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— YEAR IN REVIEW —

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle acknowledges the Awabakal, Biripi, Darjijung, Gamilleroi, Gweagul, Wanarua and Worimi peoples, the traditional custodians who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years.

We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

Vision

To **live** the joy of the Gospel and **share** it with the world.

Mission

The Diocesan Synod of 1992-93, acting on behalf of the diocesan community, resolved to embrace and promote the Vatican II understanding of the Church's mission contained in the following: The Church, because it is the People of God and the Body of Christ enlivened by his Spirit, is called to be a sign and instrument of communion with God and of unity among all people (LG1). The Church exists to promote the Kingdom of God on Earth (LG5). This it does by proclaiming Christ – the Good News of God's love for all people – and by working in the world for justice, peace and reconciliation. This mission finds its source and summit

in the Eucharist (LG11) which, when lived in everyday life and celebrated in the liturgy, is both the living symbol of Christ's life, death and resurrection and celebrates the deepest identity of the Church as a communion of life, love and truth (LG9). All those who, through Baptism, have been initiated into the community of the Church have the right and duty to participate in its life and mission as a response to the Spirit in their lives (LG3). We are called to live out the commandment of Jesus: 'Love one another as I have loved you' (Jn 15:12).



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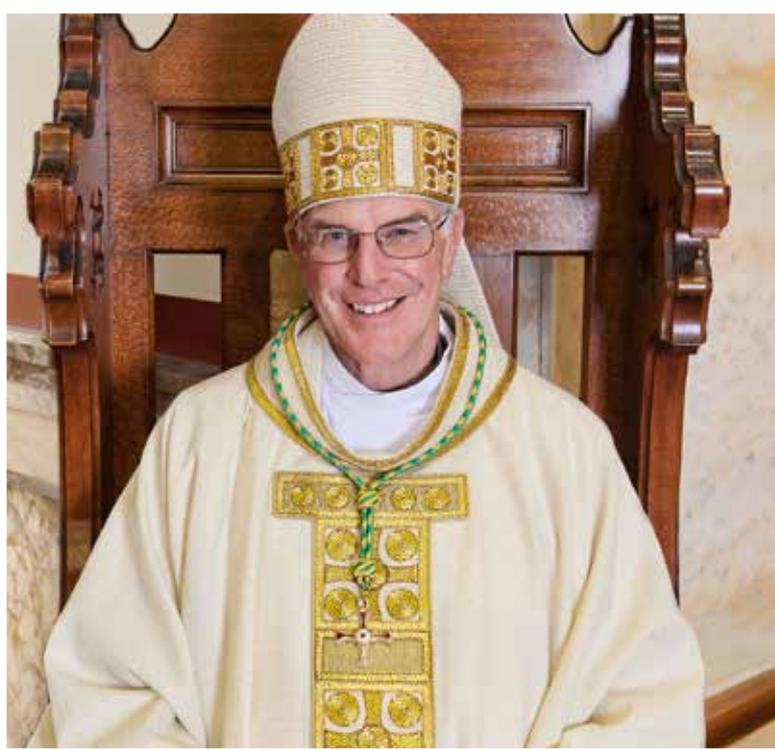
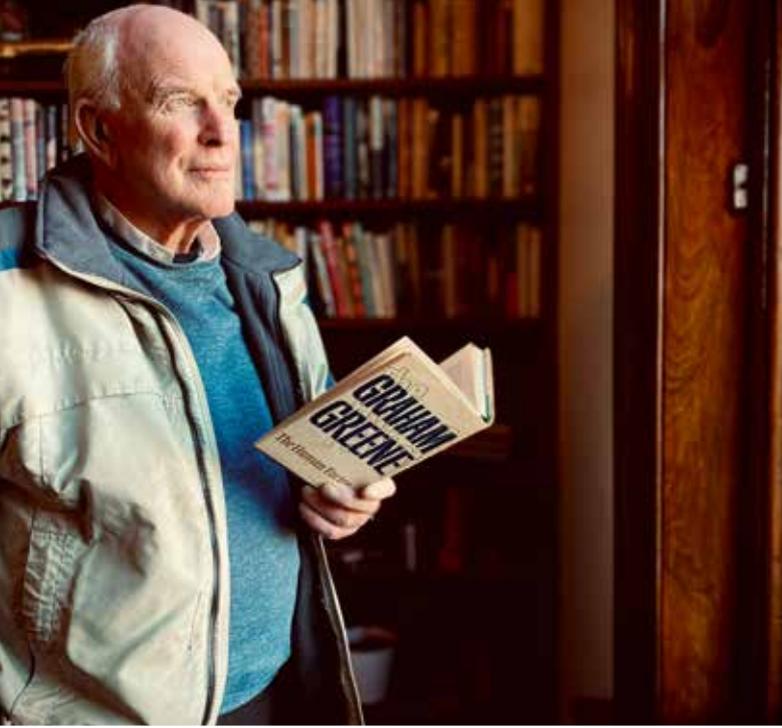
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Theological Principles

- Seek First the Kingdom of God (Mt 6:33)
- The Equality of All Believers
- Faith Development is a Life-Long Process
- The Dignity of the Human Person
- Diversity of Gifts
- Diversity of Ministries, Unity of Purpose
- Servant Leadership
- Decision-Making by Discernment
- Read the Signs of the Times
- Concern for Ecumenism.

About this report:

This publication is a yearly review of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and its agencies to showcase the achievements of the organisation within the calendar year.



Bishop Bill Wright

1952 - 2021

The eighth bishop of Maitland-Newcastle died on 13 November, 2021 having succumbed to lung cancer at the age of 69.

In the decade since his ordination, on 15 June 2011 at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bishop Bill arguably experienced many more milestones than most bishops do in their entire careers.

Under his leadership, the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has seen substantial growth in the provision of grassroots community programs through CatholicCare Social Services Hunter-Manning. Bishop Bill was passionate about walking alongside those in our community who need a bit of extra support. He was an advocate for strengthening and expanding our social footprint across the Diocese through our community kitchens, food programs and refugee support services.

Most significant to the life of the Church in our Diocese, Bishop Bill also committed to convening a synod, the first held locally in three decades. He was interested in consulting and collaborating with the diocesan community to help us work towards becoming a more welcoming, inclusive and participatory Church for all in this modern world.

