



Annual Report

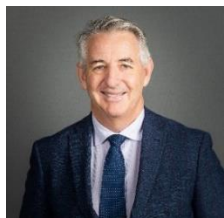
2021

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Cover image: Original artwork created for the Archbishop's stole for Catholic Education Week 2021 by Helen Bachmann (teacher at Holy Spirit Primary School, Bray Park.) Reproduced with permission of the artist for Brisbane Catholic Education, 2022.

Foreword



Welcome to the Brisbane Catholic Education Annual Report for 2021.

This has been the first year of activation of the *Brisbane Catholic Education Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025: Future Learning Communities* which was developed in consultation with our principals, employees, school communities and stakeholders. From this collaboration we identified five priorities which are essential for the future success of Brisbane Catholic Education schools:

- **Catholic Identity** – supporting the formation and spiritual growth of students, staff and community
- **Learning and Teaching** – supporting the academic development of our students and professional development of our staff
- **Wellbeing** – creating safe learning environments and a call to social justice
- **Our People** – investing in our employees to build and retain a talented and committed workforce
- **Diversity and Inclusion** – growing communities that value individual identity and cultural diversity.

These priorities have provided an important strategic compass at both a school and system level, which you can read more about in the following report.

This year we celebrated 200 years of Catholic education in Australia. It is incredible to reflect on the fact that Catholic education in our country started with the opening of one small school, with just 31 students, in Parramatta. From these humble beginnings we have grown to a massive network of 1755 Catholic schools across the country – including Brisbane Catholic Education’s 144 schools which educate over 75,900 students and employ 12,000 people. The theme for the bicentennial celebrations was ‘*Faith in the Future*’. I believe with our new strategic plan and the passion, commitment, and skill of our workforce we are well positioned to realise our vision of creating faith-filled learning communities in our schools.

The year has brought both highlights and challenges. The challenges were primarily due to COVID-19, which impacted our schools and the broader community. I would like to highlight the spirit of BCE that was demonstrated in the selfless, proactive and creative way our teachers, support staff and professional staff responded to the unprecedented level of disruption they experienced. While there were disappointments at not being able to physically host our usual events, sports carnivals, and excursions – there was also incredible innovation as our schools adapted to these challenges. One example of this was the implementation of NAPLAN online. We are proud to be the first diocese in Queensland to have all schools complete this assessment online, which was a great achievement and a credit to the project team and school coordinators.

Finally, at the end of this year we farewelled our Executive Director, Miss Pam Betts. Pam’s retirement concluded forty-two years of faithful service to Catholic Education, including nine years as our Executive Director. Pam’s legacy to Catholic Education has been extensive, deep, and much appreciated across the Archdiocese, and we wish her well in retirement.



Dr Doug Ashleigh

Deputy Executive Director

Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane

Our organisation

Fast Facts Snapshot¹

Our Schools



144
Schools

106
Primary

27
Secondary

11
P-12

Our Students

Student enrolments
over the past 5 years

2021 75,967

2020² 74,579

2019² 72,569

2018² 71,655

2017² 71,776

- **12.3%** of students in the Archdiocese of Brisbane attend a Brisbane Catholic Education school
- **60.5%** of students identify as Catholic
- **31+** different religious faiths amongst students
- **9.8%** of students have a language background other than English
- **3.1%** of students identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Our Employees



- **11,992** employees (headcount)
- **95.2%** of employees are school based
- **4.8%** of employees are office based
- **61.5%** of employees are teachers
- **109** employees per 1000 students (FTE, all BCE)
- **84.6%** staff retention rate
- **71.9%** of staff in schools identify as Catholic
- **36+** different religious faiths amongst staff

1. Data as at Commonwealth Census date (2/08/2021); 2. As reported in Annual Report 2020.

About us

Brisbane Catholic Education contributes to the development of young people through education, including their formation in Christian life, drawing on a contemporary Catholic worldview. We provide high quality learning and teaching for more than 75,900 young people enrolled in our schools and colleges and employ 12,000 staff, most of whom work in schools. Our boundaries stretch from Queensland's southern border, west to Gatton and Gayndah and north to Childers and Hervey Bay.

