

St Mary's College GUNNEDAH  
Annual School Report to the Community

2014



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**Principal**

Mr Max Quirk

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## ABOUT THIS REPORT

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St Mary's College is registered by the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW. The Catholic Schools Office, Armidale the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the Education Act 1990 (NSW).

The *Annual School Report to the Community* provides parents and the wider College community with fair, reliable and objective information about College performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education. The *Report* also outlines information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance during the year and the achievements arising from the implementation of the College's Annual Improvement Plan.

The *Report* demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the College community and the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale. This *Report* has been approved by the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale in consultation with the Regional Consultant who monitors that the College has appropriate processes in place to ensure compliance with all Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards, NSW requirements for Registration and Accreditation.

This *Report* complements and is supplementary to College newsletters and other regular communications. Further information about the College may be obtained by contacting the College or by visiting the College's website.

### **Principal's Message**

2014 has been a year of many accomplishments and achievements at St Mary's. We began the year by recognising the College Dux from 2013, who gained an ATAR of 92.85. The year finished with Sarah Clark gaining an ATAR of 97.15 in the 2014 HSC and there being a total of 9 Band 6's for that cohort.

Other pleasing academic news in 2014 was found in the NAPLAN results for our Year 9 students. The result that is of particular interest to us is the growth that was achieved in our students as they progress from Year 7 to Year 9. The NAPLAN Report shows that the average growth of St Mary's current Year 9 cohort was above State average in every category: Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation, and Numeracy. The greatest improvement was in Writing where the State average growth was 27.1 and St Mary's average growth was 41.1. This is particularly gratifying as Writing has been a particular area of focus in our teaching since last year's NAPLAN results showed it to be an area of need.

Enrolments were up with the year starting with 408 students, the highest since 2002 and 92 enrolments beginning Year 7.

### **Parent Body Message**

It has given me great pleasure to Chair St Mary's College Advisory Board for 2014. I thank the Board members for their support this year.

There have been many successful achievements in 2014. The Building and Maintenance Committee has been working through the maintenance issues, which in 2014 have been a challenge. This year was a big year for our combined P&F, which saw two major events take place: the Catholic Debutante Ball and the Family Fun Fair. Both of these events were highly successful and many thanks go to the hard workers that are involved in the P&F.

Father John McHugh is an inspiration to us all; we can only thank the powers that be for allowing him to serve our community. His dedication to our school community gives him great respect from the students, teacher and parents. Many thanks go to Max Quirk for leading the College in the right direction in 2014. We also thank Kerry Steller for her unselfish contribution, and to Cath Martin for taking on the role of Assistant Principal and we wish her well in 2015.

Michael Broekman

Chair

### **Student Body Message**

Over the year we have had the opportunity to meet some great people in the Gunnedah community and also some of our local politicians. We have had amazing support from the staff and students of St Mary's College to help us along the way.

We would like to thank our fellow students for their great ideas about what should be done within St Mary's College and also the staff who have given us inspiration so we can become the best leaders we can be.

College Captains 2014

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## SECTION TWO: SCHOOL FEATURES

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St Mary's College is a Catholic systemic Co-educational College located in GUNNEDAH.

With a population of 400 students, St Mary's provides a holistic Catholic education in a caring and stimulating environment following the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy who founded the College in 1879.

St Mary's College Gunnedah has always had a strong academic focus with many students progressing to university studies. An active Vocational Educational and Training program has also provided students with a successful pathway into apprenticeships and traineeships.

Cultural pursuits have always been a part of St Mary's College and the band and choir prove very popular with students and parents. A comprehensive sporting program provides students with an opportunity to excel, representing the College at CCC and State levels.

### Mission Statement

The members of the community of St Mary's College will strive to provide a caring and stimulating environment for a holistic education of high quality for all of the College's students, in the Catholic and Mercy traditions.

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## SECTION THREE: STUDENT PROFILE

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### Student Enrolment

The College caters for students in Year 7 to Year 12. Students attending this College come from a variety of backgrounds. The following information describes the student profile for 2014:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
227	173	8	400

\* Language Background Other than English

### Student Retention

Of the students who completed Year 10 in 2012, 79.62% completed Year 12 in 2014.