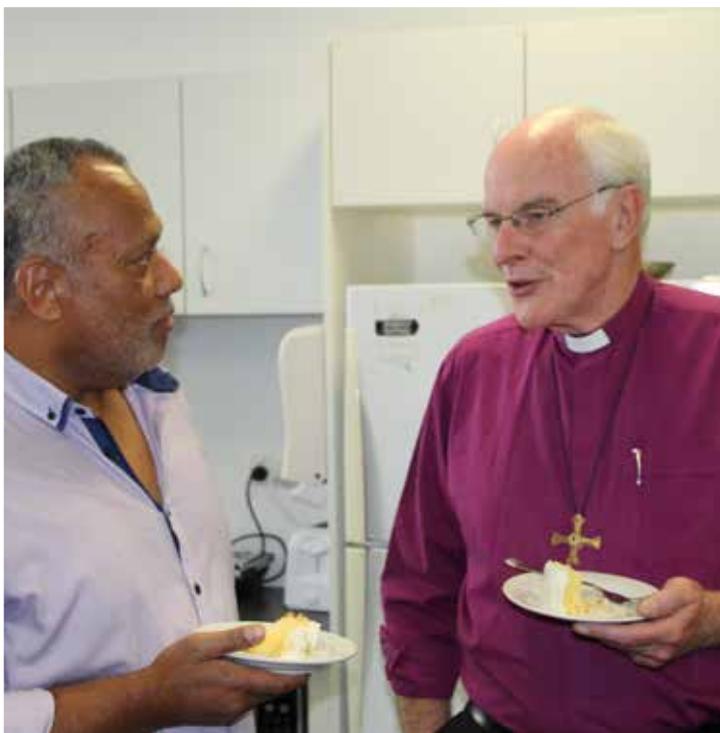
With direction from the Bishop, the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has developed three new schools, St Aloysius Catholic Primary School and St Bede's Catholic College, both in Chisholm, and most recently, Catherine McAuley Catholic College in Medowie. The Diocese has also seen the introduction of important services such as St Nicholas Early Education, St Nicholas OOSH and St Nicholas Pathways and the recent opening of The Rosewood Centre to better support people's mental health in our community.

Leading the Diocese during a period when it faced the terrible truths of its historic child sexual abuses and the failures of some of its past leaders, Bishop Bill is recognised as an important figure in supporting survivors and introducing reforms to help the Catholic Church respond to this issue.

During this time, he also served as the Co-Chair of the National Committee for Professional Standards and was a member of the Truth Justice and Healing Council throughout its existence (2013-18). He was a member of the Bishops Commission for Church Ministry and the Bishops Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Relations, as well as a member of the Bishops Commission for Evangelisation Laity and Ministry and the Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service. Additionally, he was Chair of the Bishops Commission for Professional Standards and Safeguarding.

Bishop Bill led the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle through a significant internal transformation with the introduction of the Many Parts. One Body. One Mission. initiative to support our diocesan agencies in working together, providing more opportunities to draw on each other's strengths for the good of those we serve.

Bishop Bill Wright's legacy lives on in the work of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle reflected across the pages of this report and in the hearts of so many in our region.





Fr Greg Barker

Diocesan Administrator, Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

Looking back on our year it is impossible not to spend a moment or two reflecting on the death of our Bishop, Bishop Bill Wright. He instigated much change in our Diocese for the better. Shared Services springs to mind immediately but there are also great examples within our Catholic Schools network, the services CatholicCare provides, and the St Nicholas Early Education.

Change can be hard but unavoidable and necessary if we are going to continue to provide all the elements of being a community that our people need of us and in truth demand of us. We are always a work in progress. I love the image of the Church sitting as the perfection of a grand masterpiece in tension with the unfinished canvas.

I reflect one of the biggest changes of 2021 for me has been moving into the Diocesan Administrator's role. A combination of the Bishop's role and the Vicar General's. The transition has put me on a learning curve I would never have thought I would have the opportunity to embark on. I have enjoyed greatly the opportunity to meet with many in our organisation in a different way and to see from behind the scenes how we are structured and work together. It is amazing.

It seems we are at the stage now where we can live more freely with the challenges COVID has been giving us. In the early days of the pandemic and throughout 2021, there was still fear as we locked down and began isolating. There is a sense of the normal when we test positive, let our friends and colleagues know and then stay home for our few days. Some of us automatically switch to work from home mode and are happy there.

What I have noticed is much more comfortableness with modern technology across all sectors of our church communities, not only in the office. Who'd have thought we could make meeting virtually work. I never thought I would see the day in the parish when aged members of the community would be so familiar with their mobile devices, comfortable with the language and sharing in the modern world in that way.

COVID has taught very useful lessons I suspect and given us a renewed sense of what is important and what we can do without. I know I am a lot more aware of those around me and who they have supporting them or not. I am learning new ways to mission and to minister, and I really appreciate those moments when I can get with family and friends in person. I notice more the gift of their presence is in my life.

Looking ahead then. Sometime in the future we will have a new Bishop. He will bring his own giftedness to the role and a vision of church that will help to keep us heading in the right direction. It will be an exciting time for reinvigorating and planning. I look forward to the next stage and the part I will play in it.

WE SERVE OVER
154,000
CATHOLICS IN OUR COMMUNITY,
WITH 38 PARISHES

Our Catholic
Development Fund and
our Shared Services teams
**support the work of
all our agencies**



CatholicCare
delivers a range of
support services
for people in our
region through
27 services.



Close to
21,000
students are served
through our schools



The Diocese is committed
to **safeguarding children
and vulnerable adults**, and
while we all play a role in
this work, our Office of
Safeguarding supports this.





Sean Scanlon

Chief Executive Officer, Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

2021 has been another challenging year for many in our community. The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has not been immune to these challenges, particularly as we navigated the requirements of safely operating our parishes, schools, early education and community services during the pandemic.

Of course, it was also with great sadness that our bishop, Bill Wright, died and we were faced with a challenge of an entirely different nature. Bishop Bill was an inspiring leader – a most humble man who deeply valued the work we do in education and in supporting those in need in our community. You will read much of his legacy in the milestones of 2021 that we celebrate through these pages. Bishop Bill will be missed but I am filled with hope that we will continue to fulfil his vision.