Our system structure — clusters of schools supported by an office — is one of our greatest strengths as it enables collaborative practices. By working together for our Vision through our Mission, we share knowledge, leverage our expertise, and promote a culture which enables each young person to grow and develop their full potential.

Our Vision is that we are a faith-filled learning community creating a better future.

Our Mission is to teach, challenge and transform through our service, support, and leadership for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Our values include:

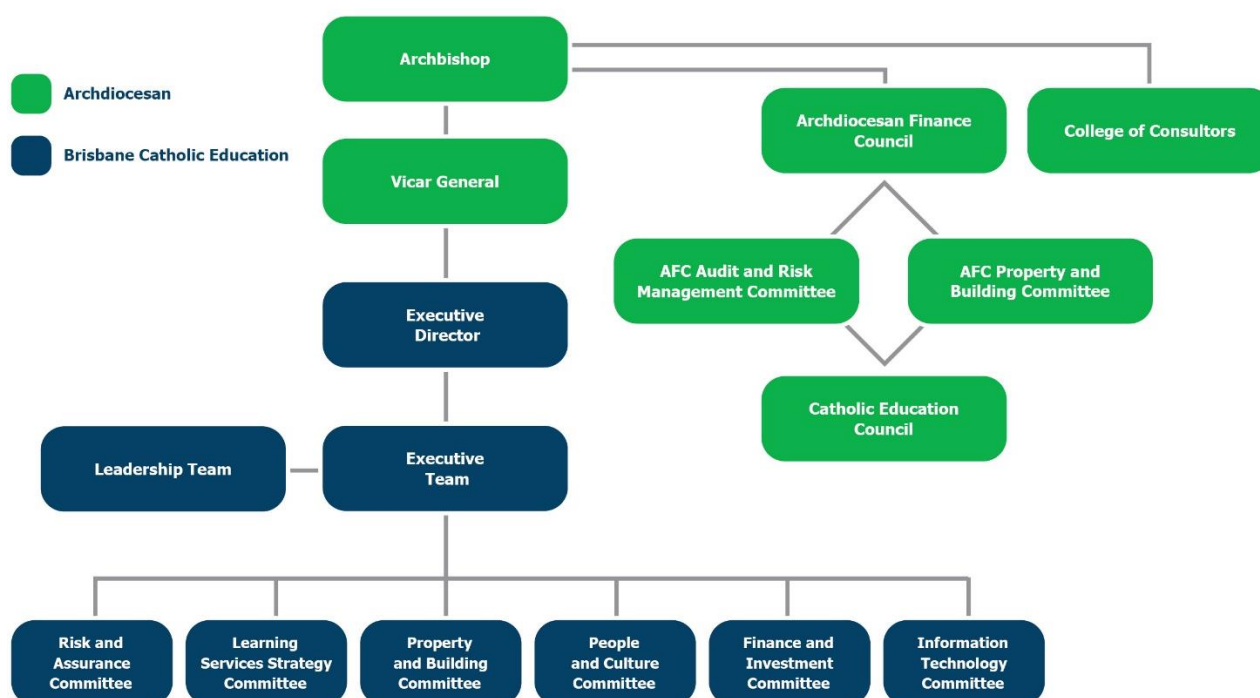
- Excellence – inspired by our Catholic tradition, strive for excellence
- Integrity – as witnesses to the Good News of Jesus Christ, act ethically
- Justice – as people of faith, foster respectful relationships, advocating for and empathising for those at the margins
- Hope – empowered by the Spirit, embrace the future with confidence.



Governance

Good governance ensures we have effective and transparent processes in place for making decisions, demonstrating accountability, and meeting our civil, legal, and canonical obligations. Our governance structures — including policies, processes, systems, and structures — enable us to meet our responsibility for the administration and management of all Archdiocesan and parish schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Brisbane Catholic Education’s governance committees assisted the organisation to discharge its responsibilities through transparent decision making and contributed to efficient and effective governance.



