



# **St Paul's Catholic School**

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2015**



orders are the Sisters of Mercy and the Christian Brothers. The school caters for students from Kindergarten to Grade 6 and has a current student enrolment of 197, including Kindergarten. The core values and mission of the school include a strong emphasis on promoting the value of each child in the school as well as a very recognisable culture of caring and supporting all students and families. The school aims to provide an educational foundation for each individual to reach his or her full development as a person, intellectually, spiritually, physically, morally and emotionally. The school also provides an excellent extra-curricular program which for 2015 included Sport, Physical Education, Music, Library, skipping, Dance and Drama.

St Paul's Catholic School has a relatively short history being built in 1983 for the start of the 1984 school year. We continually celebrate the two founding orders (Sisters of Mercy and the Christian Brothers) who took on the caretaker role of the school. The traditional culture, set by the religious order principals in the early years, have been continued by the first lay Principal, appointed in 2002 and subsequent principals.

## **VISION and MISSION STATEMENTS**

### Vision

St Paul's Catholic Primary School continually strives to fulfil the Gospel ideals and values based on the belief, 'We are God's work of Art' (Ephesians 2:10)

### Mission

We aim to develop and nurture all of our school community to reach their full potential by:

- invoking the charism of the Sisters of Mercy and the Christian Brothers to encourage faith and a spiritual journey with Christ.
- providing rich learning experiences that develop the whole child, that are valued and promoted within all aspects of school life.
- developing a welcoming school community built on relationships based on mutual respect.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### Catholic Education

The Archbishop of Hobart has ultimate responsibility for Catholic Education in Tasmania. The Archbishop receives policy advice from the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission (TCEC). Policies, approved by the Archbishop, are enacted by the Director of Catholic Education. At the local level, the Principal is responsible for the leadership and management of the school, in accordance with overall Archdiocesan policy objectives and the advice of the Board.

### Systemic Catholic Schools Governing Council

The SCSGC governs the System of Catholic Schools in collegial partnership with the Director of Catholic Education, Principals and Boards. The Council assumes final responsibility for all decisions and actions of members of the System of Catholic Schools acting on its behalf.

The Council's role is primarily one of overseeing, supporting and monitoring the operation of the System of Schools.

### Tasmanian Catholic Education Office (TCEO)

The Tasmanian Catholic Education Office, under the guidance of the Director, implements the policies developed by the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission and the Systemic Catholic Schools Governing Council. The Office also provides a wide range of professional and management services to all Catholic schools, including Archdiocesan and Congregation Colleges. These services are provided generally using Commonwealth recurrent and targeted funds, or through levies contributed by all Catholic schools. They cover a range of areas including Catholic Culture and Ethos, Learning and Achievement, Curriculum and Pedagogy, Learning Environment and Leadership. The Tasmanian Catholic Education Office is the contact point for a range of Tasmanian and Australian Government and education agencies.

### School Leaders

The Archbishop of Hobart appoints the Principals of Systemic Schools on recommendation of the Director in collaboration with the recommendation of an Appointment Panel.

#### Leadership within the school:

##### School Principal

The overall leadership and management of St Paul's Catholic School for 2015 was entrusted to the school Principal, Mr Stuart Kelly.

#### School Leadership Team

Membership of the 2015 School Leadership Team was Mr Stuart Kelly as Principal, Mr Justin Veitch as Assistant Principal Learning/Teaching, Mr Sam Morey Assistant Principal Religious Education, Miss Cathrine Montgomery Assistant Principal/Wellbeing and Sr Carmel Hinkley, Pastoral Care and School Chaplain.

#### School Board

St Paul's Catholic School Board members, under the leadership of Acting Board Chair, Mr Scott Smith, acted as advisers to the School Leadership Team. The Constitution, Section 3.4, states that the responsibilities of the Board are:

- to advise on and assist with the formulation of policy for the conduct of the School in line with TCEC/TCEO policies and Governing Council directives;
- to co-operate with and support the Principal in maintaining the School as an institute of Catholic Education;
- to contribute and assist, where possible, on matters regarded as major initiatives and/or changes;
- to liaise with the local Parish Priest/s and/or Parish Pastoral Council/s, in matters of mutual concern to the School and Parish/s;
- to participate in, and co-operate with, the School on the planning, research, development, implementation and evaluation of the School's Strategic Plan;

- to contribute to the planning and management of maintenance and building programs necessary for the recurrent and long-term welfare and effective development of the School; and
- to oversee the finances of the School and the prudent use of funds, according to the provisions of this Constitution and the directions of the TCEO.