Enrolments peaked at 434 in 2001. Recent growth in the mining industry in the region has stabilised the town and school populations. The average enrolment over the last five years has been 365, with a 2014 enrolment of 400.

### Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Armidale adheres to the policy as endorsed by the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment of Students in the Catholic Systemic Schools of the Diocese of Armidale'. The Catholic Schools Office Armidale monitors the implementation of this policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. Children from families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church may be considered eligible for enrolment. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

The full text of the 'Enrolment of Students in Catholic Systemic Schools of the Diocese of Armidale', along with any specific enrolment policy for the school, is printed at the end of this document.

### Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for 2014 was 92.22%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

<b>Attendance rates by Year group</b>	
Year 7	95.17%
Year 8	92.78%
Year 9	92.03%
Year 10	90.56%
Year 11	91.75%
Year 12	91.04%

### **Managing Student Non-Attendance**

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The College, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, College staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

College staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the College community;
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance;
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance;
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance;
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented;
- documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern;
- the Director of Catholic Schools or designated Catholic Schools Office Armidale officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom College strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

### **Senior Secondary Outcomes**

The table below sets out the percentages of students undertaking vocational training in their senior years as well as those attaining the award of Higher School Certificate (or equivalent vocational education and training qualifications).

<b>Senior Secondary Outcomes. Year 12 2013</b>	
% of students undertaking vocational training or training in a trade during the senior years of schooling.	16%
% of students attaining the award of <i>Higher School Certificate</i> or equivalent vocational education and training qualification.	100%

### **Student Post School Destinations**

Each year the College collects destination data relating to the Year 12 student cohort. The table below sets out the percentages of students for the various categories.

<b>Destination Data</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>TAFE / Other institutions</b>	<b>Workforce entry</b>	<b>Destination not reported</b>
<b>Year 12, 2014 Graduating Class</b>	40.48%	7.14%	16.66%	30.95%

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## SECTION FOUR: STAFFING PROFILE

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The following information describes the staffing profile for 2014:

Total Teaching Staff*	Total Non-Teaching Staff	Combined Total
42	17	59

\* This number includes 28 full-time teachers and 14 part-time teachers.

Percentage of staff who are Indigenous	1.35%
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### Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued. Professional learning can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in services, meetings and conferences and a range of professional learning programs provided by the Catholic Schools Office Armidale. The College takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking of its staff professional learning and individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing professional development. All teachers have been involved in professional learning opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes.

The College held the equivalent of five staff development days this year with areas of focus as follows:

<b>Term 1</b>	No staff development held this term.
<b>Term 2</b>	RAP Workshops.
<b>Term 3</b>	Pedagogy, Consistency and Practice; Read & Write Gold.
<b>Term 4</b>	Asthma; CPR; Anaphylaxis.

In the course of 2014, there were five pupil-free days in which all members of the teaching staff undertook professional development; members of the support staff were included in two full days of this professional development.

### Teacher Standards

The following table sets out the number of teachers who fall into each of the categories determined by the Board of Studies:

Teacher Qualifications		Number of Teachers
1	Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	42
2	Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	0

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## SECTION FIVE: CATHOLIC LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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College follows the Armidale Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum and uses the student text *To Know, Worship and Love*, as authorised by the Bishop of Armidale, Michael Kennedy.

### LITURGICAL LIFE

There were four full school Masses held in the course of 2014, with the Opening School Mass held in conjunction with St Xavier's. There were also Masses and opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation for particular Year levels.

Liturgies were held for special occasions. Each school assembly and each homeroom session began with a prayer. The graduation of Year 12 was celebrated by Mass followed by presentations in St Xavier's School Hall.

### STAFF AND STUDENT FAITH FORMATION

Year 12 students attended a three-day Retreat on the theme of Servant Leadership with the Youth Mission Team in Wollongong. Year 11 students undertook a four-day Western Tour and Retreat to raise their awareness of Aboriginal spirituality and of social justice issues connected with Aboriginal people.

The Staff Reflection Day held in August was facilitated by the Diocesan Renewal Team and was based around the scripture on the Prodigal Son.

Student faith formation is a key component of the RE courses taught from Years 7 to 12. It is supported by the program of collection for charitable works, the Social Justice program, the program of Masses and liturgies and class visits by the Parish Priest and appropriate guest speakers.

