St Leo's Catholic College
Wahroonga

2013 Annual Report
1. **Message from Key Groups in Our School Community**

1.1 **Message from the Principal**

This report provides the opportunity to review and celebrate the achievements of the 2013 school year.

Our school mission is to be a faith filled learning community, identifying and celebrating our Catholic values and traditions. We strive to educate our students to be confident, competent Catholic young men and women of conscience for the 21st Century, laying the foundations for lifelong learning and instilling a strong sense of optimism and hope for all students.

This year is the second year of our three-year Strategic Plan. Of our three goals based on our Mission, Teaching and Learning and improving our facilities and site – it is pleasing to see our achievements and our growth in each of these goals. As a school we encourage positive relationships and I thank the community of staff, students and parents who tirelessly work together in partnership to continually improve our school in all aspects of learning.

1.2 **Message from the Parent Body**

The St Leo’s community championed a range of activities to support active partnerships and parent engagement in 2013. The St Leo’s Parent Network, working as a sub-group of the St Leo’s Board, sponsored Principal’s Update forums each term and targeted parent-led workshops. A workshop canvassing study techniques was of particular interest and well attended.

Parents, ex-parents, ex-students and members of the broader St Leo’s Community have enabled the Literacy and Numeracy Programs to go from strength to strength, delivering measurable improvements in student learning outcomes. St Leo’s continued its involvement in The Dish, a mobile van serving dinner for homeless people in Hornsby, providing the College community opportunities for involvement in a social justice and outreach project.

1.3 **Message from the Student Body**

As the captains of the school, we were responsible for organising and maintaining an entirely new system of leadership. Both of us were looking forward to the challenge, hoping to grow as leaders and as people.

Our first event as School Captains was St Leo’s Day. We had to liaise with all the house captains and organise events, activities and a sausage sizzle for the entire school. Our qualities of leadership developed over this time, mainly thanks to the amazing efforts of our fellow leaders and our teacher mentor. Several encounters with many people of prominence in the community followed, giving an excellent opportunity to showcase the school, one of the most enjoyable aspects of being School Captains.
We were selected to attend a day in Parliament House where we were privileged to meet Her Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, Professor Marie Bashir. We learnt many strategies for leadership, as well as receiving inspiration from one of Australia’s greatest leaders. We were also honoured to have dinner with Mr Barry O’Farrell, then Premier of NSW, along with several other school captains from the local area.

Our experiences have given us excellent opportunities to develop skills of leadership, organisation, time management and also to meet some inspiring people along the way. It was a one year journey that we will always remember fondly.
2. School Profile

2.1 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2013:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>LBOTE*</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
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<tr>
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<td>168</td>
<td>4</td>
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*Language background other than English

2.2 Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established an Enrolment Policy† which is implemented by all systemic schools in the Diocese.

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.

†Copies of this policy and other policies in this report may be obtained from the Catholic Schools Office website at: http://www.csodbb.catholic.edu.au/about/index.html or by contacting the Catholic Schools Office.

2.3 Staff Profile

The NSW government requires that this report detail the number of teachers in each of the following categories:

a) have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines;

b) have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications;

c) do not have qualifications as described in (a) or (b) but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context. Such teachers must have been employed:
- to ‘teach’ in NSW before 1 October 2004 (either on a permanent, casual or temporary basis), and
- as a ‘teacher’ during the last five (5) years in a permanent, casual or temporary capacity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
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Further information about the staff profile can be found in the School Facts section of the school’s profile page on the My School website.

2.4 Teacher Attendance and Retention Rates

The average teacher attendance rate during 2013 was 95%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The teacher retention rate from 2012 to 2013 was 100%.
2.5 Teacher Satisfaction

The College continues to have a very high staff retention rate which demonstrates the satisfaction the staff experience working at St Leo’s. Staff are committed to professional learning and have embraced the professional development focus of individual research projects in 2013. Staff willingness to present their work has been overwhelming. Staff generously support and attend College related activities outside College hours such as camps, retreats, Vinnie’s Night Patrol, sporting events, parent evenings and also attend social functions organised by parents.

There is an active social club. A College Book Club has also been established.

Staff consultation occurs when decisions need to be made and feedback sought -both positive and negative-and where appropriate, adjustments made.

2.6 Student Attendance and Retention Rates

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<th>Year</th>
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</table>

The average student attendance rate for 2013 was 93%.

Of the students who completed Year 10 in 2011, 86% completed Year 12 in 2013.

Management of non-attendance: In order for students to reach their full potential it is of paramount importance that they attend school regularly. While it is the parents’ legal responsibility under the Education Act to ensure that their children attend school regularly, our staff as part of their duty of care, monitor all absences and work in partnership with parents to support and promote the regular attendance of students. In doing so the school, under the leadership of the Principal:

- provides a caring environment which fosters in students, a sense of wellbeing and belonging;
- maintains accurate records of student attendance;
- implements policies and procedures to monitor student attendance and to address non-attendance issues as and when they arise;
- communicates to parents and students, the school’s expectations with regard to student attendance and the consequences of not meeting these expectations; and
- recognises and rewards excellent and improved student attendance.

