Part D – About Implementation

While Part A outlined the key implementation principles, this section briefly explores shared assumptions, values and responsibilities, along with implications for leadership and induction processes.

Shared assumptions

Any initiatives in spiritual formation will sit within the Catching Fire Framework, and operate on the following assumptions:

• The lifelong learner is the focus and frame. This is a person-centred framework.

• Each ‘lens’ (Jesus Communion Mission) provides a trajectory through which that dimension of Christian life has particular focus and is connected to the lifelong learner’s context, personally and professionally.

• These three dimensions overlap and interplay. In reality, they are interconnected and the development of each develops the whole. In any one initiative, it is possible to shift and layer each lens. At the same time, the elements of each dimension ought be identifiable and easily articulated.

• Embedded into the design framework is a communal dimension of living and learning, foundational to Christian spirituality and Catholic education. It is cognisant of both the common journey characteristic of the individual’s immediate staff and school or office community, as well as the broader Catholic education community that includes parents, parish communities and archdiocesan ministries. This circle of connectivity wraps around, and holds in community, the individual journey.

• Strategies are multi-targeted, multi-locational, multi-modal and multi-dimensional. In addition to school based training and initiatives, presenters are coordinated from all directorates and from an ‘outside’ network.

• All initiatives coordinated through BCEC are explicitly and carefully linked

• conceptually to the Spiritual Formation Framework (Jesus/Communion/Mission Dimensions) and

• strategically to the Strategic Renewal Framework for Catholic Schooling 2007-2011 (Priorities 1, 4 and 5).

Shared Values

This Spiritual Formation Framework is based on the following shared values which we hold to be fundamental to our educational mission:

• Our Catholic Christian tradition - we are a pilgrim people, journeying together. Our story is never fully written, so our plans are never fully realised. We are constantly drawing upon our tradition and being called into new ways of growing and renewing ourselves as church.

• Dignity and justice for all - all persons are created equal and human dignity is inviolable. Our educational efforts should confirm the belief that everyone is unique, that individual distinctions enrich and enliven our world and that the individual has both rights and responsibilities.

• Catholic Christian community - a community in communion that does not exist for itself but is empowered by the Spirit to be at the service of others; an evangelising and joyful presence in the world.

• High quality learning - education shall impart in the learner a zest for life, the courage to tackle it, and a desire by students to use and extend what they learn. Critical judgement in different areas of learning should be developed by testing expression and performance against identifiable standards.
• **Collaboration and subsidiarity** - Catholic educators make use of a ‘shared wisdom’ in arriving at decisions and attempt to locate decision making at the lowest appropriate level.

• **Creativity** - we look for creative, flexible and future oriented responses that best address the needs of students, the local community, system and government.

• **Stewardship** - education should view individuals as moral beings, accountable for their decisions and responsible for their actions, with an ability to seek what is true and to do what is right.

• **A mutual accountability** - as an educational community we report on the outcomes of our work and the degree to which our intentions are realised.

**Shared Responsibility**

**Individual Staff Responsibility:**
An invitation to Spiritual Formation goal setting

**Spiritual Formation Goal Setting**
This key strategy seeks to integrate spiritual formation goal setting into the general individual goal setting of Brisbane Catholic Education staff. Professional goal setting already happens at middle management and leadership level and is presently being encouraged at general staff level. This strategy invites individual discernment about needs and interests in the area of spiritual formation, and can be facilitated to integrate into broader professional goal setting. Again this is an approach that sits spiritual formation within the broad field of professional learning and not as an adjunct to core business. School based, flexible options are important for this initiative. Rather than being a ‘silo’ strategy, it is envisaged as a way of putting spiritual formation in focus with other goal setting and actively supporting staff to identify and follow their own needs in this area.

**School or Section Level Responsibility:**
With the integration of spiritual formation into renewal planning and goal setting, spiritual formation will become more intentionally integrated into school renewal planning and goal setting, and annual planning for the whole staff.

**Archdiocesan Level Responsibility:**
Provision and co-ordination of strategic development of staff formation programmes that are sustainable at a grass roots level, as well as a range of system wide resources accessible to all school and BCEC communities. Programmes are targeted with an inherent long-term aim to build facilitator capacity among school communities. The integration of spiritual formation into priority areas such as leadership and induction processes constitute priority targeting.

**Spiritual Formation and Catholic Leadership**

Formation programmes for leaders in Catholic schools need to focus on the heart and soul of leadership as well as on its cognitive and intellectual aspects. Patrick Duignan

Leadership plays an essential role in any Christian community. The pre-eminent doctrinal principle of leadership in the Church is founded in the fact that the church is a *communio*, the people of God. This understanding of community recognises that everyone shares in the responsibility of mission – the charism of Christian leadership is calling forth the gift in others to action that mission.

The authentic witness of the leader will have much to do with the effectiveness of that calling forth. The eminent Australian writer and theologian, Fr Tony Kelly, observes that for personal witness to be authentic, the leader must, at some point, go the personal journey into God themselves and also in relationship with those she/he leads.

In these times, the very nature of the task demands leadership that is prophetic, relational and creative. It is prophetic because the leader must be a guiding light who keeps marking the vision and setting the challenge to be gospel centred in how Catholic education looks and feels in their school. It is relational because fundamental to a Catholic understanding of education is a communal imperative and a positive anthropology. This means that the nurturing of relationship at all levels is not simply an effective strategy for leadership, but at the core. It is creative because
our educative purpose is centred in the present yet oriented to the future and demands new ways of engagement that are authentic, outward looking and life-giving.