Staff, parents and students were all strongly encouraged to join the celebration of the Family Masses held in St Joseph's Church. Attendance of families was very pleasing.

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice education within the RE program complemented the College's charitable fundraising activities, at least one of which was held per term.

All school assemblies were preceded by an Acknowledgement of Country.

## PARISH LINKS

The Principal and Religious Education Coordinator worked closely with the Parish Priest on the school's liturgical program and class visits. The Parish Priest is a member of the College Board and regularly attends meetings. The REC serves on the Parish Liturgy Committee. The Principal is a member of the Parish Pastoral Council.

The College Newsletter is regularly available in the Parish Church; Parish news is published in the College Newsletter and significant College news published in the Parish Bulletin. Parishioners are eligible to nominate for membership of the College Board.

Students in Years 6 in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Armidale undertake the Diocesan Religious Education (RE) Test annually. The test consists of fifty multiple-choice questions. Results of the test are analysed by teachers and are used to inform teaching and learning in Religious Education.

**CSO will insert data when it is available**

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## SECTION SIX: CURRICULUM

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The College follows the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards, NSW syllabus for each course offered as required for Registration and Accreditation under the Education Act 1990 (NSW) and implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale.

St Mary's College follows the Board of Studies, Teaching & Educational Standards syllabus for each subject offered (as required for registration under the Education Act 1990) and implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools Office.

Religious Education is a compulsory subject at St Mary's.

The College operated the mandatory BOSTES courses of English, Mathematics, Science, PDHPE, Creative Arts and Technology throughout Years 7 and 8. Each of History, Geography, Visual Arts and Music was run for each class for two terms per year. Students fulfilled the mandatory Languages requirements in Year 8 (Indonesian).

Students in Years 9 and 10 took the BOSTES courses in English, Mathematics, Science, Australian History and Geography, and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. The College offered two elective lines.

In Years 11 and 12 there was a good range of electives, again enhanced by a small number of composite classes. Several VET courses were available to senior students, either within the College (Primary Industries) or in conjunction with TAFE Colleges.

Assessment was conducted according to BOSTES Syllabus guidelines for all BOSTES courses and along similar lines for BOSTES-endorsed courses.

Each course in Years 7 to 10 incorporated relevant aspects of Literacy, Numeracy, Indigenous Perspectives and Information and Communications Technology. All courses from Years 7 to 12 incorporate "A Sense of the Sacred", through which connections between syllabus content, attitudes and skills can be related to Catholic perspectives. Multicultural and environmental education are incorporated into RE, Science and HSIE courses.

The student support staff provide mainly in-class assistance to students with diagnosed disabilities and/or literacy and numeracy difficulties. Transition programs were implemented at the end of 2014 for new students enrolled in 2015. Teaching staff received training in writing an Individual Education Plan for each funded student.

An after-school Homework Centre was operated in the school library. 2014 was its sixth year of operation.

Able and interested students are also encouraged to participate in both academic and sporting competitions on local, regional and state levels, with the possibility of higher representation in some fields.

Work Health and Safety, and the use of data analysis from test and examination results were focus areas for staff professional development.

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**SECTION SEVEN: STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN STATE-WIDE TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS**

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The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. An analysis of these results assists College planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs.

The tables below show the percentages of students who achieved particular skill bands in numeracy and the aspects of literacy. The College results shown are compared to students nationally. Literacy is reported in four content strands (aspects): Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Numeracy is reported as a single content strand.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2014		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
<b>Year 7</b>	<b>Reading</b>	25.00%	29.00%	10.00%	15.90%
	<b>Writing</b>	14.00%	15.50%	39.00%	28.60%
	<b>Spelling</b>	27.00%	30.60%	27.00%	17.20%
	<b>Grammar</b>	27.00%	29.20%	22.00%	18.90%
	<b>Numeracy</b>	15.00%	28.60%	16.00%	17.30%

NAPLAN RESULTS 2014		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Reading</b>	21.00%	21.30%	14.00%	22.70%
	<b>Writing</b>	10.00%	14.80%	36.00%	38.00%
	<b>Spelling</b>	19.00%	23.70%	29.00%	22.40%
	<b>Grammar</b>	17.00%	19.60%	27.00%	26.80%
	<b>Numeracy</b>	31.00%	24.00%	19.00%	20.70%

### Higher School Certificate

The results of the College’s Higher School Certificate (HSC) candidature are reported for particular subjects. The table provided shows the percentage of students who achieved in the top two bands and shows comparison with results from previous years.

