



Annual Report to  
Bishop Peter Ingham in respect of  
*Good Samaritan Education Colleges in the*  
**Wollongong Diocese 2016 Year**

# Good Samaritan Education

*Good Samaritan Education (GSE)* was established by the Superior of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict and constituted as a Public Juridic Person by the Archbishop of Sydney on July 22, 2011. *GSE* assumed the rights and obligations of the apostolic works of the Sisters in the ministry of Catholic Education. In the Diocese of Wollongong, these works are conducted at St Patrick's College, Campbelltown, St Mary Star of the Sea College, Wollongong and Mater Dei, Camden.

St Patrick's College, St Mary Star of the Sea College and Mater Dei were founded by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. St Patrick's was established in 1840, St Mary Star of the Sea in 1873 and Mater Dei in 1910. The Sisters incorporated each College under the Corporations Act during the 1980s and 1990s.

## Governance Structure



## Association of Ministerial PJPs

In 2016, *GSE* became a foundation member of the Association of Ministerial PJPs (AMP). In partnering with other ministries of canonical governance through AMP, *GSE* seeks to participate in a vibrant expression of Christ's mission in the world and to actively enable the co-responsibility of all Christ's faithful for the flourishing of the Church and its ministries.

## Statutes

To constitute *Good Samaritan Education* as a public juridic person, it is a pre-requisite that its Statutes 'are approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority' (Canon 117). Cardinal Pell, as Archbishop of Sydney, approved the Statutes *ad experimentum et ad quinquennium*, that is, for an experiential period of five years in July, 2011. In 2015, the Statutes were reviewed and approved by the Assembly and the (final) Decree was signed by Archbishop Fisher on March 15, 2016.

The Statutes of *Good Samaritan Education* are its fundamental legal document. The Statutes together with the statements of the Charism of *Good Samaritan Education* and the Philosophy of Education of *Good Samaritan Education* form the foundational documents of *Good Samaritan Education*.

The Statutes authenticate the life and role of *Good Samaritan Education* within the Church, establishing it in its relationships with other ecclesial structures and entities, especially the particular Churches, and with competent ecclesial authority in accordance with the law. The Statutes not only elucidate the identity of *Good Samaritan Education*, they serve to protect it. Furthermore the Statutes define and safeguard the canonical autonomy of *Good Samaritan Education*.

Article 5 of the Statutes of *Good Samaritan Education* sets out its purpose, in part, as:

*The purpose in keeping with the mission of the Church for which Good Samaritan Education, in accordance with canon 114, has been established is:*

- 4º to take over from the Institute its Catholic Schools as determined by the Superior of the Institute, and to conduct them as Catholic Schools in accordance with canon 803 §1;*
- 6º to undertake in accordance with the Regulations other proper apostolic works of the Institute, as determined by the Superior of the Institute.*

Article 5 4º of the Statutes mandates *Good Samaritan Education* to succeed the Institute of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, as the public juridic person responsible for the Catholic schools formerly under the control of the religious institute, itself a public juridic person. These colleges are now by legal right proper apostolic works of *Good Samaritan Education*, which give expression to its share in the mission of the Church.

Effective from 1 June 2012, *Good Samaritan Education* is the public juridic person held accountable by Church authority for the Catholic identity of its Colleges, for their fidelity to the Catholic faith and the teaching of the Church, and for their compliance with the laws of the Church governing Catholic schools.

Article 6 of the Statutes of *Good Samaritan Education* states that:

*Good Samaritan Education continues the mission of Christ through its apostolic works in the Particular Churches, in accordance with the norms of canon law. In particular Good Samaritan Education shall:*

- 6º provide annually to the diocesan Bishop a report in respect of its apostolic work(s) in the Particular Church.*

In accordance with Article 6, this is a report on the fidelity of the schools of *Good Samaritan Education* to their Catholic mission.

## Formation

The focus of *GSE* is Jesus Christ and his mission, which is the mission of the Church. All members of *GSE* participate in formation experiences to help them grow in understanding of their ministry as part of this same mission. Embedded in the Scriptures and the Rule of St Benedict, these formation experiences are centred on Christ and organised around the three pillars of Prayer, Community and Mission. Formation programs within this *GSE* Formation Framework address the development of:

- human qualities critical to forming wholesome relationships and building Christian community
- a spirituality and practice of prayer that underpins a shared ethos and animates ministry
- adequate knowledge in theological and pastoral studies to support a shared understanding of mission

- the practical pastoral abilities to serve in the ministry of Catholic education.

Each year, members of *GSE* commit to a program of formation appropriate to their individual ministry.