### **CATHOLIC CULTURE AND ETHOS/RELIGIOUS LIFE**

The focus in the area of Religious Education continued to centre on the Archdiocese Religious Education Curriculum “Good News for Living”. Religious Education at St Paul’s aims to provide substantial learning experiences for the students in programs for the Liturgical Calendar of the Church, incorporating Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas. Our mission at St Paul’s Catholic School is to follow Jesus, our Teacher, by providing a welcoming and supportive environment where we strive to live the Gospel values of love, forgiveness, justice, compassion and peace. The promotion of these Gospel values is evident in our modelling to our students, by word and example, to become fulfilled and responsible members of society. The partnership between parents and staff working together is an essential part of the development of relationships within our school community. We strive to develop within our community an attitude of respect and acceptance where all members are valued. As an educational community, we aim to challenge students to express their opinions and communicate effectively and creatively, so that they may become resourceful and effective problem-solvers with a commitment to life-long learning.

At St Paul’s we are committed to providing opportunities for students, staff and the community to develop their spirituality and outreach. We aim to maintain the charism and spirituality of our two Founding Orders – the Mercy Sisters and the Christian Brothers. We continued a major focus on developing a greater understanding of the work of Catherine McAuley and Edmund Rice. During the year, we supported outreach programs such as CARITAS, and the

Archbishop’s Samaritan Project and other ‘causes’ for which the school has an affinity. As a Catholic school, it is important for us to celebrate as a Christ-centred community. We gathered throughout the year to celebrate prayer in class groups and as a whole school. Classes endeavour to attend the Parish Mass on Tuesdays to be ‘one with the Parish’. We support the Parish Sacramental programs of Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation, which are significant celebrations in the Parish/School year. Parents are vital participants in the programs, and we encourage them to support their children through preparation and celebration of the Sacraments.

As an important part of the Bridgewater Brighton Parish, we strive to foster co-operation, support and communication. We encourage students and their families to attend Parish Masses, Holy Days and significant Feast Days. Special liturgies are held to celebrate important events such as Holy Week, The Assumption, ANZAC Day, Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, Remembrance Day, Advent, the Commissioning Mass at the beginning of the year and the Graduation / Thanksgiving Masses at the end of the year.

## **STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT**

### **Student background**

**School ICSEA value:** 933

### **Distribution of Students**

Bottom Quarter	Middle Quarter		Top Quarter
47%	31%	19%	2%

## **NAPLAN Results for 2015**

Comparatives for like and all schools -

	READING	WRITING	SPELLING	GRAMMAR and PUNCTUATION	NUMERACY
GRADE 3 ST PAUL'S	355	342	333	362	333
GRADE 3 LIKE SCHOOLS	385	387	380	395	365
GRADE 3 ALL SCHOOLS	426	426	409	433	398
GRADE 5 ST PAUL'S	486	415	453	484	471
GRADE 5 LIKE SCHOOLS	463	454	472	469	464
GRADE 5 ALL SCHOOLS	499	478	498	503	493

During 2015, we focused on a number of strategic and operational goals to enhance student learning by engaging in improvement strategies that drew from the critical reflection of our school community, as it responds to various questions and issues about student learning. This ensures that knowledge remains current and that we cater for the various educational needs, learning styles and challenges presented at St Paul's Catholic School.

Students with special needs, talents and gifts are given appropriate opportunities, challenges and experiences to develop their potential and meet their learning needs with various activities throughout the year. Individual education programs are provided for students who are assisted in our educational support programs. Targeted intervention, extension and enrichment formed the basis for catering for the diverse learning needs of students. Multlit (Making Up Lost Time in Literacy) the intervention reading program designed for students who are experiencing some difficulties in the

acquisition of appropriate reading skills continued as a major focus. Pre-Lit and Mini-Lit were also fully implemented in the Early Years. EASAL programs offered enrichment experiences for our talented students. Letters and Sounds and Daily 5 programs were consolidated in 2015 and became an integral part of our Literacy Block. All staff were trained in facilitating the PM Benchmarking, which is valuable reading data.