Catholic Education Council

Under the leadership of Chair Mrs Jenny Parker, the Catholic Education Council acted as an advisory body to the Archbishop and Brisbane Catholic Education, and:

- provides advice on the responsibilities, policies, and priorities of Brisbane Catholic Education
- monitors policy implementation in schools for which Brisbane Catholic Education is responsible and where appropriate, policy regarding religious education in Religious Institute schools
- provides oversight to policies, procedures, and systems to safeguard assets, ensure accuracy and reliability of records and ensure adherence to Archdiocesan policies.

Executive Team

The Executive Team consists of the senior executives of the organisation.



Miss Pam Betts
Executive Director
(Retired December 2021)



Dr Douglas Ashleigh
Deputy Executive Director
and Learning Services
Executive



Mr Patrick O'Sullivan
Corporate Services
Executive



Ms Balveen Ajimal
Strategy and Performance
Executive

During 2021, the team set the strategic direction for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane and provided support to the Executive Director in relation to delegated governance responsibilities. On 8 November 2021, Dr Sally Towns was appointed as Executive Director after the resignation of Pam Betts.

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team consists of the section/functional heads of the organisation. It provided support to the Executive Team throughout 2021, with a focus on leadership, strategic direction, governance, and stewardship. The Leadership Team in 2021 included:

- Alain Pitot, Head of Catholic Identity
- Catherine Abercrombie, Legal Counsel
- Cathy Heffernan, Head of People and Culture
- Chris Garnier, Head of Finance
- Derek Maclean, Head of Learning and Teaching Services
- Donalee Moriarty, Head of Strategy and Sustainability
- Ken Sawers, Head of System Performance and Improvement
- Leigh Williams, Head of Information Technology Services
- Dr Paul Thornton, Head of School Progress and Performance
- Reuben Norris, Head of School Resource, Infrastructure and Sustainability

Internal governance committees

To coordinate key governance matters, the following internal governance committees operated in 2021:

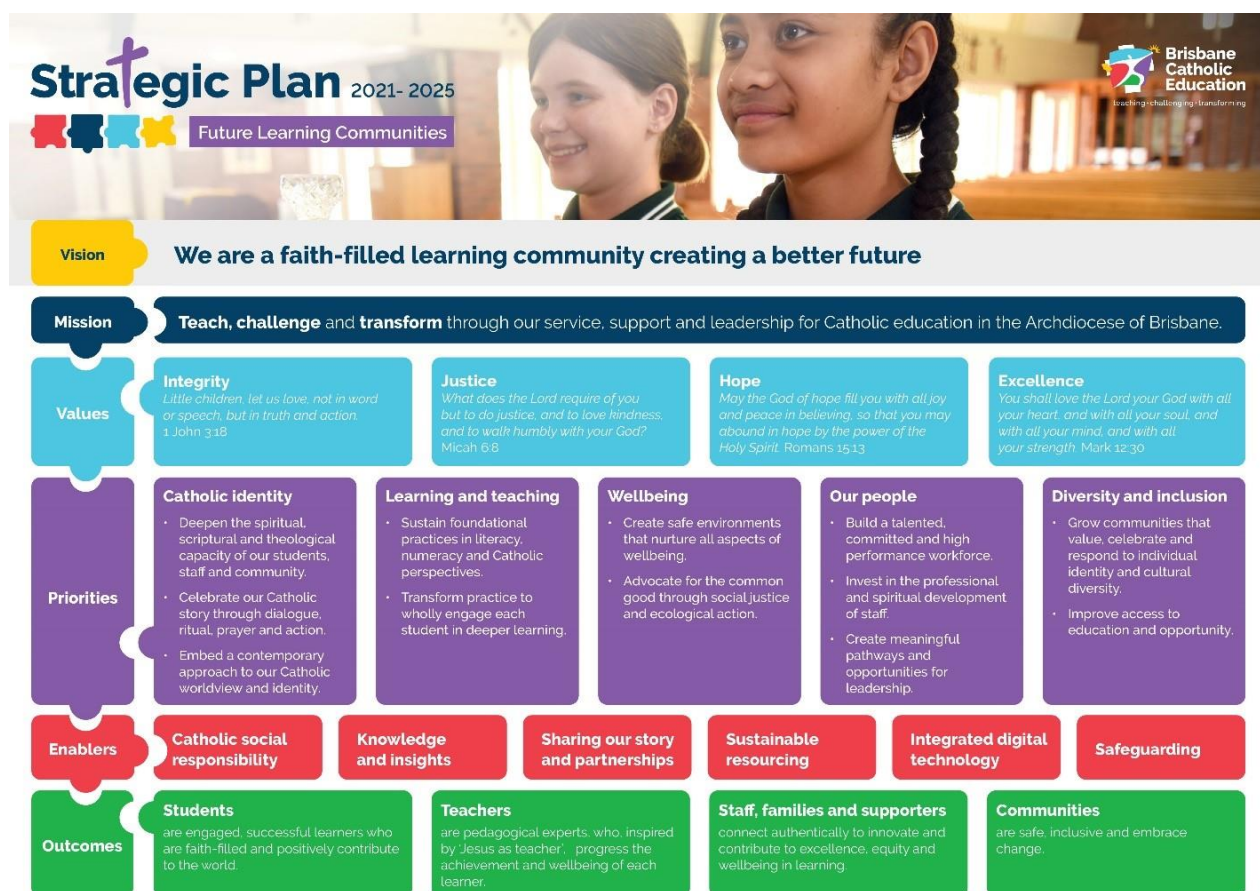
- Finance and Investment Committee: Provided oversight and direction relating to the overall financial performance, position, cashflows and sustainability of Brisbane Catholic Education to ensure Brisbane Catholic Education fulfils statutory, governance and oversight responsibilities in relation to the finance function
- Information Technology Committee: Provided leadership, strategic direction, governance, and stewardship in relation to organisational information technology priorities, strategy, and resourcing to ensure an enterprise approach to information technology strategy, investments, and processes to support the achievement of Brisbane Catholic Education strategic objectives
- Learning Services Strategy Committee: Provided oversight and direction to ensure an enterprise-wide and integrated approach to the development, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the program