## **GSE Formation for Mission Framework**

As well as engaging participants on an intellectual level, *GSE* formation programs invite a spiritual journey. They are about ‘enabling people to grow as human beings and as disciples of Christ so that they might truly respond to the Gospel call to bring about the reign of God’<sup>1</sup>.

### **Prayer**

A rhythm of prayer is woven throughout the daily schedule of *GSE* formation programs. Opportunities are provided for participants to critically reflect upon their experiences and to allow themselves time and space to be changed by them. The Listen, Learn, Live methodology has been developed to guide participants through a reflective process, which uses foundational elements of the tradition to engage them in a personal response.

### **Personal Learning**

In a *GSE* formation program, participants are involved in personal engagement with processes that require critical reflection to understand, synthesise and apply new information. When involved in transformative learning participants are engaged in a process which taps into how they view the world. The interplay of cognitive, emotional, moral, social and spiritual aspects of themselves results in a modification of this view, which in turn can change behaviour, practice and pedagogy.

### **Professional Learning**

The design elements of *GSE* formation programs reflect the five main principles of adult learning: self-concept, experience, readiness, orientation and motivation. Formation programs are about experiential learning and involve the potential for participants to undergo personal growth and change and to assimilate new learning. Experiential learning can trigger reflection on reframing methods and outcomes for mission and pedagogy in the school setting.

## **Catholic Identity**

As the culture of a Catholic school is authentic only ‘in a relational and community context’<sup>2</sup>, Catholic schools seek to implement ‘a real educational community, built on the foundation of shared projected values’<sup>3</sup>

The Second Vatican Council makes it clear that this community aspect of Catholic schools has a theological dimension as well as a sociological one<sup>4</sup>. The educating community ‘is thus called to further the objective of a school as a place of complete formation through interpersonal relations’<sup>5</sup>. This requires educators to be ‘willing to offer a permanent commitment to formation and self-formation regarding a choice of cultural and life values to be made present in the educational community’<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>*GSE* Formation for Mission Framework 2010

<sup>2</sup>Congregation for Catholic Education (2007), *A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful*, #12 997, *Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, #18

<sup>3</sup>Congregation for Catholic Education (2007), *A Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful*, #5 3

<sup>4</sup>Vatican Council 11 (1965), *Declaration on Christian Education Gravissimum Educationis*, #8

<sup>5</sup>Congregation for Catholic Education (1997), *Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, #18

<sup>6</sup>Congregation for Catholic Education (1997), *The Catholic School*, #32

GSE formation programs are firmly positioned within this shared Catholic identity, and explicit in their expression of the GSE educational mission.

## The Tradition of the Sisters

GSE formation opportunities aim to engage participants in the rich heritage of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan through story and tradition. The Sisters directive from Polding was 'to teach in schools, to visit and assist the sick in their own homes and in hospitals, to instruct ignorant persons in the faith, to conduct orphanages, to reform the lives of penitent women and to apply themselves to every other charitable work'<sup>7</sup>. The Sisters have lived the spirit of the parable for over 150 years by imitating the charity of the kind Samaritan and by 'using gentleness and compassion for the unhappy whom they tend'<sup>8</sup>.

In more recent times, the Sisters have sought to respond to the call of the gospel in urban, rural and indigenous communities in Australia; and in the Pacific region in various cultural settings – Japan, 1948; The Philippines, 1981; Kiribati, 1988 and Timor-Leste, 2000.

GSE aims to strengthen partnerships by providing people in its learning communities with a deeper understanding of these contemporary ministries.

## The Good Samaritan Philosophy of Education

The Good Samaritan Philosophy of Education is foundational to GSE formation experiences and to the education that is offered to students in the colleges. The philosophy draws on the strength of the Good Samaritan Benedictine tradition by valuing the dignity of each person, a love of learning, a holistic view of education and an integrated curriculum. It promotes an academic school environment, which is at the forefront of modern educational developments, a respect for individual differences and an integration of faith and life<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup>Trustees of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan (1982), *Rules of Polding: An annotated translation of the 1867 Italian text*, p.3

<sup>8</sup>Trustees of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan (1982), *Rules of Polding: An annotated translation of the 1867 Italian text*, p.3

<sup>9</sup>The Good Samaritan Philosophy of Education February 2000, edited 2003

# St Patrick's College, Campbelltown

Established in 1840, St Patrick's College is the oldest Catholic independent school in Australia. Operating under the trusteeship of *Good Samaritan Education (GSE)*, values of justice, prayerful discernment, hospitality, peace, community and stewardship are an integral part of the faith and life of the College.

As a Catholic school, the College celebrates the Church calendar and is committed to social justice and community service. Students and staff are invited to recognise the presence of God in their lives and nurture a relationship that is life-giving and sustaining.

## Mission

We cater for the diversity of young women through:

- a vibrant and inclusive faith community
- collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- an Academic Care model
- contemporary educational practice
- a safe, well-resourced and dynamic environment.