Throughout this report you will read of the work of our agencies. Our organisation is a diverse one, but the common thread of this work is the commitment we have to serve all people in our community, so they experience life to the full. It is a great privilege to lead work that connects with so many in our community.

I believe one of the critical indicators of the Church's ongoing value is deeply rooted in our steadfast commitment to helping those around us in a way that is relevant to the times. From periods of depression when the Church stimulated the economy by commissioning the building of places of worship

and education; to the modern day where we have developed new services to support working families, we have been willing to step forward to fill the gap left by government and for-profit organisations.

In 2021 we continue to fill these gaps – we've grown our OOSH services, particularly in rural communities where other providers were unable to support.

Catherine McAuley Catholic College opened in Medowie to serve families and students on the Port Stephens peninsula where we heard from locals there was a gap in Catholic secondary education.

CatholicCare continued to support thousands of people in its community kitchens, refugee programs and other services ensuring those who are vulnerable have somewhere to turn in difficult times.

Our Synod, the first in 30 years, saw over 300 people gather to reflect on ways that we can continue to serve our communities in the future.

As one of the region's largest employers we are mindful of our practices and impact. Our Diocese seeks to become a leading organisation for sustainability across the Hunter Region and in 2021 we progressed this work and initiatives that further the implementation of Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

This year we submitted our first Modern Slavery Statement to the Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network (ACAN). The Modern Slavery Statement describes the actions we have taken to establish a modern slavery framework and policies.

We welcomed two new leaders to our Diocesan Leadership Group in 2021 – David Healy joined as Executive Director of St Nicholas and Lisa Tierney as our new Chief Operating Officer.

It is our leaders and our people who have continued to serve the community in this challenging year. My deepest thanks go to our dedicated staff who have continued to innovate and remained open to change throughout 2021, whilst being committed to maintaining safe work environments.

2021 has taught us resilience, given us courage, and reminded us to always be ready to adapt. The events of the year have encouraged me to reflect on the values of our Church and for that, I am thankful.

I look forward to the year ahead where we will be launching a new Diocesan-wide strategic plan that will further align mission and purpose across the scale and diversity of all our work, as we continue to deliver real and tangible benefit to the lives of people in our region.

Over
4,000
students supported
across our
OOSH centres



Almost
1,200
families are supported
through St Nicholas
Early Education





To start the year, CatholicCare launched a new clinical and allied services brand, The Rosewood Centre. To support the community during lockdown the Rosewood Centre's team of psychologists moved appointments online and delivered a series of free mental health and wellbeing webinars.

CatholicCare also continued to build on its government-funded contracts, receiving a three-year extension to deliver the Brighter Futures program in the Manning, as well as joining forces with CentaCare New England Northwest to deliver the Gamble Aware program across the Hunter New England health region.

In addition, its dedicated staff continue to provide care and support to children and young people through family preservation programs and permanency support programs.

CatholicCare launched its first-ever August Appeal, which raised \$12,000 to support grassroots programs throughout the Diocese such as food services and the refugee hub. Demonstrating the demand for this community work, in November volunteers at the Taree Community Kitchen served their milestone 50,000th meal since CatholicCare commenced operations.

I'm delighted that in 2021 CatholicCare's Newcastle food service hit the milestone of serving 40,000 meals since commencing its operations.

CatholicCare commenced a new social enterprise cleaning business aimed at providing training and employment for refugee and asylum seekers and vulnerable young people.

The Refugee Hub supported refugee and asylum seekers with casework, advocacy, and English lessons. Volunteers supported students from St Columban's and San Clemente through the Refugee Hub's homework centre.

Our agency was successful in re-registration with the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding commission and reflecting our investment in people – a core pillar of our new strategic plan, we initiated a Diploma of Management and Leadership commenced for all CatholicCare leaders.

I'd like to thank our dedicated team of staff and volunteers who work to ensure CatholicCare's services continue to support those in need in the community.

The Rosewood Centre opens

In 2021 we launched the Rosewood Centre. Our Access EAP program and CatholicCare Clinical Services services were growing and changing so in order to make sure our name and work is inclusive of all that we do, we introduced The Rosewood Centre.

The Rosewood Centre still offers the same clinical support services our team has provided to the



Newcastle and Hunter community for over 30 years, and our staff remain working under this new brand.

Our new name comes from the strong and resilient Australian Rosewood tree, and like our namesake, we are here to help you and the people we support to grow and thrive.

Roses are symbolic in the Catholic Church; a symbol of the Virgin Mary and a fragrance common in Catholic rituals. Our new name, The Rosewood Centre, represents our origins and steers us towards our future.

The Rosewood Centre team provides the same mental health services - offering counselling, psychology, allied health, clinical assessments, behaviour support and our Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Under The Rosewood Centre brand, our clinical services will continue to operate from eight locations across the Hunter and Mid-Coast region – Hamilton, Cardiff, Maitland, Forster, Taree, Gloucester, Port Macquarie and Singleton.

Our Mayfield team had an exciting move to a new venue in James Street, Hamilton where we continue to support people in our community to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

GambleAware Counselling

CatholicCare Social Services Hunter-Manning and Centacare New England North West are working in partnership with the Office of Responsible Gambling to provide free counselling and gambling-related support services to people impacted by, or at risk of, gambling harm.

Together, CatholicCare and Centacare provide these services as *GambleAware Hunter New England*. Our support includes counselling, financial counselling and consultation, recovery groups and community engagement and education.

The service launched in 2021 and exists to serve those who need to be pointed in the right direction for self-help and resources, or may need intervention support.

The team is here to support people every step of the way and consists of an intake officer, Community Engagement and Care Coordinators to provide case management,

counsellors to provide evidence-based psychological counselling and financial counsellors/consultants to provide financial literacy training, skill-building and associated advocacy.



Community Kitchen celebrates milestone

Since serving our first meal at the Taree Community Kitchen in December 2015, our services have expanded to help people needing assistance right across the Hunter-Manning region. We are proud to share that six years on in 2021 that first Community Kitchen hit a huge milestone: serving its 50,000th meal!