of work arising from the Brisbane Catholic Education Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 Learning and Teaching priorities

- People and Culture Committee: Provided oversight and direction to the work of the People and Culture function in achieving the vision and mission of Brisbane Catholic Education and its strategic objectives.
- Property and Building Committee: Provided proactive, responsive, and strategic advice in relation to land acquisition/divestment, property maintenance and compliance, future school development, and existing school capital development for Brisbane Catholic Education schools ensuring schools are financially viable to sustain proposed debt serviceability and contribute cash towards intended capital development projects
- Risk and Assurance Committee: Provided independent oversight in relation to risk management, a robust system of internal controls, compliance management, internal assurance, and external reviews and audits to ensure an enterprise approach to risk and compliance strategy and processes to support the achievement of Brisbane Catholic Education strategic objectives.

Our year in review

The Brisbane Catholic Education *Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025: Future Learning Communities* was developed following extensive consultation and engagement in 2020 and sets Brisbane Catholic Education’s direction for the next five years. This report maps our progress and achievements during 2021, against the *Strategic Plan 2021–2025: Future Learning Communities*.



Catholic Identity

Providing opportunities to enhance Catholic Identity remains a critical focus for Brisbane Catholic Education, as we aim to:

- deepen the spiritual, scriptural, and theological capacity of our students, staff, and community
- celebrate our Catholic story through dialogue, ritual, prayer, and action
- embed a contemporary approach to our Catholic worldview and identity.



In 2021, the following key initiatives were implemented to further these objectives:

- the continued transition from a traditional offering of face-to-face formation programs to innovative hybrid programs that utilise digital technology, while being informed and underpinned by scripture, Church documents and BCE's Catholic Identity Position Statement, that support students and staff on their journey to be faith-filled
- the celebration of 175 years of Catholic Education in Queensland.
- The delivery of formation programs to more than 6,000 students across Brisbane Catholic Education, including:
 - Year 5/6 leadership program – Delivered to more than 2,500 students at 100 schools and supported by Year 9 student leaders
 - PoTENTIAL 2021 – A day dedicated to faith, connection, empowerment, tradition, encounter, and joy for 400 Year 10 students
 - Year 11 and 12 Q&A – An opportunity for Year 11 and 12 students to engage in respectful dialogue with a panel of experts on consent and respectful relationships
 - Online Prayer on Friday – Online prayer led by the BCE Youth Leaders was trialled during Term 4.
- The delivery of formation opportunities to staff, including:
 - weekly virtual mini spiritual formation programs
 - 2021 Youth Ministry Colloquium offering Campus Ministers, Chaplains, and Youth Ministers from across Brisbane and beyond an opportunity to network, be creative, be renewed and deep dive into professional learning topics