Grade Six students continue to be involved in leadership programs, which develop their skills and experience in assisting and supporting younger students. These programs include the 'Making Jesus Real', which provide opportunities for Grade 6 students to participate in leadership activities which promote values, character building and Christian living. The program enables students to explore co-operative group sharing activities and encourages them to show initiative in decision-making and problem solving tasks. It encourages affirmation of others and develops leadership potential through understanding the responsibilities of being effective leaders. The organisational and team skills of student leaders were promoted and practised by their involvement in the very successful Red Day fundraising, training for sports events and commitment to house events and peer support.

## **LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

In 2015 we continued with pedagogical transition from instruction to active learning, thus increasing the capacity for and attention to personalised learning, collaborative learning, globalised learning and project-based learning.

## **CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY**

The students of St Paul's Catholic School receive a Catholic education which encompasses the following learning areas: Religious Education; English; Mathematics; Science; Technology: History and Geography; the Arts, which includes Music, Dance and Drama; Health and Physical Education, and LOTE.

We aim to:

- Guide students in their discovery of a Christian way of living within the family of God within our Catholic tradition.
- Assist students to develop and grow academically to the best of their abilities and capabilities.
- Encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Provide equity and equal opportunity for all students.
- Provide a well-balanced curriculum, which acknowledges and addresses the needs of students in a climate of social, cultural and technological change.
- Assist students to develop self-confidence, self-esteem, and respect for others.
- Encourage students to learn co-operatively and collaboratively and to maintain a positive attitude to learning.

To provide and maintain a positive environment, we aim to:

- Become witnesses of the Gospel values of truth, justice, freedom, love and service.
- Create a friendly, safe and supportive school community where everyone is treated with dignity.
- Provide balanced and broad Catholic educational experiences which stimulates learning, encourage excellence and respects individual differences.
- Support staff through structures that allow for personal and professional growth.
- Give every opportunity for parents to enter into an educational partnership with staff and to share in their children's spiritual, emotional and intellectual development.
- Support staff, parents and students in times of grief, illness and stress.

During 2015, St Paul's Catholic School taught the Australian curriculum for English, Maths, Geography, Science and History and continued the transition in other learning area curricula as specified by Catholic Education Tasmania. St Paul's Catholic School also continued to utilise the Science Program, 'Primary Connections' to support the teaching of Science in conjunction with

the Australian Curriculum. Primary Connections is an innovative and exciting approach to teaching and learning which links the teaching of Science with the teaching of literacy in Australian primary schools. Primary Connections supports teachers to improve students' scientific literacy, as well as their learning outcomes in both science and literacy. Linking science with literacy enriches the learning experience for students.

The Primary Connections 5Es teaching and learning model is based on the theory that students learn best when they are allowed to work out explanations for themselves over time through a variety of learning experiences structured by the teacher. Students use their prior knowledge to make sense of these experiences and then make connections between new information and their prior knowledge. To help students make the connections between what they already know and new information, each Primary Connections unit uses five phases: Engage, Explore, Explain Elaborate and Evaluate.

Access to digital technologies continued to support student learning in 2015. Our goal and focus was to implement lessons and planning which facilitated the integration of digital technologies across all curriculum areas. Thus ipads, laptops, interactive whiteboards, internet access, educational programs and apps continue to be an integral part of the learning environment. In 2015 St Paul's commenced a one-to-one ipad program with students in Grade 5 and 6. These devices were funded by the school and loaned to the students for the school year.

St Paul's Catholic School continued the Birth to 4 years program for our school community. The program known as 'Engaging the Learning Community' endeavours to create a community rich in learning and teaching so we can provide opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with the three central stakeholders in a child's learning – the child, the family and the school. St Paul's offers this program in partnership with Good Beginnings.

ETLC involves the bringing together of families, educators and community support groups. The Engaging the Learning Community program supports existing school families and fosters the development of on-going relationships with potential families in the community, who may not be aware of what St Paul's Catholic School has to offer. Engaging parents with the learning community enables greater communication between school and home, between the child and their family and support learning.

### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The school has an attendance policy, which aims to maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or frivolous absences. All student absences are recorded in the morning by teachers, and are aggregated on our database and communicated to agencies as required. The Principal contacts parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.

### **CAPITAL WORKS**

2015 saw the design and initial construction of Sensory Room. This important space is crucial for our students that face additional challenges. The school also upgraded the primary student toilets and completed projects in the school environment that was from funds allocated by the TCEO in 2014.

### **SCHOOL INITIATIVES**

Three members of the school leadership team travelled to Bendigo in March 2015 to be trained by staff from Yale University in the RULER Program. RULER is an acronym that stands for Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating emotions. The first two stages of RULER were fully implemented in 2015. A staff Charter was also produced.

### SCHOOL CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM

School chaplain and pastoral care worker continued to be an incredible resource to staff, students and families. The chaplaincy program gives Sr Carmel the most valuable of resources – time. As a trusted listener and supporter she, among a diverse range of practices, walks and talks with students and families, conducts programs to support children through grief, trouble shoots in times of crisis and initiates 'hobby' projects which bring children together to learn and socialise positively.

### Revved Up & MPower

A number of teaching staff in 2015 were trained in the MPower & Revved Up Programs. Both programs are to assist with the social and emotional growth of our Grade 3-6 students. MPower is for girls and Revved Up for boys. These groups gathered on a weekly basis to discuss issues and factors that are impacting on their wellbeing. Both programs were very successful in engaging the students and for providing a forum for understanding and development.

### Drumbeat

Three staff were trained as facilitators of the Drumbeat Program in 2015. Drumbeat is a drumming program for students that are dealing with trauma and other serious challenges.

### Futures

2015 saw the full implementation of our school based Futures Program. The program was designed, planned and full implemented by St Paul's staff. This program gave all students an opportunity to choose a small group activity each Thursday afternoon. Groups included – gardening club, bike club, boot camps, choirs, guitar groups, mechanics, sewing, glee club, art club, etc..

The Futures initiative was well supported by students from Guilford Young College and the Catholic Education Office. This program also gave the parents an opportunity to participate in the activities and even lead some them. At the end of each term each group showcased their new skills and talents to the

wider school community.

#### Mercy Action Program (MAP)

An exciting new initiative that saw the Sisters of Mercy take an active role in our community supporting our most marginalized and vulnerable students. The school staff, led by Sr Carmel, facilitated two holiday programs in January and a Grade 6 Leadership Day. This gave our most challenging students something to be excited about before returning to school (January 2015) and a positive start to the school year. MAP also sponsored an artist in residence program and supported a range of other programs in the school, including purchasing mountain bikes.

#### Bridges out of Poverty

All staff participate in the Bridges out of Poverty Workshop (2 days) in February 2015. This proved to be a valuable experience and assisted all staff in understanding the complexities of working with the poor and marginalized. A direct result of this professional Learning was the implementation of a range of new structures, processes and programs. One success story from the course was the training all staff received in the use storytelling when dealing with volatile and aggressive parents.

#### School Playground Environment

Our playground environment continues to develop and grow. 2015 saw the continuation of our Kitchen Garden Program. This program has reconnected a number of parents back to the community and has given a number of students an opportunity to develop in an area they are passionate about. The basketball court received a significant upgrade and the playbox and construction areas continued to be improved.

#### St Paul's Soccer Club

A major achievement in 2015 was the establishment of the St Paul's Soccer Club. Over 70 students from Prep – Grade 6 were representing St Paul's every

Saturday morning in the Northern Suburbs Soccer Association. This has developed a sense of pride in the school and has actively engaged a large number of parents in coaching and managing.

#### Mentoring Programs

St Paul's continued to develop relationships with St Virgil's College, St Patrick's College (Launceston) and Guilford Young College. All three Colleges facilitate a range of programs at St Paul's, which promote higher education and provide our school with a range of positive role models. GYC students participated in our FUTURES Program every Thursday afternoon and the St Patrick's students worked throughout the year with our Grade 6 leaders, including a joint camping experience. SVC students are regular visitors to the school and worked across all grade areas.

Stuart Kelly

**Principal**