The recipient of this milestone meal, Michael, is one of our regular friends who visits the Taree Community Kitchen. The kitchen serves approximately 50 hot and nutritious meals each day of operation, but the kitchen offers far more than just a meal. With the assistance of volunteers, CatholicCare has created a space where people can feel safe and enjoy the company of others. The kitchen is also an opportunity for disadvantaged people to access other services via information and referral.

We extend our most heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the volunteers and donors who form the backbone of our Community Kitchens. 2021 was a big year for all of us and so many people in our communities have faced challenges. Thanks to our supporters, we were able to serve 18,000 meals during the last year. Such an achievement could not have been possible without the commitment and collaboration of all those in the community looking to help those in need.



Catholic Schools Office

Gerard Mowbray, Director of Schools



I am so deeply appreciative of the commitment to our students, by each and every member of staff, both teaching and support. Of course, 2021 has been full of challenge. Of greater importance to me has been the capacity of staff to so effectively respond to the challenge.

In 2021, the Church celebrated 200 years of Catholic education in Australia. While our Diocese is still a few years away from any of our schools reaching this bicentenary milestone, our tradition of providing Catholic education to local communities is showing no signs of wavering.

Our Diocese recorded a 1.5 per cent increase in student enrolments this year. Supporting this growth was a bolstered commitment from the Diocese to ensure we have the staff, physical assets, pastoral resources, and pedagogical approach in place for our young leaders.

To enable the Diocese to meet sustained demand for Catholic education, this year we opened a new high school in Medowie; Catherine McAuley Catholic College. The school opened to students in Years 7 and 8 and will continue to expand in coming years. A robust capital works program complements the opening of Catherine McCauley Catholic College. The Diocese this year invested \$115 million in infrastructure and maintenance across our network of schools.

Supporting our student and staffs' faith and helping them to reach their potential is a cornerstone of Catholic education. Accordingly, it has been rewarding to have 513 staff and 311 senior students from across our network of schools engage in formation programs, including with theologian-in-residence, Professor Michael Dennin, from the University of California.

Despite the pandemic leading to periods of enforced home learning, our schools continued to deliver exceptional learning opportunities for students. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our schools' staff and students for their tenacity and resilience during the lockdown. I know it wasn't always easy, but you showed great commitment to carrying on, even when faced with difficult and ever-changing circumstances.

As we adjusted to a "new normal", all our schools continued with their Clarity journey, led by international consultant Lyn

Sharratt. Clarity is steeped in years of international research in education and centres on 14 Parameters that unwrap the core tenets of successful school improvement processes, with the aim of student growth and achievement.

In addition, an increasing number of our schools have signed onto our Gifted Education Program, aimed at providing meaningful opportunities for all students to excel in their learning, and the Successful Foundations project, which provides a wonderful transition to school for our youngest learners through a play-based learning methodology.

Pleasingly we have had growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments and launched the re-developed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy.

St Joseph's College Lochinvar and St Mary's Catholic College, Gateshead are now embedding their third HSC cohort and we look forward to welcoming the first HSC cohort at St Bede's Chisholm in the new year.

The CSO was delighted to work closely with our other Catholic agencies throughout 2021. We partnered with CatholicCare to provide *Beyond the Gates* support to schools in the Upper Hunter, Manning and East Lake Macquarie and we have collaborated with our property team to implement a range of sustainability initiatives in our schools.

2021 certainly presented its challenges and I thank our staff, our students and their families for their perseverance and resilience as we worked together throughout the year.



Catherine McAuley Catholic College opens

Access to Catholic secondary education on the Port Stephens peninsula is now a reality, with Catherine McAuley College opening its doors to almost 300 eager students in 2021.

The kernel for the college's foundation was a study commissioned by Bishop Bill in 2015-16. The investigation uncovered a strong desire from the Port Stephens community for a co-educational, Years 7-12 Catholic secondary in the region, which subsequently became one of the adopted recommendations.

Given the historical roots of Irish Catholic families on the peninsula, the Mercy congregation's solid presence at St Brigid's, Raymond Terrace, St Michael's, Nelson Bay and St Peter's, Stockton, there was a strong argument for naming the college after Blessed Catherine McAuley. This Irishwoman, who founded the Mercy nuns, could speak strongly to the young people of today with her deep sense of social justice and her commitment to the education and healthcare of poor communities in Dublin.

Since that initial study was undertaken, Catherine McAuley Catholic College has transitioned from a vision to reality. This process has included ongoing community consultation with local parishioners, families and the Worimi people to ensure the college reflects their hopes and aspirations; robust and innovative design and building works to ensure contemporary learning can be facilitated within environmentally intuitive spaces; and, insistent research into best-practice teaching pedagogies has been undertaken, to ensure students' academic outcomes are optimised and their wellbeing remains at the fore.

This year the college offered educational opportunities to students in Year 7 and 8. In the years to come, this will expand by one new year group each year until 2025, when the college will reach capacity and accommodate up to 1200 students in Years 7-12.

200 Years of Catholic Education in 2021

In what is a fitting celebration for Catholic education in Australia, this year marked 200 years since the first official Catholic school opened in our country. Fr John Therry, who arrived in the colony as one of the first official Catholic chaplains, embedded on an arduous yet remarkable task of establishing a Catholic community amongst a backdrop of poverty and hardship.

Starting a school of just 31 students, Fr Therry's efforts continue to reverberate through the now 1,751 schools operating across the nation, some 100,000 staff, serving more than 768,000 students.

As the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) recognises and celebrates such a significant milestone, we acknowledge that the success of Catholic education has not occurred by chance. In this time of remembrance,

we extend our thanks and deep gratitude to all those who have visioned, dreamed, and believed in providing an education that embodies the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We too acknowledge all men and women, both lay and religious, who have contributed to the success of Catholic education here in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. From our humble beginnings in Maitland, where our first school was opened by Peter Cook in 1833, to our now 59 schools whose legacy rests on the fervent work of our early faith-filled pioneers.

As we look ahead to the future, we do so with optimism and hope, committed to the sacred work we do each and every day. May our "faith in the future" be seen in our unwavering belief that Catholic education creates young women and men who serve as leaders and disciples of our world.

Office of Safeguarding

Sean Tynan, Director of Safeguarding



Early in 2021 the Office of Safeguarding (OoSG) relocated to newly renovated offices in Mayfield, providing a significant improvement in the facilities available to the Safeguarding team.