- numerous retreats available to school and office staff (Be, Call to Hope, Staff with Spirit, Dialogue School Retreats) reconnecting staff with themselves and God
- BCEO staff morning prayer including Circle of Prayer and First Friday Mass
- Welcome to the Catholic World, a series of seminars specifically designed as an induction for new BCEO staff and introduction to basic Catholic ideas, culture, and practices
- continued collaboration with Australian Catholic University to deliver the 'Spiritual and Pedagogical Accompaniment' (SPA) program for pre-service teachers, the 'Introduction to the Catholic Dialogue Schools Project' study intensive, and the 2021 Spiritus Brisbane Program.

Learning and Teaching

Providing high-quality learning and teaching remains a critical focus for Brisbane Catholic Education, as we aim to:

- build sustained foundational practices in literacy, numeracy, and Catholic perspectives
- transform practice to wholly engage each student in deeper learning.



In 2021, the following key initiatives were implemented to further these objectives:

- a review of all Brisbane Catholic Education schools, undertaken to support our learners by ensuring the consistent application of the Australian Curriculum
- a review of thirty schools and colleges to ensure high quality Religious Education programs, effective Religious Education leadership, and engaged school contexts
- building student capacity through a continued focus on developing assessment capable learners, as a response to system and school data, ACARA (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority) and QCAA (Queensland Curriculum Assessment and Authority) National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) reports. Year level specific resources have been designed to support teaching that will improve understanding, skill, and achievement in key improvement areas.
- delivery of phase 1 of the Distance Education project, enabling the launch of an authentically hybrid and flexible learning option at St John Fisher College from 2022. 'FisherONE' addresses industry growth in online education and will provide a broader range of senior learning options for BCE students as well as opportunities to engage students beyond BCE.

- completion of the discover and define phase of the Progressive Reporting Project which will replace the current student reporting system and enable teachers, parents, and students to communicate and collaborate around student learning progress and achievement. The project will progress to design and development phase in 2022, with three schools to trial the functionality of the application and a group of early adopters to provide feedback.
- development of the *Amplifying Progress, Realising Potential Digital Strategy 2021 – 2025* to underpin and enable learning and teaching and other core business areas. The Digital Strategy will enhance the student learning experience, connect, and safeguard our community, deepen the use of data and insights, streamline processes and user experience, and support continuous innovation.

After a 12-month hiatus in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual NAPLAN returned in May 2021 for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Key achievements for Brisbane Catholic Education include:

Comparison to National Growth in Effect Size

	Year 3 to 5	Year 5 to 7	Year 7 to 9
Reading	▲	■	■
Writing	■	▲	▲
Numeracy	▲	▲	■

Comparison to National Mean Scale Score (MSS)

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Reading	▲	▲	▲	▲
Writing	▲	▲	■	▲
Numeracy	▲	■	■	■

Key

▲	The average achievement of Brisbane Catholic Education students was above the average achievement of all Australian students
■	The average achievement of Brisbane Catholic Education students was not above the average achievement of all Australian students

In 2021:

- 94.5% of Brisbane Catholic Education students completed school with a Queensland Certificate of Education or Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement
- 92.1% of Brisbane Catholic Education's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students received a Queensland Certificate of Education
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) continued to be a significant aspect of senior learning in Brisbane Catholic Education schools with 5,019 VET Certificates awarded to 2,478 of the 3,751 students who completed Year 12. Of these, 69.2% (1,716) students attained a VET Certificate III or higher.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing remains a critical focus for Brisbane Catholic Education, as we aim to:

- create safe environments that nurture all aspects of wellbeing
- advocate for the common good through social justice and ecological action.