Higher School Certificate	Percentage of students in top 2 bands (Bands 5 and 6)					
	2012		2013		2014	
	School	State	School	State	School	State
Studies of Religion 1	22%	41%	24%	49%	24%	49%
English Standard	10%	16%	4%	6%	3%	8%
Mathematics	43%	52%	50%	49%	38%	54%
Biology	13%	27%	7%	33%	12%	29%
Business Studies	18%	38%	25%	35%	17%	37%
Mathematics General 2	20%	22%	10%	21%	15%	26%

In 2014, 42 students sat for examinations in the HSC. The results were strong with a number of high achieving students. A number of students received Band 5 or 6 results in subjects: Mathematics General - 5 students; English Standard - 1 student; SOR - 10 students; Biology - 2 students.

The subject Mathematics General 2 (course code 15235) was a new subject for the 2014 HSC cohort, the data above for the years 2012 & 2013 refers to General Mathematics (course code 15230).

In 2014 the number of students issued with a RoSA	41
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### **Student Welfare Policy**

No changes were made to this Policy this year.

The full text of the College's Pastoral Care Policy may be accessed on the College's website or at the administration office.

### **Discipline Policy**

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this College. The College does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by College persons and non-College persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the College.

No changes were made to this Policy this year.

The full text of the College's Student Discipline Policy may be accessed on the College's website or at the administration office.

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

The Catholic Schools Office, Armidale has established a *Student Anti-Bullying Policy* which is implemented by our school and all systemic schools in the Diocese. It provides a framework for school communities to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person. The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) monitors the implementation of this policy. No changes were made to the policy this year.

The full text of the *Anti-Bullying Policy* may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or at the CSO website.

### **Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy**

The Diocese of Armidale has established a *Staff Grievance Policy* which is implemented by our school in the Diocese. Each school also has an individual Grievance Policy and Procedure for dealing with matters at a school level. The rationale for these policies is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of our contemporary world. The Catholic Schools Office monitors the implementation of these policy. No changes were made to

the policy this year.

The full text of the individual policies may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or at the CSO website.

### **Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility**

Respect for all members of society was promoted on a whole school basis through the charitable works program, in which members of the Students' Representative Council took a leading role. The College continued its involvement in the Red Cross Blood Donor Program and in the Riding for the Disabled Program.

Student involvement in civic events was encouraged. Students who volunteered such events were recognised by the presentation of certificates, usually at College assemblies.

The College maintains active participation in town ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day activities. Aspects of Civics and Citizenship were addressed through the History and Geography courses, especially in Years 9 and 10.

Respect and Responsibility is also promoted through the College's Pastoral Care and Discipline Policies, which were reinforced by Year Supervisors at Year assemblies and by the Principal and Assistant Principal at the fortnightly College assemblies.

Each year, the College develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. The plan is drawn from the College's Strategic Improvement Plan and informed by the document *Diocesan Intentions and Directions 2012-2014*. The College engages in an annual evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness against these external standards in collaboration with the Schools Consultant.

### **Key Improvements Achieved in 2014**

Major achievements from 2014 Annual Plan:

#### **1. Mission and Evangelisation.**

Staff were actively involved in staff retreats, liturgies and Masses.

Good attendance by families at the Opening Mass and Family Mass.

Students were actively involved in mission activities.

#### **2. Learners and Learning.**

Review of teaching and learning practices was undertaken, including analysis of examination results.

Use of ICT in the classroom was expanded with additional iPads and touch screen TVs installed.

#### **3. Leadership.**

Processes to enhance staff orientation and new scheme teachers requirements continues and proving effective.

Staff showing leadership potential were identified and offered leadership roles in an acting capacity as opportunities arose. Suitable PD opportunities were also identified and offered to suitable staff.

#### **4. Partnerships.**

College Newsletter is now available to families via email, website and app.

The College website and app are continually updated to maintain relevance.