A highly skilled and experienced senior staff member from the Catholic Schools Office was seconded to work with parish leaders to coach them in the ongoing implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards across our faith-based communities. This work was undertaken in conjunction with her ongoing role coaching school leadership teams. Whilst the implementation of strict public health orders (COVID-19) caused restrictions in physically accessing parishes, the initiative has generated positive feedback from those parishes that have availed themselves of the support.

Also in 2021, the OoSG actioned its primary prevention strategy through increased participation in the design and implementation phases of new programs and facilities, inculcating safeguarding strategies as an integral part of new services and program launched across the Diocese.

The OoSG maintained a high rate of training across the Diocese, including over a dozen face-to-face training days in addition to live streamed presentations connecting with approximately 1,000 diocesan personnel.

During 2021 the OoSG underwent a significant realignment, with Healing and Support transitioned out of Safeguarding, to strengthen and promote the integrity of that vital service. Funding for Alternative Dispute Resolution services was also transferred to the Diocese's Governance Service, to increase the integration of dispute resolution with the Diocese's complaints management.

Meanwhile, the OoSG experienced a significant and ongoing demand for its core services throughout the year:

- A record 'intake' with 1,539 individual intakes received by Safeguarding in 2021, up 9% on 2020 rates. The nature of the intakes received included:
 - 490 concerns for abusive conduct occurring outside of the Diocese.
 - 251 reports of concerns for peer-on-peer conduct.
 - 308 requests for advice and professional support from diocesan workers to assist with a range of issues related to practical safeguarding in parishes and diocesan services like our schools, CatholicCare and St Nicholas Early Education.
- Of the 1,539 intakes, about half resulted in reports to statutory authorities, including the Department of Community and Justice, the Office of the Children's Guardian and NSW Police.
- Thirty-six investigations were commenced in 2021, a 19% increase compared to 2020. Thirteen of these investigations were conducted under the reportable conduct scheme administered by the Office of the Children's Guardian.
- Ten assessment and management of risk cases, involving eight students and two diocesan workers, one more case than 2020.
- Twenty-six 'requests for information' were submitted to the National Redress Scheme, a 35% increase on the previous 12 months.

Also, during 2021 there were, on average, 30 current damages claims for personal injuries that were case managed by the OoSG.



Increased staff training

The Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse's Child Safe Standard stated that staff are to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.

In response the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has implemented a comprehensive safeguarding training regime that is compulsory and is provided free to all diocesan workers. From 2021:

- Training is part of staff induction, diocesan employees are introduced to the Diocese's safeguarding framework, including the central role of the Office of Safeguarding.
- Diocesan employees participate in annual safeguarding refresher presentations, as part of their local work groups.
- Unpaid helpers (including volunteers) in child-related work receive safeguarding training as part of their induction to the Diocese.
- Staff in child-related work are required to attend a specialist safeguarding training course after starting employment with the Diocese.
- Advanced safeguarding training is mandatory for staff in child-related work in diocesan schools, early education centres and welfare services as part of a cycle to updating and reinforcing the Diocese's safeguarding practices.
- Diocesan clergy participate in safeguarding training as well as receiving advanced and specialist safeguarding training with the Director of Safeguarding.
- Targeted safeguarding training for work groups or workplaces identified as having or potentially having a deficit in safeguarding knowledge, practices or culture.

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards implementation

An extraordinary level of change has come from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission). Perhaps the change that will prove the most significant is the introduction of 'safeguarding standards' for children. In Volume 6 of its Final Report, the Royal Commission detailed the development, understanding and application of ten child safe standards ('Standards').

The Royal Commission "examined the elements that define a child safe institution, noted why institutions fail and considered what standards could be applied" to make safer institutions. It was the Royal Commission's view that state and territory governments should require all child-related institutions to comply with the standards, including Churches that minister to children.

The Standards have formed the blueprint for a series of national, state and territory equivalents. In Australia, the Catholic Church is the only national church to have developed a set of standards designed to meet its particular circumstances in ministry and provision of services. The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) are more rigorous and demanding than the Royal Commission's Standards. The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is a signatory to the NCSS and is in the process of implementing them across our parishes, schools and other services.

External auditors will measure the Diocese's compliance with the NCSS. This will be a very expensive and demanding exercise. The Diocese is already working towards ensuring our compliance with the NSW Child Safe Standards. A significant complexity that is being worked on is to ensure that the Diocese can translate its compliance with the NCSS to the regulatory compliance regime of the NSW Child Safe Standards.

There is a huge overlap between the NCSS and NSW Child Safe Standards, which is not surprising as both are highly derivative of the Royal Commission Standards. However, as a Diocese we are committed to ensuring compliance with all these standards to ensure that the past will not be repeated.



St Nicholas

David Healy, Executive Director of St Nicholas



St Nicholas Early Education, St Nicholas OOSH and St Nicholas Pathways, commenced implementation of the St Nicholas Strategic Plan 2021-2024.

Four intersecting themes guide the agency's strategic direction: community and partnerships, sustainability, growth, and quality. This holistic approach has enabled the agency to continue to mature, even through periods of hardship brought on during the pandemic.

2021 saw the appointment of a new leadership role – Executive Director of St Nicholas which reflects the Diocese's continued commitment to the growth of St Nicholas and supporting families, children and students.

This year St Nicholas Early Education opened three new centres in Medowie, Gillieston Heights and Muswellbrook, taking its total number of centres to 11.

Three of our other Centres went through the Assessment and Rating process. In their first time through the process, Maitland and Branxton both achieved 'Meeting' ratings. Established service, Raymond Terrace improved its rating from "Working Towards" to "Exceeding" – an incredible result that shows the commitment to quality being driven by the team.

Our Early Education teams continued to enhance service offerings across all locations, including fostering relationships with community partners. In Raymond Terrace, the children were fortunate to build on their relationships with residents in COVID-safe ways from Opal Aged Care.

In Cardiff, children made meaningful connections with culture through the Elder-In-Residence program, offered in partnership with Speaking in Colour. This partnership program has created meaningful and lasting connections between children attending our service and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and dancers, and was recognised in the Narragunnawali RAP Awards.