In 2021, the following key initiatives were implemented to further these objectives:

- supporting our students, staff and school communities through the turbulent times of COVID-19 ensuring both their physical and mental wellbeing were at the forefront of decisions
- the delivery of learning resources and professional development to enhance and embed Student Behaviour Support plans that cater to the diverse needs of all students
- partnering and consulting with a variety of external organisations to deliver initiatives that support student mental health and wellbeing including SchoolTV, the Department of Education, Lifeline, Dovetail and HeadSpace Schools
- a review of wellbeing support and processes in the regional schools of Wide Bay and South Burnett
- the development and delivery of resources and training for schools when responding to suicide, and to support students who exhibit suicidal and self-harm behaviours and appropriately identify and intervene when students are at risk
- the 'Leading with Emotional Intelligence' program and other online wellbeing sessions to support employees
- the 'Workplace Psychological Essentials' pilot was undertaken and will be made available to Principals in 2022.
- a Principal wellbeing retreat facilitated by external consultants 'Gone Bush', that is supported through a Community of Practice for past attendees to continue and share their wellbeing strategies
- commenced development of an Employee Wellbeing Framework for 2022.

Our People

Our People remain a critical focus for Brisbane Catholic Education, as we aim to:

- build a talented, committed, and high performing workforce
- invest in the professional and spiritual development of staff
- create meaningful pathways and opportunities for leadership.



In 2021, the following key initiatives were implemented to further these objectives:

- investing \$1.4m towards scholarships for 290 employees, to support their development in both their role and across a range of priority areas
- facilitating leadership development opportunities designed to align to the BCE Leadership Framework for current and aspiring leaders across the organisation. This included one-on-one coaching opportunities and a range of leadership programs. As a result, 75% of responding participants reported increased confidence and a deeper understanding of what it means to lead at Brisbane Catholic Education.
- supporting school leadership teams to embed a performance and development culture at their schools to enable clear direction and development focussed on their role and career aspirations
- developing and delivery of information and support to teachers interested in the Highly Accomplished / Lead Teacher career pathway
- delivering spiritual and theological formation as a key component of the Early Career Teacher program
- the annual BCE Excellence Awards were held, celebrating the achievements of our people in schools and our offices
- implementation of organisational reviews to ensure the appropriate organisational structures, people with the right capabilities are in place to support to schools and our people have clarity and understanding of the organisational priorities and their roles

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion remains a critical focus for Brisbane Catholic Education, as we aim to:

- grow communities that value, celebrate and respond to individual identity and cultural diversity
- improve access to education and opportunity.



In 2021, the following key initiatives were implemented to further these objectives:

- The conclusion of BCEO's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in September 2021. The RAP was a great success, leading the way in creating systemic change across the organisation. Some of the major successes included:
 - appointment of new Senior Manager Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education role, who commenced in March 2022
 - reviewed the remuneration of identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander positions
 - increased the number of schools with registered RAPs to 21 schools and over 80 schools with draft RAPs
 - 300 office staff (64%) completed or enrolled in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Days at Ngutana-Lui
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee survey which guided key reconciliation initiatives led by BCE leadership
 - reconciliation workshop with Executive and Leadership team
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Day run for 30 Principals.
- the first 'Break through to Principal' program, which addressed the key barriers women face progressing into principalship. Since completing the program, 11 (55%) of the 21 women that participated had a change in role, with one securing a principal role and a further eight securing acting principal/head of roles
- revision of the Enrolment Application and Support Process to assist the enrolment process for students with disability and to ensure they receive the appropriate support once enrolled
- professional learning for Education Officers to ensure students with disability are appropriately considered when planning using the Australian Curriculum
- development of the Engage Student Support System to provide a module for schools to record support for students in Out of Home Care.