St Mary's students participated in many community events.

#### 5. Resourcing.

The portable PA system is being utilised for various College events.

The Food Technology block improvement is in progress.

Asset register is maintained.

### **Priority Key Improvements for 2015**

#### 1. Mission and Evangelisation.

St Mary's staff to be able to articulate the Catholic Core Principles and Values.

#### 2. Learners and Learning.

Increasing students' potential to achieve Bands 5 and 6 in the HSC.

To engage and extend the top students in Years 7 to 12.

To improve school culture and student attitude towards excellence in learning.

#### 3. Leadership.

To develop a whole school plan for mentoring Institute Teachers/New Scheme Teachers.

#### 4. Partnerships.

St Mary's College community to have a more visible presence in the Parish.

## 5. Resources.

To develop a master plan for the resourcing of the College, prioritising the facilities required for the next major building project.

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, the College has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the College from parents, students and teachers.

**Parent Satisfaction**

There were 152 responses to the parent survey. Parents responded to 38 statements covering the areas of Resources, Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Catholic Ethos, Improvement Processes and General Matters. The average overall satisfaction rating of parents was 73%, with a mean score of 3.66 out of 5. The highest satisfaction being with Leadership (3.87), followed by Resources (3.76), Teaching and Learning (3.63), Improvement Processes (3.52) and Catholic Ethos (3.57).

**Student Satisfaction**

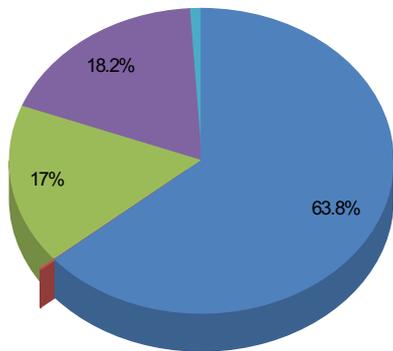
There were 148 responses to the student survey. Students responded to 35 statements covering the areas of Resources, Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Catholic Ethos, Improvement Processes and General Matters. The average overall satisfaction rating of students was 71%, with a mean score of 3.62 out of 5. The highest satisfaction being with Teaching and Learning (3.75), followed by Catholic Ethos (3.59), Leadership (3.55), Resources (3.39) and Improvement Processes (3.29).

**Teacher Satisfaction**

There were 43 responses to the staff survey. Staff responded to 37 statements covering the areas of Resources, Leadership, Staff Engagement, Catholic Ethos, Improvement Processes and General Matters. The average overall satisfaction rating of students was 73%, with a mean score of 3.67 out of 5. The highest satisfaction being with Resources (3.8), followed by Catholic Ethos (3.78), Staff Engagement (3.72), Leadership (3.62), and Improvement Processes (3.47).

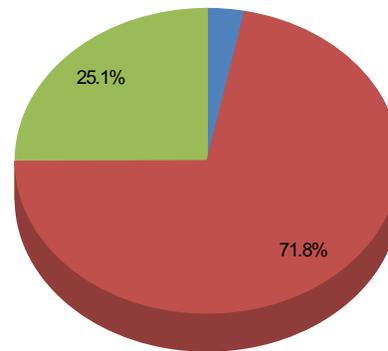
**SECTION ELEVEN: FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

**Income**



- Commonwealth Recurrent Grants (63.8%)
- Government Capital Grants (0%)
- State Recurrent Grants (17%)
- Fees and Private Income (18.2%)
- Other Capital Income (1%)

**Expenditure**



- Capital Expenditure (3.2%)
- Salaries and Related Expenses (71.8%)
- Non-Salary Expenses (25.1%)

This School Financial Information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire.

School Financial Information for the 2014 year is detailed below:

<b>RECURRENT and CAPITAL INCOME</b>	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$4,278,669
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$1,771
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$1,138,898
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$1,219,508
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$68,123
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$6,702,675</b>

<b>RECURRENT and CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</b>	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$193,487
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$4,408,118
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$1,539,440
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$6,141,045</b>

For the 2014 year the St Mary's College received \$4,350 as Interest Subsidy.

Our school community is appreciative of the support it received from the NSW State Government under the Interest Subsidy Scheme

**Notes**

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.
3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income.
5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture and Equipment.
7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.