Our Early Education Centres also launched an engaging online learning portal, to support families who elected to keep their children at home during the lockdown. The year has presented many challenges but the St Nicholas' teams have shown resilience and dedication to ensure we continue to safely support local families with quality care.

St Nicholas OOSH continued its strong growth in 2021, opening 11 new services. St Nicholas OOSH now operates at 36 locations, including from five public schools, and provides care to more than 5,400 children and employs more than 250 staff.

Five of St Nicholas OOSH services undertook the Assessment and Rating process – all achieving a Meeting the National Quality Standards result.

In what was a challenging year, St Nicholas OOSH remained operational during the COVID lockdown period providing quality childcare to support our families who are essential workers.

This year, St Nicholas Pathways developed a business manager role. Erica Wilkinson, worked to ensure we seek new opportunities to support career pathways into early childhood education and care.

Pathways continued its partnership with the International Child Care College and as a result, 13 students commenced their school-based apprentice traineeship (SBAT). This foundation and success of Pathways' SBAT program for St Nicholas Early Education has allowed Pathways to offer a 35% increase in positions for next year.

Additionally, these two agencies also partnered to launch the Pathways CONNEX program. Operating out of purpose built Pathways training facility in Maitland, and training room in Muswellbrook, this program is providing entry-level qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care to 15 students.



Pathways Program rollout (CONNEX launch in Upper Hunter)

St Nicholas, an agency of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, has experienced the perils of the skills shortage first-hand, having recently opened a new early education centre in Muswellbrook, as well as new out-of-school-hours care services in Scone, Denman and Jerrys Plains.

“It’s very difficult to recruit staff in those regional areas, and due to the large number of parents and carers working long hours in the mines, manufacturing and agriculture, there is a high demand for care and education for young children,” said Erica Wilkinson, Business Manager for St Nicholas Pathways, the vocational education arm of St Nicholas.

To help combat these challenges and provide high-quality support for families with young children in these areas, St Nicholas was successful recently in securing the Sustainability Support Grant from the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF). “The Sustainability Support Grant is intended to help eligible childcare services operating in areas of limited supply improve the viability and sustainability of their service,” said Fiona Mackie, Director of the Community Child Care Fund (Program & Delivery).

In conjunction with its RTO partner the International Child Care College, St Nicholas will use the funding to support the introduction of its CONNEX program in the Muswellbrook area. Providing both early childhood education and employment opportunities for the Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter communities.

The St Nicholas Pathways CONNEX program offers a blended program of face-to-face, online, and workplace-based training that leads to a nationally accredited, entry-level qualification in early childhood education and care.



Early Education online learning portal

Our Home Learning Portal is an online resource designed to support families to remain connected to our centres and continue their child’s learning journey as we entered lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Online connection was in demand in 2021

- Over **1,000 unique users**
- 560 logins in the first 24 hours
- Nearly 900 users accessed the Zoom learning sessions page, over 700 users accessed the video experiences page, and over 200 users downloaded our learning packs
- Access was extended to Diocesan employee families and refugee families, free of charge.

Out of School Hours childcare (OOSH) growth

St Nicholas OOSH continued its strong growth in 2021, opening 11 new services. With over 36 locations we provide care to more than 5,400 children, and employ more than 250 staff.

Each St Nicholas OOSH service works collaboratively with children and families to provide high quality education and care. Educators work with each child on an individual level to extend and strengthen their unique interests and talents through play and leisure.

St Nicholas OOSH complies with all national regulations and licensing requirements and follows the National Quality Framework. St Nicholas OOSH follows the My Time, Our Place framework. The Australian Government the framework is designed for use by school age care educators working in partnership with children, their families, schools and the community.

Pastoral Ministries

Teresa Brierley, Director of Pastoral Ministries



Pastoral Ministries provides a ministry hub which supports the Five Foundations Pastoral Planning Framework for the whole diocesan community. These five foundations are:

- Identity and Community
- Worship and Prayer
- Formation and Education
- Mission and Outreach
- Leadership and Structure.

Synodality has been the key focus for Pastoral Ministries during 2021. We attempt to encounter the whole diocesan community on our synodal journey as expressed by the following:

In order to walk together, the Church today needs a conversion to the synodal experience. It needs to strengthen a culture of dialogue, reciprocal listening, spiritual discernment, consensus and communion in order to find areas and ways of joint decision-making and to respond to pastoral challenges. In this way, co-responsibility in the life of the Church will be fostered in a spirit of service... Synodality is a constitutive dimension of the Church. We cannot be Church without recognising a real practice of the *sensus fidei* of all the People of God. (Amazonian Synod n. 88)

Within Pastoral Ministries, this journeying together is done via the following diocesan advisory councils:

- The Council for Mission
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Ministry
- Ecumenical and Interfaith Council
- Council for Women
- Diocesan Council for Ministry with Young People
- Faith Formation Council
- Liturgy Council
- Social Justice Council.

The people on these various councils set the many diverse opportunities provided to the diocesan community and supported by the Pastoral Ministries Team.

Our own Diocesan Synod, the Australian Plenary Council and now the Bishop's Synod on Synodality continue to provide a local, national and universal lens to the 30-year synodal journey the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has been on.

The following chorus of Leonard Cohen's ballad, Anthem, speaks of the light being let in through the work of Pastoral Ministries:

*Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in.*

So let's keep ringing those bells in order to let the light of Christ shine on who we are and all that we do in God's name, to build the Kingdom of God, together.

The Five Foundations (Acts 2:42-47)



1

**Identity &
Community**



2

**Worship &
Prayer**



3

**Formation &
Education**



4

**Mission &
Outreach**



5

**Leadership &
Structure**



Synod Session Two heralds change for our Diocese

On Saturday 22 May, more than 300 commissioned Synod members, participants and interested persons had their say on matters concerning our Diocese's future.

Parishioners ranging in age from 19 to 87 came together across six sites, including Hamilton, Mayfield, Booragul, Maitland, Aberdeen, and Taree to have their say on a variety of issues affecting our community.

These issues included women in leadership, homelessness, care for the environment, communication, cultural diversity, protection for the marginalised, including refugees, interfaith dialogue, and youth engagement.

In attendance was Director of CatholicCare Social Services Hunter-Manning, Gary Christensen, who described the Synod as an important part of the fabric and culture of our Diocese.