Enablers

Outside of our strategic priorities, Brisbane Catholic Education also ensured the successful delivery of the 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan through the delivery of improved systems and enterprise-wide business processes including:

- the commencement of the School Improvement Review Project, a school-centric and risk-responsive strategy to enable all schools to build foundations for sustainable growth and improvement based on the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT)
- the commencement of the Safeguarding Project, which will provide Brisbane Catholic Education with critical information to ensure we have embedded the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCCS) across four domains: governance, people, practice, and spaces. The development of a plan that ensures a holistic and integrated safeguarding approach is underway and will be reported against in 2022.
- the introduction of a school performance dashboard “School HealthCheck”, a tool to support Principals and school leadership teams to measure, monitor and act on key areas of performance and compliance each term. The HealthCheck drives both school and enterprise strategy, performance, and compliance improvement, with aggregated quarterly reporting and is an important source of evidence to inform and enhance planning.
- the first system-wide school marketing campaign for Brisbane Catholic Education – My Amazing Start was created to assist schools with their community engagement through digital storytelling. The campaign focussed on Prep students’ amazing start at BCE schools. The campaign additionally aimed to increase brand awareness of BCE highlighting the benefits and experiences of a faith-filled education journey.
- Information Technology Solutions continue to promote student engagement and enable student agency and enable connectivity with families and supporters, while keeping our learning environments safe and secure. In 2021:
 - 68% of BCE students collaborated on their learning within MS Teams
 - 68,000 users connected with schools via their parent portals and apps each month
 - 1.1 million cyber security threats were deflected by our firewall each month
 - LinCS 5 project was designed, and a contract signed for the delivery of new WAN into all BCE schools to provide increased connectivity capability.



Celebrations and awards



Celebrations



Celebrating 200 years of Catholic Education in Australia

In 2021, we joined other dioceses in celebrating the bicentenary of the opening of the first Catholic school in Australia, embracing the theme of 'Faith in the Future'. Many of our schools held local assemblies to recognise this significant milestone and give thanks to the many religious orders who worked tirelessly to establish our first schools. On 24 May 2021, student representatives from 75 of our schools were able to attend the national Mass at St Stephen's Cathedral, with many more students and staff joining online.

Brisbane Catholic Education says 'welcome' at Luminous Lantern Parade

Brisbane Catholic Education was proud to be a community sponsor for the 2021 Luminous Lantern Parade, with students and staff walking together in unity to celebrate cultural diversity, show support for refugees, and welcome people from overseas to Queensland. A highlight of the night included students proudly donning signs which read 'Brisbane Catholic Education says welcome! To all new Queenslanders.'



BCE celebrates NAIDOC Week in Ipswich

NAIDOC Week activities may have been cancelled in July 2021 due to COVID-19 lockdowns, but that did not stop the Ipswich community from recognising and celebrating. Brisbane Catholic Education was proud to host one of 75 stalls at the NAIDOC community event which celebrated the rich histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the area.

60-year anniversary for San Sisto College, Carina

San Sisto College community celebrated 60 years of Catholic education, with Principal Shelley Hamilton retelling the inspiring story of the beginnings of the College. In true San Sisto College spirit, the occasion was also commemorated with cutting the cake, house talent show, and Year 12 'sing-off.'

Awards



Students code their way to success at Premier's Coding Challenge

Four Brisbane Catholic Education students have been recognised for their coding and problem-solving abilities, announced among the 20 state-wide winners of the 2021 Premier's Coding Challenge. The talented students created solutions to address this year's theme of Digital Wellbeing and were awarded at a ceremony at the Queensland Museum in Brisbane by Assistant Minister Bart Mellish MP.



University honours for former Our Lady's College student

Former Our Lady's College student Clare Collins was awarded the title of Laureate Professor at The University of Newcastle – only the second woman at the university to receive the honour. The achievement was also a first for the university's Faculty of Health and Medicine.



Big win for Emmaus College riders at SEQ Championships

Equestrian riders from Emmaus College have taken the overall SEQ Champion Primary School for the third time at the South East Queensland Championships at Caboolture. The College is the only school to have won the prestigious award three times.

Excellence Award winners 2021

The 2021 Brisbane Catholic Education Excellence Awards night was a huge success with Archbishop Mark Coleridge in attendance to present the awards. The celebration was extra special, after the cancellation of the awards the previous year.