**Spiritual Formation and the Leadership Framework**

Spiritual formation is therefore closely and explicitly linked to Catholic leadership development. While religious leadership is well highlighted as a particular function or dimension of Catholic leadership, this is not the sole focus of attention for spiritual formation. Rather, spiritual formation for leadership rises through all capabilities underpinning every function or dimension of leadership. It is as critical in the delivery of educative leadership and staff leadership as it is for religious leadership. Thus, spiritual formation is not an optional extra for those aspiring to Catholic leadership or continuing in Catholic leadership. As builders and leaders of Christian community, in each person’s unique way, spiritual formation animates, colours and informs the development of all leadership capabilities. While the Catholic leader must ensure that the religious life of the school is maintained, it is the way in which they carry out all their leadership domains that reveals a deeply grounded authentic Catholic leader. In doing so, these leaders embody and encourage those core Catching Fire capacities such that they become the fabric of the community they lead.

The literature consistently indicates that if leaders do not see spiritual formation as central to effective ministry in Catholic education, in overall staff development and in their own leadership, then it is highly unlikely that staff will develop this perspective. The connection for Catholic leaders between educational leadership and spiritual formation has yet to be strongly forged and supported. The need here, as it is for all professional learning, is to have formation that is owned, tailored to needs, and planned for intentional growth.

The integration of spiritual formation into professional learning plans for leaders will require a proactive strategy, rather than an ‘in principle’ approach. This is the area that is most easily left off professional renewal. But if we are to grow outstanding Catholic education leaders, it is essential that we have people who have attended seriously to their own spiritual formation.

Continuing dialogue around the connections between spiritual formation, religious leadership and Catholic educational leadership within our Catholic schools and across the broader Australian Catholic educational arena will greatly aid a cohesive comprehensive and coherent approach.

Along with the importance of this strategic dialogue, one other specific strategy bears comment here. Mentoring or leader companioning, which has a long and rich history in spiritual formation, has developed strong support in prominent leadership centres throughout the world and in other Christian denominational settings. Research shows this to be particularly effective in deepening inner leadership capacity in the second term of principalship, and thus is a powerful tool in contemporary spiritual formation in particular and professional learning in general.

Attending to one’s spiritual formation is core business in Catholic leadership and the bedrock of Catholic leadership capability. In the words of leading spiritual writer and educationalist, Parker Palmer, ‘We lead who we are.’

**Spiritual Formation and Induction Processes**

*I do not pray for success. I ask for faithfulness.*

*Mother Teresa of Calcutta*

The nurturing of teachers, the forming of leaders and the development of a Catholic culture across the organisation begins at induction. Increasingly, less and less can be assumed with regard to familiarity with the Catholic culture. While information about the structure, operation and key people in a Catholic organisation can be a significant introduction to church in itself, the deeper understanding and learning of what it is we are about requires formation rather
than information. The invitation and culture of expectation that we wish to nurture must be intentionally and strategically supported. It will not just happen.

The implications are for new ways of engagement that again meet people where they are, welcoming who they are and what they bring, helping them to name and situate their own story within our story. It calls us too, those who are already engaged in the story, to know it, to witness to it strongly and authentically in what we do and how we do it.

Spiritual formation therefore is a vital part of induction processes and we will continue to intentionally and creatively integrate formation into existing and future induction processes at all levels.

Moving from the broad circle of concern to a targeted circle of focus for spiritual formation in the Brisbane Catholic Education community, Leaders and New Graduates are seen as the two critical growth points. Within initiatives here, particular attention will be given to the inclusion of direct witness, narrative and face to face sharing. Research indicates that particularly in the area of spiritual formation, this remains the most effective (transformational) mode of learning for any adults, regardless of demographic or generational identity.

New graduates need to be appropriately inducted into the Brisbane Catholic Education community in a way that places spiritual formation as central to their vocational journey, and supports their early development as Catholic teachers. Preliminary research among fourth year ACU students in 2005 confirmed that these prospective graduates carry an expectation that spiritual formation will be provided as part of their beginning and ongoing development as Catholic teachers. This imperative around the inclusion of spiritual formation within induction programmes also applies to everyone newly joining our staff community – whether that be in the schools communities, within the ICT team, the O’Shea Centre Team, the secretarial staff, or any other section of the centres.

Two other groups that have emerged for priority targeting are experienced teachers and those on staff who already display an energy for their own spiritual journey. The formation seeding of these staff members, with a view to resourcing and empowering them as practical ‘animateurs’ of the ‘spiritual culture’ among their own communities, will constitute a key strategy in developing a grass roots culture of expectation around spiritual formation in our ministry of Catholic education.

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared Responsibilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spiritual formation occurs both within and beyond our educational communities. Within our educational communities spiritual formation is a shared responsibility between the individual, the school or section and the archdiocesan level.</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Leaders and Managers (Schools and BCE Centre)</th>
<th>Archdiocese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An invitation to include spiritual formation (SF) goal-setting in annual planning.</td>
<td>Actively encourage staff in individual spiritual formation planning and goal setting.</td>
<td>Sets system expectations for Spiritual Formation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes up opportunities provided including individual, school-based and system-based options.</td>
<td>Plan for and integrate school based or section based SF initiatives into professional learning connected to Strategic Renewal Framework priorities.</td>
<td>Organises occasional whole of system events.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Offer opportunities for SF to the wider school community as appropriate.</td>
<td>Coordinates and/or provides targeted formation opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follows through opportunities identified in earlier goal setting.</td>
<td>Ensure staff have access to SF initiatives both school-based and BCEC/other offerings as appropriate to role and experience.</td>
<td>Provides support and resource personnel and mechanisms in an integrated way.</td>
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</tbody>
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