"I think the Synod has been inclusive and participatory, and I think the voting shows there is a real appetite for change across the Diocese.

One of the Synod recommendations, which particularly struck a note with him, was the commitment to listen to and 'embrace the spiritual, ecological, and cultural wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people'.

"I think it's incredibly important that we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spirituality in liturgy," he said.

"The reason being, Aboriginal people were the first persons of this land, they have a deep spiritual connection to the land and the sea, and it's imperative that we embrace that spirituality as a sign of respect. But also as an acknowledgment of the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the justice system and the children out-of-home-care system. Acknowledging it in liturgy brings it to the forefront of our mind and helps us make the changes we need in our attitudes and practices to ensure we are helping our Indigenous brothers and sisters."

As part of the special occasion, synod members, participants, and interested persons were also given the opportunity to reflect, and hear from theologians, our Canon Lawyer and Bishop Bill.

Director of Pastoral Ministries, Teresa Brierley, described the landmark event as a wonderful experience of the people of our Diocese gathering to reflect the moment of the Spirit and to affirm the Five Foundations as our spiritual framework.

"I found the day to be very prayerful as we invoked the Holy Spirit to guide us and give us the courage to imagine what might be while being attentive to our past," she said.

"I recognise that what we are being called to is being revealed as we walk together. This is not a comfortable journey for many because it involves trusting other fellow pilgrims along the way."

Catholic Development Fund

Jenny Chung, CDF Fund Manager



The Catholic Development Fund (CDF) continued to play a significant role in ensuring the good work of all our agencies can continue. Loan funds in excess of \$80 million were provided by the CDF to diocesan agencies this year, which assisted to build new schools and school infrastructure across the Diocese including at Catherine McAuley College, Medowie; St Bede's Catholic College, Chisholm; St Mary's Catholic College, Gateshead; St Aloysius Primary School, Chisholm; St Patrick's Primary School, Lochinvar; St Therese's Primary School, New Lambton; and Rosary Park Primary School, Branxton.

Loan funds were also provided to expand the facilities of St Nicholas Early Education in Chisholm, Medowie, Gillieston Heights and to provide much-needed facilities for CatholicCare to carry out its important work.

The CDF generated a surplus of more than \$6m for the year ended 30 June 2021, exceeding its budget and forecast results, which is an exceptional result in a very challenging environment with interest rate yields at historically low levels.

From this surplus, a \$5m distribution was made to the Diocese to support its pastoral mission. The balance was retained to build the CDF's capital base.

During the NSW COVID-19 lockdowns the CDF remained fully operational with our doors remaining open so we could continue to service the needs of our loyal members, Parishes, the Diocese and its Agencies and the community.

This would not have been possible without the diligence and commitment to service of the CDF

Customer Service team led by CDF Office Manager, Anne Campbell. It's important that I acknowledge and thank them for their professionalism and dedication to their duties. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the team, since my appointment in April as Catholic Development Fund Manager.

The CDF has continued its investment of focusing efforts on strengthening the CDF's risk management, governance and compliance frameworks, ensuring we continue to meet our regulatory and compliance obligations and the high standards the community expect of us.

2022 is shaping up to be an exciting year for the CDF and its team with ambitious plans for growth and the completion of a major core banking system upgrade.



St Nicholas Early Education, Chisholm – Stage 2



St Patrick's Primary School, Lochinvar

Shared Services

Across all our agencies, our Shared Services team continued to support the work of the Church throughout 2021. Our technology services, human services, administration, and communications teams were kept particularly busy assisting agencies to navigate complications arising from the pandemic.

Meanwhile, our property, finance, governance, enterprise management, and data and analytics teams also pivoted and ensured we continued to make great gains in supporting each of our agencies, whilst also streamlining their service provision.

2021 saw the appointment of our new Chief Operating Officer (COO), Lisa Tierney. In leading our Shared Services teams, Lisa is driving strategic initiatives to provide support for our internal stakeholders and the wider Catholic community in their dealings with the Diocese.

A green lens for our work

From renewable energy to run our schools, to new hybrid electric vehicles, to partnerships with local food waste recycle programs, and the development of a new sustainability strategy – our Diocese is implementing a range of sustainability initiatives.

We are committed to becoming a leading organisation for sustainability across the Hunter Region and progressing the implementation of Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This includes transitioning to clean energy, investing in low carbon technology and integrating sustainability into how we construct schools and buildings. The Property team is currently developing our first Sustainability Policy and Sustainability Strategy.