The work towards our mission is enhanced through the guidance and encouragement of dedicated and professional staff.

## Vision

As a Christ-centred community, formed in the Good Samaritan tradition, St Patrick's College empowers young women through holistic education to be independent and resilient lifelong learners who are actively engaged in working for a just society.

## Values

As a Benedictine College, St Patrick's holds Benedictine values which are an expression of Gospel values. Values are displayed around the College and each year the College profiles one value with the community for the year.

Middle school leadership positions are drawn from Benedictine values, which reinforce the relevance they have in the community.

- Stability
- Stewardship
- Community
- Humility
- Love of Christ and Neighbour
- Peace

## Enrolments and Staffing

Total Enrolments	Indigenous Enrolments	Students with Disabilities	Teaching Staff FTE	Non-Teaching Staff FTE
648	33	26	54.7	20.9

## Nurturing a faith-filled culture

### a) Spiritual and religious dimension

#### i) Religious Education curriculum

At St Patrick's College, students complete a program of study in Religious Studies in each academic year. The College follows the Diocese of Wollongong Religious Education Syllabus in Years 7 to 10 and the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) studies of Religion I and II syllabus in Years 11 and 12. Currently there are no Catholic Studies classes in Years 11 or 12.

The course for each academic year is structured so that the pastoral programs, social justice initiatives and the retreat and reflection day programs are supported within the curriculum. Gospel and Benedictine values form the foundation of all learning within the classroom. Specific Benedictine values are allocated to each of the topics across the Years 7–10 units of work.

The Religious Studies and Studies of Religion curriculum continued to be delivered using contemporary, innovative, engaging and sequential programs that allow students to build on what they know and progress through the learning continuum. In the middle school, the newly introduced Year 7 programs were reviewed and streamlined and overall focus remained on religious literacy. In Year 8, the focus was once again on the place of religion and faith in the wider world. The teaching and learning programs were revised after their first year of completion.

In 2016 the revised Year 9 To Know, Worship and Love curriculum was implemented. It is expected that the Year 10 revised topics will be introduced in 2017. 2016 also saw the continuation of a strategic study of Lent and Easter across Years 7–10 to complement the study of Advent and Christmas.

The new Year 9 units continued to focus on independent learning. This was supported through the inclusion of the 21st Century Fluencies, which provided a foundation for each of the five units of work. The continued use of a Bloom's Taxonomy matrix across two separate units of work also served to assist students in gaining more independence in their learning.

In the senior school, the Year 10 sequence of units is modelled very closely on the Studies of Religion curriculum in order to prepare students for the demands of this course in Years 11 and 12. The inclusion of a focus question for each unit continued in 2016.

These programs consider the learning needs of the students, the learning environment provided by the school (especially in terms of ICT and the 'Bring Your Own Device' program) and the expertise of the teachers in each particular year and/or course group. A continued focus in 2016 was a review of the teaching and learning strategies offered to the Life Skills students in Studies of Religion. Greater effort was made in having their experiences more closely mirrored to those of their peers.

An important aspect of Religious Studies at St Patrick's is the experiences offered to students outside of the classroom to support their learning. In 2016, Year 7 students again undertook an excursion to the Nan Tien Temple in Berkeley, where they toured the temple and were instructed in the practice of origami. Year 11 toured the Auburn Gallipoli Mosque and listened to young Muslim women speak about living their faith in a post-modern, multi-faith community.

The Religious Studies and Studies of Religion curriculum continues to be supported by an online subscription to the resource *Understanding Faith*. Religious Studies is also supported through the textbook *To Know, Worship and Love* for Years 7–10. Students continue to have access to these texts in class.

#### ii) Prayer and liturgy

Every Tuesday, the College community prays in the chapel. Students and staff are invited to join in a variety of experiences. We may say a few decades of the rosary, celebrate a communion service, sing or reflect on the Gospel for the day using *lectio divina*. The chapel provides a sense of reverence to our gathering.

Every morning, apart from Tuesday, staff begin with a staff-led prayer. The prayers are varied and cater to our diverse community. At times we sing, other times we watch a small YouTube clip, or we listen to a reflection. It is always a great way to begin the day.

Each of the year groups in the middle school experience a spirituality day, which has a focus on a Benedictine value. The senior years each have their own retreat experience. The programs across the three years are sequential, with the Year 12 retreat aimed at preparing the girls for experiences beyond their school years. In each program there is a focus on inviting girls to deepen their relationship with God and join in the community of prayer. Girls find each retreat very valuable and they always reflect very fondly on their experiences when they return to the College.

