as the provision of information about the specific initiatives and actions.

A clear and effective communication of the sector's identity and core values will involve a fundamental shift of culture from how Catholic education has been framed in the past. The offerings and successes of schools will be made more visible and overt as important expressions of the mission of the church and the service of Catholic education to students, children and families. Connections among local Catholic schools with their local parish communities can be more strongly emphasised and explained.

The intention to present Catholic Education as a valuable and viable choice for families is not a stratagem to increase enrolments. It is about CESA providing a service to families, students and children and highlighting the value of the service in their lives. The place of the local parish community is key.

Action commitment

a) The Catholic Education Office is to develop a multi-tiered promotion and marketing plan for the Catholic system of schools and early years services that takes into account the sector as a whole, the regions and individual schools.

b) The promotion and marketing strategy is to take into account CESA's introduction of early years services, including the matter of whether this support should extend to a coordinated promotion of the services and an associated communication and marketing plan.

c) The promotion and marketing strategy is to take into account initiatives such as the following and other relevant matters:

- the current marketing project focused on ten metropolitan parish schools with critical enrolment issues
- support for schools to include a marketing plan as part of their strategic planning
- advice from the Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities on how to include the parent voice in the promotion and marketing plan
- analysis of research on parent choice.

Conclusion

Catholic Education South Australia has already achieved great success and has much to be proud of in its achievements.

Catholic Education South Australia along with other school sectors across Australia, now faces the challenge of how best to develop new structures and systems that meet the significant changes occurring within our communities, society and economy.

The *Strategy for Leading Catholic Education to New Levels of Excellence* presents the goal, defining principles, initiatives and 10-point action plan of the Strategy to address the challenge.

The goal of the Strategy is to strengthen and transform the presence of Catholic education in South Australia.

The initiatives and actions through which Catholic Education South Australia will achieve the goal are based on two defining principles:

- Catholic education seeks to be an option of first preference for Catholic families along with all families from the full range of backgrounds in our community who seek a Catholic education for their children.
- Catholic education in South Australia operates as a system of schools and early years services working in partnership for the common good.

The Strategy presents Catholic Education South Australia's committment to continue as a living expression of the mission of the Catholic church and the partnership of schools with families to create opportunities for encouraging life to the full in all its personal, spiritual, social, ecological and cultural dimensions.

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