## **Enrolment Policy**

BISHOP'S COMMISSION FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

### POLICY STATEMENT

ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS IN CATHOLIC SYSTEMIC SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

#### 1. RATIONALE

The Catholic Church teaches that the “task of imparting education belongs primarily to the family” and that parents “have a primary and inalienable duty and right in regard to the education of their children”. (Vatican Council II, Decree on Christian Education, nn 3 & 6) Furthermore, parents have the duty ‘to entrust their children to Catholic schools whenever this is possible’. (ibid, n.8)

1.1 This policy addresses the needs of families seeking a Catholic education.

Its primary focus is to provide guidelines for the enrolment of children from Catholic families. Catholic families are defined as:

Families in which at least one parent is a Catholic or in which the children to be enrolled have been baptised Catholics.

1.2 This policy seeks to establish consistency across the Diocese in enrolment practices.

1.3 This policy reflects and supports the Diocesan Mission and Vision Statement (1997-2001 Catholic Schools Office Diocese of Armidale): To provide quality education for students in the Catholic Tradition in partnership with rural communities, and the words of Bishop Kevin Manning in launching this statement “Catholic schools in the Armidale Diocese aim to educate, to build community and to serve and thus support parents who are the primary and principal educators of their children.”

#### 2. ESSENTIAL PROVISIONS

The following provisions are essential to the implementation of the policy:

2.1 Each school develops an enrolment policy which is consistent with the provisions of this and Annual School Report to the Community 2014

other Diocesan Policies and directives while being sensitive to local needs.

2.2 Each school establishes a school enrolment process.

2.2.1 This process encompasses the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the school's enrolment policy.

2.2.2 This process includes appropriate consultation between the Principal, the Parish Priest(s), the school board and relevant representatives of the community(ies) on which the school depends.

2.3 Each school will have an Application for Enrolment form as part of the school Enrolment Policy. See Appendix 2.

2.4 The school enrolment policy is available to all members of the parish and school communities and a copy is forwarded to the Diocesan Director of Schools.

2.5 All parents seeking to enrol children in Catholic schools are assisted to understand the ideals and principles upon which the Catholic School is based.

2.6 While children from all families who are prepared to support the ideals and principles of the Catholic school may be considered for enrolment, priority in enrolment is given in the following order, except in special circumstances: (See Bases of Discretion)

2.6.1 Children of Catholic families.

2.6.2 Non-Catholic children who have previously attended another Catholic school or whose parents, for religious reasons, wish them to have a Catholic education.

2.7 It is expected that children of Catholic families will normally make up at least 75% of the enrolment of the school. Permission to allow any significant departure from this norm must be sought from the Diocesan Director of Schools.

2.8 Enrolment age of children entering kindergarten must be in accordance with the directives in the CSO Administrative Handbook.

### 3. IDENTIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Prior to enrolment the educational needs of applicants will be identified. If the level of support

required is beyond the capacity/ability of the school to provide, the matter will be referred to the CSO to make a determination as to the ability of the Diocese to meet the needs of the applicant. Refer to Part A Handbook and Support Documents for Students with Special Needs, Diocese of Armidale.

#### 4. SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

Children of families who are suffering financial hardship and related inability (as opposed to unwillingness) to pay school fees fully or in part should not find this an obstacle to enrolment within the terms of the Policy: Diocesan School Fees.

#### 5. BASES OF DISCRETION

5.1 In relation to the implementation of the general and particular principles outlined in 2.2, consideration also may be given, as local needs require, for the following reasons:

5.1.1 family situations necessitating a pastoral approach or requiring the exercise of compassion,

5.1.2 parents' intention with regard to their own and their children's search for "education in the faith",

5.1.3 the enrolment of siblings of children already attending the school,

5.1.4 family circumstances involving relocation.

5.2 Full fee-paying overseas students may be enrolled in Catholic schools after the needs of local students who are eligible for enrolment have been met. Full fee paying overseas students are enrolled in accordance with the requirements of the Catholic Education Commission NSW, which are available from the Catholic Schools Office.

#### 6. APPEALS

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified and given reasons for the rejected application by the School Principal and advised that they may appeal to the Diocesan Director of Catholic Schools. (See Appendix 1 "Procedures for Appeal").