The programs for retreats and spirituality days are planned carefully to align with the needs of the cohort. Pastoral teachers make up the team working on the program and the briefing prior to the event is used to enable staff to familiarise themselves with the program and hone skills for the day/s. At the conclusion of the program, girls evaluate the event and staff contribute to an important review meeting. In this way, the program is always able to provide the support the students need at that time.

2016 was the centenary of the Appin Massacre. This was an occasion when soldiers killed Aboriginal women and children at a campsite and chased the men off the face of a cliff. Each year, the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry group hold a ceremony at Cataract Dam in respect to those killed. As 2016 was the year of Pax, the staff spirituality day focused on peace through reconciliation. Several Aboriginal speakers held workshops on reconciliation and after lunch, all staff convened at Cataract Dam for a moving service to remember this event, which continues to impact on our local community. It was a very moving and spiritual service where staff prayed together for those killed and those who were left to survive.

Prayer continues to precede every meeting at the College and is used at the start of the day in homeroom. Once a cycle, each year group has chapel with the Principal. Generally, this begins with the College prayer and will then focus on the church season, preparation for mass or opportunity to gather feedback from the students. Last year, it was also used for meditation and acquainting the girls with the liturgical architecture in the chapel.

Prayer is used at the beginning of all key events followed by the acknowledgment of Aboriginal country. These two focus the community and set the tone for the event. All students and staff can access the chapel during the day. We now have the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle and it is appreciated as a place of reverence and tranquillity.

Liturgies and celebrations are prepared to accommodate those students who are unchurched.

### iii) Formation

The Benedictine value for 2016 was Pax. We spent the year looking for a right relationship with our God, our community and our environment. There was a special focus on being respectful, being authentic and bringing peace into our interactions.

All new staff participate in the induction program offered by GSE. Those staff who join during the course of the year attend a presentation with the Principal on what it means to be employed in a school built on the Good Samaritan tradition.

Each year staff are encouraged and given time to participate in the formation programs offered by GSE. In 2016 a staff member participated in the Japanese Immersion and the College mission team attended the conference for Mission Leaders. Both found the experience very beneficial.

Several coordinators attended the curriculum/pastoral coordinators conference, which they found very informative. Staff also attended the Reflect, Reconnect and Renew day and the Good Samaritan retreat.

The process of discernment to determine captains from the elected body of student leaders at the student leaders camp is very much couched in Benedictine leadership. In 2016, a group of students were also inducted from Year 9 as Middle School leaders. The leadership positions are Community Leader, Humility Leader, Stewardship Leader, Stability Leader, Pax Leader and Hospitality Leader. These leadership positions align in responsibility with the senior leadership positions.

Throughout the year, the Mission Coordinator offers a professional 'learning byte' on embedding the mission in our teaching program. Participation in this learning byte is well attended as staff are very supportive of the mission of the College.

## b) Linkages between the College and the local church

The Opening School Year Mass was held on St Patrick's Day. In 2016, we held our mass at St Paul's Church, Camden. The opportunity to celebrate in a church was well appreciated by the students and the parents. The parish priest Father Michael Williams was very hospitable and the girls particularly reverent.

Sadly, Father Tony Daly, parish priest of Ruse, passed away very suddenly in 2016. Whilst he was an infrequent visitor, he was still a good friend of St Patrick's and particularly supportive of the Aboriginal community.

Father Michael Healy and Father Lucas Myint from St John the Evangelist continue to be strong supporters of the College. A number of girls were again trained in ministries for the mass. Some specially trained to be a special minister of the Eucharist and they have used these skills at College Eucharist celebrations.

Bishop Peter Ingham generates messages for the Wollongong diocese periodically. These messages are always forwarded onto the community and often referred to in the editorial of the college newsletter *Inside Out*. Year 12 have included in their portfolio the message sent from Bishop Peter as they prepare for their HSC exams.

Each year the Aboriginal students participate in the Sorry Day service at Holy Trinity Church, Minto, where they dance and read at the ceremony.

During 2016, St Patrick's has continued its involvement in the Supporting Campbelltown Community project. This is a consortium of Australian Catholic University (ACU), St Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Care, Catholic Club and the CEO Wollongong in finding a means of supporting young people in the Macarthur area with a disability. With assistance from the Catholic Club, CEO Wollongong and ACU, we have conducted some research to determine the deficit of need in the area and we will be able to begin modestly offering support to the young people with a disability.

The College chapel is now set up in a Benedictine style. The placement of liturgical items in the chapel, which is very similar to the structure in their parish churches, has helped girls to recognise the significance of the items and their location in a church. The chapel has an atmosphere of reverence and sacredness, which all girls respect.