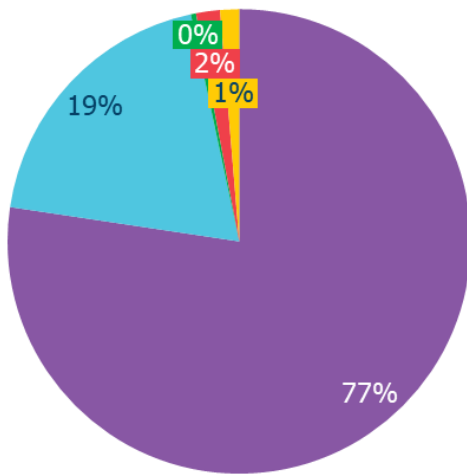
Award winners:

Paula-Mary Camilleri	The Archbishop's Community Spirit Award
John Thomas	Excellence in Building Strong Catholic Identity Award
Grant Shipton	Excellence in Nurturing a Professional Workforce by Developing Colleagues Award
Travis Price	Excellence as an Early Career Teacher (less than 5 years) Award
Tony Green	Excellence in Supporting Learning and Teaching through a school-based Role Award
Timothy Mason	Excellence in Learning and Teaching in a Primary School Award,
Philip Ellison	Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Secondary School Award
Eric Ellis	Excellence in Supporting Learning and Teaching through a BCE Office Role Award.
Team at St Paul's School, Woodridge	Excellence in Learning and Teaching by a School or School Team Award

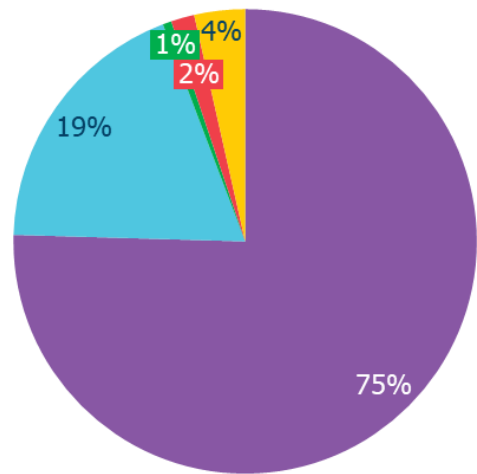
Finance overview

- Government Recurrent Grants¹
- Other Revenue¹
- School Fees and Levies¹
- Government Capital Grants²
- Interest Received¹

2021 Revenue (%)

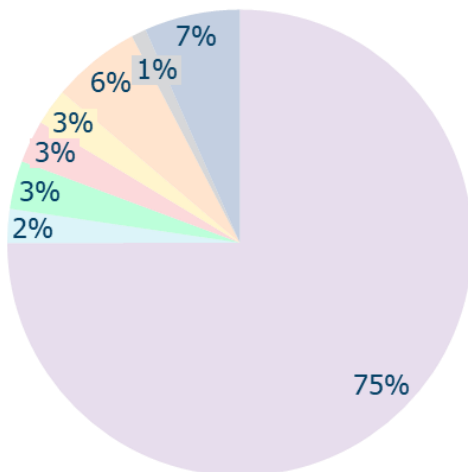


2020 Revenue (%)

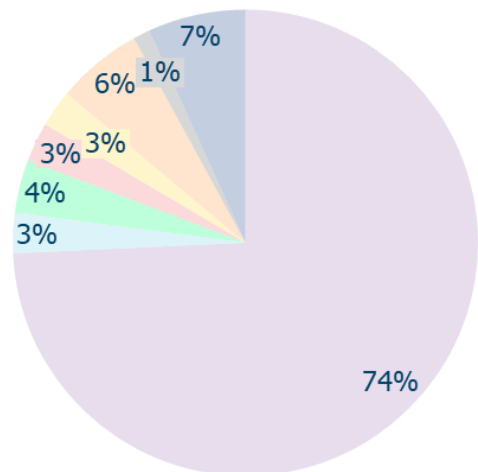


- Staffing Costs¹
- Facility and Equipment Maintenance¹
- Technology Expenses¹
- Tuition Expenses¹
- Site Operation Expenses¹
- Depreciation Expense¹
- Interest Expense¹
- Other Expenses¹

2021 Expenses (%)



2020 Expenses (%)



Notes: 1) Revenue/Expense from Operating Activities; 2) Revenue from Non-operating Activities