Walking on Sacred Ground

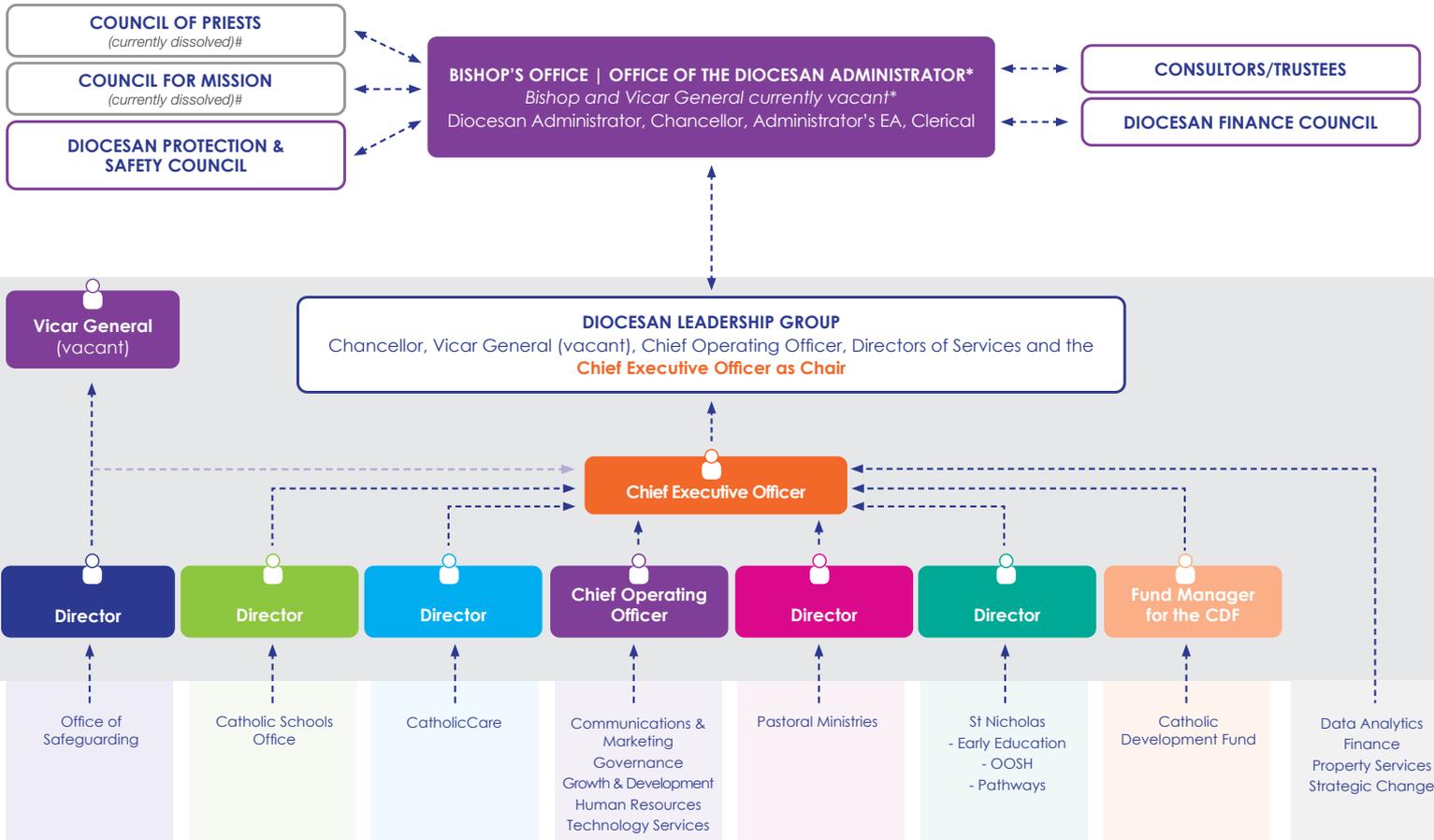
Each year, the Bishop of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle conducts a staff day for everyone working in the Curia – Chancery, Catholic Schools Office, CatholicCare Social Services, Shared Services, St Nicholas Early Education and the CDF.

This important day allows staff to experience the many facets of the Diocese at a local level. The theme for the 2021 event was Walking on Sacred Ground, an indigenous guided tour of Aboriginal culture and history that survives in our community.

More than 250 staff were placed into nine groups, spreading out to cover our entire Diocese including Morisset, Manning, Wollombi and Nelson Bay.

Bishop's Staff Day was a resounding success, and a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the traditional custodians of our land and connect with staff across our work.

Governance



*Bishop Bill Wright died in November 2021. Fr. Greg Barker has been appointed as Diocesan Administrator until a new bishop is appointed by the Holy Father, Pope Francis. The Vicar General role also remains vacant until a new bishop is appointed. *Councils will be elected following the appointment of a new bishop.

6,000+ volunteers

Our community

4,600+ employees

154,481
CATHOLICS



Financials

Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

Income Statement

For the year ended
30 June 2021

	\$000
Income	37,742
Expenses	38,268
Net Assets	53,568
INCOME	
	\$000
Rental Income	5,918
Contributions	5,548
Fundraising and Bequests	-
Shared Service and Other Income	24,778
Revaluation of Assets	1,498
Total	37,742
EXPENSES	
	\$000
Information Technology	1,939
Finance Costs	2,904
Property Expenses	1,888
Employee Benefits Expenses	23,130
Other Expenses	8,407
Total	38,268

CatholicCare
Social Services
Hunter-Manning

Income Statement

For the year ended
30 June 2021

	\$000
Income	25,264
Expenses	23,895
Net Assets	4,068

INCOME	\$000
Grant Funding	19,947
Fee For Service	1,667
Other	3,650
Total	25,264

EXPENSES	\$000
Salaries & Wages	11,900
Client Support Costs	6,785
Management Fees	2,101
Property Expenses	1,130
Other	1,979
Total	23,895

St Nicholas

(Incorporating
Early Education, OOSH
and Pathways)

Income Statement

For the year ended
31 December 2021

	\$000
Income	31,058
Expenses	32,959
Net Liabilities	(7,146)

INCOME	\$000
Private fees received	12,091
Government childcare funding received	17,649
Government grants	1,037
Other income	281
Total	31,058

EXPENDITURE	\$000
Employee benefits expense	21,794
Operating expenses	3,740
Depreciation and amortisation	2,914
Rent and other property expense	1,722
Catering and consumables	1,305
Finance costs	1,185
New centre establishment costs	299
Total	32,959

Catholic Schools Office

Income Statement

For the year ended
31 December 2021

INCOME	\$000
School fees, excursions & trip income	41,175
Other private income	3,394
State Government recurrent grants	68,456
State Government interest subsidy	226
Commonwealth Government recurrent grants	237,719
Sub total Recurrent Income	350,970
Commonwealth Government capital grants	661
State Government capital grants	8,185
Fees/Levies - Private capital income	16,020
Sub Total Capital Income	24,866
Other Income	3,650
Total Income	379,486

EXPENSES	\$000
Salaries & salary-related costs	265,751
Academic & extra-curricular expenses	8,907
Building & equipment maintenance & replacements	22,761
Interest expenses - capital loans	4,386
Depreciation expenses	11,704
Bad & doubtful debts expenses	2,471
Other operating expenses	23,802
Total Expenses	339,782

BALANCE SHEET	\$000
Total assets	661,828
Total liabilities	218,325
Total Equity	443,503
Restricted - employee entitlements	55,244
Unrestricted	388,259
Total Equity	443,503

Catholic Development Fund

Income Statement

For the year ended
30 June 2021

	\$000
Net Interest Income	7,077
Expenses	299
Distributions	5,000
Net Assets	26,842

PROFIT & LOSS	\$000
Interest income	8,529
Interest expense	-1,452
Net Interest income	7,077
Fee & Commission expenses	-90
Other Operating Income	1,013
Salaries & related costs	-339
Other expenses	-883
Profit	6,778
Distribution	-5,000
Profit after distribution	1,778