## Building a just and caring community

GSE Colleges exist for the growth of each child enrolled and thus child protection is central to all practices and policies. St Patrick's College ensures that all policy and procedures in relation to child protection are in line with the legislative and regulatory requirements of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). The College is an inclusive community which fosters right relationships and gives evidence of solidarity with marginalised people and a commitment to the principles and practice of participative decision-making, subsidiarity and delegation.

### a) Social justice activities

Throughout the year, social justice was an active area of energetic focus at the College. The College hosted a dinner for refugees in the area. It proved to build good connections and links between the College and the local Iraqi community.

Throughout the year, Year 10 students spend each Tuesday for a term participating in community service. They assist in special schools, St Vincent de Paul Society and other outreach agencies. The girls find the experiences to be very enriching.

The College is very supportive of the local St Vincent de Paul Society Conference. Each year, 40 blankets are made by students and given to the society to warm those in the area for winter. Throughout the College, over 60 hampers are filled for Christmas giving and a team of students distribute the hampers during their holiday time. The College coordinated can drives and the winter appeal in line with the programs promoted by the society.

Students networked with other students at the Social Justice Forum at Mount St Benedict College and relished the energy and motivation of inspirational young adults. Participation in Good Samaritan Ministry Outreach exposed students to other areas of need and the action that would make a difference to those less fortunate.

Students who visited Santa Teresa in the Northern Territory returned to the College and initiated a drive for people to order the Santa Teresa crosses. This raised awareness and supported the Santa Teresa community.

St Patrick's College has a diversity across ethnicity, faith traditions and access to resources. The College celebrated Harmony Day by sharing food from different cultures on the top oval. A group of students also travelled to Amity College (a predominantly Muslim girls' school of Turkish origin) to celebrate their Cultural Diversity Day. It constructively built bridges and friendships across the cultures and faith traditions.

The College endeavoured to remain accessible to all families through the offer of scholarships and discounts. So that all can access the opportunities, fees are structured to include all activities and expenses. In this way, there is no disadvantage of inequity in the provision of services to the students.

## **b) Participative decision-making**

The Leadership Team discusses all the relevant and significant decisions that impact on the College. It is a highly functional and supportive team, who carry a large load at the College.

The Management Team hold more functional and practical roles in the College and provide significant support to Leadership. It is often the first point of call when strategic or significant decisions need to be implemented. It is also the team that contributes to the discussion during the formulation of any decision-making. The Leadership and Management Teams meet once per term and this is chaired by the Principal.

The Staff Consultancy Committee meets once per month, however the items for the agenda are not as forthcoming as in the past. A solution for many concerns are now found prior to the meeting.

# St Mary Star of The Sea College, Wollongong

St Mary Star of the Sea College has a rich history of educating young women in the Good Samaritan/Benedictine tradition. Established by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan in 1873 as an independent Catholic college for girls, the college has provided the city of Wollongong with outstanding women who have made significant and valuable contributions to our community and our Church. The College is conducted by a Board of Directors under the guidance and direction of *Good Samaritan Education (GSE)*, an ecclesial entity established by the Sisters. Working in partnership with *GSE*, the College continues its commitment to offering a holistic education aimed at enabling all girls to achieve and develop to their full potential. Through a range of programs and opportunities for involvement, girls enjoy experiences that enhance their academic, social, spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing.

In 2016, the College had a student population of 1130 girls and a staff of 120. While the College is staffed by lay teachers and administration personnel, the Good Samaritan ethos is strong, and the College works hard to maintain its links with the congregation and to foster our identity as a Good Samaritan school. We had a very successful year across all domains this year, with very good academic results, outstanding achievements in the arts, sport, public speaking and in our various social justice programs.

## Mission

Inspired and informed by our Good Samaritan heritage, St Mary Star of the Sea College educates young women, encouraging all to realise the full potential of each individual and to act for social justice, in order to make a difference in the world.

## Values

- Love of God
- Love of Learning
- Peace
- Stewardship
- Hospitality

These values are consistent with the teaching and learning framework and they are celebrated in all aspects of the academic and pastoral life of the College. They resonate in our community as signposts by which we follow Christ as Good Samaritans, striving to create a world in which the dignity of each person is appreciated and respected.

To remain faithful to the principles outlined, the College strives to provide an education that values academic achievement while balancing the academic with the spiritual, pastoral and personal dimensions of learning. The approach taken to education at St Mary's College is demonstrated by providing a Catholic education that is designed to meet the various requirements of each student in planning, teaching and in an approach to assessment that is formative and structured. We focus on an inquiry approach that allows students to explore current issues and seek contemporary solutions. We do this by utilising facilities in ways that further support and promote collaborative practices, teamwork and discernment in decision-making and planning in the learning cycle.

## Enrolments and staffing

Total Enrolment	Indigenous Enrolment	Students with Disabilities	Teaching Staff FTE	Non-Teaching Staff FTE
1123	7	55	86	37

## Nurturing a faith-filled culture

### a) Spiritual and religious dimension

#### i) Religious Education curriculum

The College continues to use the Wollongong Diocesan Religious Education curriculum. The focus for this document is the catechetical and evangelising mission of the Church that exists to enable people to understand, appreciate and celebrate the richness of the Catholic Tradition. Using the Good Samaritan Teaching and Learning Framework and our Benedictine values, the Religious Education Curriculum also enables the young women in our care to see and respond to God in their lives while supporting them in their lifelong journey in faith.

At St Mary's College, we believe that the richness of Catholic faith and culture and the best of contemporary pedagogies come together in our Religious Education Curriculum. Supported by the *To Know, Worship and Love* books and resources used in Years 7–10 across the College, this curriculum focuses on stimulating and challenging students in their understanding of Scripture and our Tradition. It also supports deeper engagement with symbol and ritual, and the ability to engage in critical thinking and moral reasoning.

Students in senior school study the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Studies of Religion 1 Unit, Studies of Religion 2 Unit, or Catholic Studies.

All students study Religious Education from Years 7–12.

#### ii) Prayer and liturgy

The Charism of the Good Samaritan Sisters, the Rule of Benedict and the Parable of the Good Samaritan form the basis for all that we do at the College. They inform our policies, guide our procedures and are evident in the ways that we communicate and live as a College community.

St Mary's College strives to cultivate a high quality liturgical life through placing an emphasis on the Benedictine values and practices of love, prayer, stability, conversation, obedience, discipline, humility, stewardship, hospitality and community. We also provide opportunities for reflection on our history, our culture and our spirituality. With strong focus on our charism and values, it is hoped that graduates will be able to engage with the world in ways that support them in deepening and expanding the reach of peace, justice and human dignity in their lives.

Prayer is a part of each day and we seek opportunities to find God in the daily happenings and realities of our life. We celebrate Mass on a regular basis, and we take time to celebrate the liturgical seasons and the significant events in the life of our community through worship, prayer and thanksgiving.

#### iii) Formation

Formation is an important part of educating and developing students and staff in our tradition. It is for this reason that the College continues to provide regular opportunities for staff to join with members of other Good Samaritan communities at network meetings, retreats and induction days. Staff and students are also provided with opportunities to attend immersion trips offered by the Good Samaritan Mission Team.

As a College, we staff recognise the importance of deepening our understanding and appreciation of our Good Samaritan/Benedictine tradition and the wonderful charism that we have been gifted with and this is undertaken in various ways. We gather weekly for prayer and our staff meetings provide time to reflect on our values and our tradition. Our Board takes opportunities at each meeting to pray and reflect on the challenges and the blessings that are part of being a Good Samaritan/Benedictine community in an increasingly secular world.

## b) Linkages between the College and the local church

As part of the Cathedral Parish, the College continues to maintain strong links with the Bishop and the Dean of the Cathedral through regular communication, participation in parish events and in our sharing of resources and facilities. The College supports local church initiatives at a variety of levels, from providing access to our facilities for diocesan events, hosting Masses in our hall and chapel and having our girls participate at diocesan and parish events. The College has worked with the Curia and the Catholic Education Office to support professional development opportunities, diocesan gatherings and diocesan consultations throughout 2016. St Mary's continues to be a highly visible presence in the Diocese of Wollongong and the College continues to work cooperatively with the Bishop and local clergy.

## Building a just and caring community

GSE Colleges exist for the growth of each child enrolled and thus child protection is central to all practices and policies. St Mary, Star of the Sea College ensures that all policy and procedures in relation to child protection are in line with the legislative and regulatory requirements of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). The College is an inclusive community which fosters right relationships and gives evidence of solidarity with marginalised people and a commitment to the principles and practice of participative decision-making, subsidiarity and delegation.

### i) Social justice activities

At St Mary's there is a natural orientation toward raising the consciousness of students and staff in the area of social justice through acting with compassion and standing in solidarity with marginalised people. This is demonstrated in numerous ways, with students involving themselves in a variety of clubs and organisations that provide opportunities to reach out and support those in greatest need. Staff demonstrate their commitment to social justice by supporting students in these endeavours and modelling behaviours that demonstrate justice and compassion.

The College has, at the heart of its mission, a preferential option for the poor, the marginalised and the needy. This is central to who we are as a community and we try to live out this mission in the ways that we celebrate diversity, welcome all people into our community, make provision for the marginalised and actively seek opportunities to be Good Samaritans to those in need. One way this is demonstrated is through our bursary program that continues to be expanded and made available to those families who may not otherwise consider the College as a possibility for their daughters.

A commitment to the common good, which is implicit in our mission, ensures that each member of our community has the chance to achieve their potential. By observing the principle of subsidiarity at St Mary's, we are attempting to ensure that responsibilities and decisions are delegated, as much as possible to those who are affected, leaders, teachers, admin staff, students and families. In this way, we hope to maximise participation in the various decisions that are part of living and working in community.

### ii) Participative decision-making

A continued focus on building a just and caring community and maintaining right relationships is an important area in the development of the new College Strategic Plan. This area is an important aspect of the identity of our school and should inform all relationships within the College. As such, right and respectful relationships don't stop with staff and are a priority with students, parents and members of our wider community.

Building and maintaining such a culture is not without its challenges as it requires a commitment by the College community to work and act in particular ways. It also requires an understanding of why we choose to live and work in an environment that supports a strong commitment to social justice. Given the challenges, I believe St Mary's continues to be a place where inclusive relationships and social justice are evident. This is evidenced by the positive, resilient culture that exists in the College and the responses in parent and student satisfaction surveys that are administered each year.

# Mater Dei, Camden

Mater Dei was founded by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan in 1957 and now is a proud member of the ten Colleges who together comprise *Good Samaritan Education (GSE)*. Mater Dei is a Catholic, coeducational, congregational school for students from Kindergarten to Year 12 who have been assessed with mild to moderate cognitive impairment as their primary disability. The underpinning philosophy of every student's enrolment at Mater Dei is inclusion into the wider community. Inclusion is based on the dignity and uniqueness of each person, self-esteem, respect, equity, independence, interdependence and responsibility. We work collaboratively with parents, guardians and advocates of the students entrusted into our care thus providing a student-centred community at Mater Dei. In this way, it is our hope that students will live as independently as possible in the least restrictive and most stimulating environment in the wider community.

## Mission

As a Catholic and Good Samaritan School in the Benedictine tradition, Mater Dei respects the dignity of each person and the unique contribution they make to our school community. We are committed to providing a holistic and inclusive education for students that builds in them a capacity to become fully participating members of the community, and that dignifies their giftedness. We strive to work with parents and guardians to empower students to live independent lives that enrich the communities in which they live.

## Values

Mater Dei embraces the values espoused in the *GSE Teaching and Learning Framework* and the *GSE Mission Framework*.

- Peace
- Prayer
- Service
- Hospitality
- Stewardship

## Enrolments and staffing

Total Enrolment	Indigenous Enrolment	Students with Disabilities	Teaching Staff FTE	Non-Teaching Staff FTE
143	1	142	18	23.8

## Nurturing a faith-filled culture

### a) Spiritual and religious dimension

#### i) Religious Education curriculum

As a Catholic School in the tradition of the Good Samaritan Sisters, Mater Dei is committed to the promotion of the religious and spiritual development of each student. We try to do this in an environment that nurtures a personal relationship with a loving God. In leading students toward this relationship, we are conscious of the cultural, environmental and spiritual factors that are part of the lives of our families. We are also sensitive to the individual needs and capacities of our students and this often requires a creative approach to the Gospels and the teachings of our Church.

Mater Dei School's Religious Education Program underpins all teaching and learning at Mater Dei. In providing students with opportunities and skills to relate to God in their own way, we provide:

- Religious Education lessons as a priority in all weekly class timetables, with each K–10 class grouping involved in the Religious Education Program, ‘To Know, Worship and Love’ throughout their school week, and Year 11 and 12 undertake HSC Catholic Studies (Life Skills)
- daily class prayer for all students and weekly school prayer as a school
- a dedicated sacred space in each classroom that is attended with great care and reverence, with particular attention given to symbols, for example liturgical colours, candles and religious icons
- regular opportunities to celebrate class and whole school masses and liturgies
- opportunities for students to engage with Good Samaritan/Benedictine Values embedded in school rules, banners and symbols around the school
- a hospitable environment that focuses on welcoming all people as Christ
- good Samaritan/Benedictine values embedded in school awards and school statements, including weekly, monthly and end of year awards such as Stewardship Awards, Citizenship Awards, St Benedict Awards and the Mater Dei Peace Prize
- opportunities for students to participate in retreats and pastoral spirituality days that foster Good Samaritan/Benedictine values and nurture students in the faith, for example the Year 11/12 Retreat, and the Good Samaritan Ministry Outreach Program.

## ii) Prayer and liturgy

Mater Dei has a strong liturgical life that follows the Church seasons. Each year we celebrate important occasions such as our annual Opening Mass and Ash Wednesday, Stations of the Cross, Mother’s Day Mass, St Benedict’s Feast Day Mass, Mater Dei Feast Day Mass, End of Year Mass and Buddy Class masses. Every second year Mater Dei also offers and coordinates a Sacramental Preparation program to Catholic students for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. Students are well prepared at school over a number of weeks in special sacramental classes. Our school chaplain Father Michael Healy and Bishop Peter Ingham celebrate our Sacramental Mass for our students and their families at the conclusion of the program.

## iii) Formation

We always search for new ways to bring life to the spiritual and religious development of our staff. We celebrate morning Mass every second Wednesday morning before school in the Mater Dei Chapel. We have a sacred space in the staff room with an invitation to staff to write in the prayer intentions book and we have a compulsory whole of staff Morning Prayer gathering every alternate Wednesday morning. This is facilitated by groups of staff and is generally well received.

Mater Dei remains committed to providing staff in all programs with opportunities to deepen their own faith and to immerse themselves in the traditions and values of the Good Samaritan Sisters. A central theme for all that we do is the parable of The Good Samaritan and the parable is used regularly to focus ourselves on our core values and to reflect upon how they speak to us today.

Staff members are provided with additional opportunities to deepen their own faith through:

- participation in weekly staff prayer at the commencement of meetings
- participation in fortnightly prayer and reflection gatherings for all school staff
- participation in the celebration of fortnightly community Mass
- regular Professional Development days focusing on the religious dimensions of our work and the deepening of knowledge and faith at whole staff and personal level
- opportunities offered to attend the Good Samaritan Retreat, Good Samaritan Network days, Orientation days and Good Samaritan Staff Induction days
- participation by staff in the Good Samaritan Immersion Programs and the sharing of such experiences at staff level
- formation sessions at staff meetings with the Principal and the Assistant Principal on the significance of various feast days, Church seasons and focusing on the Rule of Benedict

- the presentation of the Rule of St Benedict as part of the Orientation Program for all new staff members.

## b) Linkages between the College and the local church

As best as we can, we continue to seek opportunities to build our relationship with our parish of St Paul's and with our surrounding parish schools. Mater Dei staff participates in the Beginning of School Year Mass in our parish along with other Diocesan school staff. All local catholic primary and secondary schools accepted invitations for their Principals and student representatives to join in our celebration of the Feast of St Benedict. Our local parish Priest Father Michael Williams celebrated Mass on this day. This was once again a great day of celebration and community that enhanced the links between Mater Dei and our local Catholic school communities.

## Building a just and caring community

GSE Colleges exist for the growth of each child enrolled and thus child protection is central to all practices and policies. Mater Dei ensures that all policy and procedures in relation to child protection are in line with the legislative and regulatory requirements of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). The College is an inclusive community which fosters right relationships and gives evidence of solidarity with marginalised people and a commitment to the principles and practice of participative decision-making, subsidiarity and delegation.

### a) Social justice activities

Mater Dei is an inclusive community. We continue to prioritise inclusion as an aspiration across the whole organisation and most especially for our children and young adults. In all that we imagine, plan and implement, no priority is more important. This philosophy is very strongly held by all members of the Mater Dei community and it manifests itself through:

- the vocabulary we use as part of our everyday deliberations and the way in which this informs our actions
- deliberating on initiatives in our school, constantly using the vocabulary of least restrictive environments and the least dangerous assumption
- a focus on building good staff culture that encourages an inclusive staff community
- the development and implementation of policies that encourage equality of opportunity, the valuing of all staff, the right to a cohesive and supportive work environment and the support necessary to allow staff to effectively undertake their duties
- the provision of regular inclusion opportunities for all students enrolled at Mater Dei, including current programs such as inclusive schooling opportunities, community access programs, structured work placement programs and reverse inclusion visits from mainstream schools
- working with mainstream schools to build capacity for the development of more inclusive communities that foster right relationships and support the poor, the marginalised and the dispossessed in their local communities
- working with visiting students on practicum experience from the University of Western Sydney's Medicine faculty and from the ACU
- seeking to provide employment opportunities for adults who have intellectual disability
- staff and students being proudly involved in Project Compassion each year and our Year 10 students serving our local community with Meals on Wheels each week.

### b) Participative decision-making

Currently, the ways in which the principles of participative decision-making, subsidiarity and delegation are exercised include:

- a leadership model that is inclusive of all departments and all areas of the organisation

- meeting structures that allow for participative decision-making and delegation of authority
- increasingly providing opportunities for departments to take greater responsibility for their own budgets, staffing and resourcing to the extent that this is possible and honouring the principle of subsidiarity
- providing opportunities for staff to contribute to the direction of the organisation through meetings, surveys and evaluations focusing on current and future initiatives and major issues
- a growing openness across the organisation to consult and to listen in a range of areas and to give staff a voice in major and minor decisions
- a conscientious commitment to change the emphasis of meeting agendas from information driven to shared professional learning and dialogue.

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