School attendance records also contain information regarding student absences including reasons for absence and documentation to substantiate reasons for absences. Teachers are required to monitor non attendance diligently on a student by student basis and to bring to the attention of the
Principal immediately any unexplained absences, non attendance of a chronic nature, or reasons for non attendance that cause concern. Matters of concern are referred to the Principal, the Catholic Schools Office and the relevant Department of Education and Training officer where appropriate.

Where a student is not able to attend school for a prolonged period of time due to a medical condition or illness, the school in collaboration with parents provides resources to contribute to the student’s continuum of learning where possible.

The Catholic Schools Office monitors each school’s compliance with student attendance and management of non attendance on an annual basis as a minimum, as part of the system’s School Review and Development processes.

2.7 Student Satisfaction

Students have a strong voice in the College and are given strategies to use when in need of support. This includes a number of significant staff with whom they are encouraged to communicate on a needs basis. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their decisions and when ineffective choices are made they are led through a process of self-evaluation. There is a clearly published Student Appeals Process in the diary.

There is a Student Representative Council with representatives from each Year group. The Student Representative Council meets regularly with College staff to put forward proposals arising from the student body. Tutor Groups are organised according to Houses to foster house spirit and take responsibility for significant College events.

Students demonstrate their satisfaction with the College through their participation in extra-curricular activities, Peer Support, Debating, Representative Sport, social justice activities, Bible Study, attendance at Mass, Duke of Edinburgh. Student participation is growing in these areas.

Exit Interviews have been introduced for students leaving the College to provide feedback on positive experiences and areas that can be improved. Students speak fondly of their experiences such as camps, friendships, relationships with teachers and memorable learning experiences.

2.8 Senior Secondary Outcomes

The percentage of students in Year 12 attaining a Year 12 Certificate or equivalent VET qualification in 2013 was 100%.

The percentage of students in Year 12 undertaking vocational or trade training was 34%.

2.9 Student Destinations

Students at St Leo’s Catholic College can choose an academic or non-academic pathway for study for the Higher School Certificate. The College offers two clearly defined patterns of study. An ATAR pathway ensures students qualify for the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) leading students to further study at University while a non-ATAR pathway directs students to seek an apprenticeship, further study at TAFE or full-time employment. Of the students who completed their HSC in 2013, 4% are still looking for work or taking a “GAP” year. Approximately 68% of the candidature was offered places over a range of courses at Universities in NSW. The majority, 35%, gained entrance to Macquarie University, closely followed by Australian Catholic University, 23%.

Other Universities that accepted significant numbers of St Leo’s Catholic College students included University of Western Sydney, 15%, University of Sydney-12%, University of New South Wales-11%, University of Technology Sydney-11%, as well as University of Notre Dame Sydney, Charles Sturt University – Bathurst, University of New England and the University of Newcastle. A number of students also applied for positions at private Colleges. Approximately 28% obtained apprenticeships, continued study at TAFE, or entered employment.
3. Catholic Life and Mission

3.1 Catholic Heritage

The College motto “God’s Law in the Heart” gives direction to our commitment to develop competent, confident young Catholic men and women of conscience, informed through a personal relationship with Christ.

3.2 Religious Life of the School

The whole College celebrated its Catholic identity, and marked special occasions through participation in the Eucharist at our: Opening College Mass, Lenten, Easter and Christmas observances, Graduations, and holy days of obligation. Some of these were community celebrations, joined by the Cathedral Parishioners and Our Lady of the Rosary Primary School.

Weekly College Masses, on Tuesdays and Fridays, are possible through the involvement of the Dean of the Cathedral Parish, and Administrator, of Holy Name Parish, Wahroonga.

The College actively engaged with Diocesan events including Annual Diocesan Staff Mass, Year 10 Social Justice Day, Catholic Mission Mass, and the Bishop’s Year 12 BYTE.

Our Year 10 students participated in our College based, annual Vocations Day Conference, and had the opportunity to speak with invited members of several Religious Orders.

Weekly Bible Study classes are very well attended by students across all year groups, and are often run by the senior students themselves.

3.3 Catholic Worldview

The College actively engaged all staff and students in its social justice initiatives through Tutor Room based fund-raising, House based charities, Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal and Legacy Day. As part of the Broken Bay Diocese the College generously supported Project Compassion and Mission Australia.

Our students gained a close perspective on the needs of the community through regular visits to the local nursing home, monthly Street Retreats, feeding the homeless through Vinnie’s Van, and attendance at the Diocesan Social Justice Day.

Our juniors participated in Reflection Days, and the seniors in Retreats, combining themes from a Catholic Worldview with issues faced by young people today.

The College is engaged with integrating the Catholic Worldview into its teaching and learning programs across all Key Learning Areas.

3.4 Professional Learning in Catholic Life and Mission

The College extends the domain of Religious Education teaching to all teachers through its Bible Stories initiative, where the life and ministry of Jesus is unpacked and reflected on by all staff and students through the Tutor Program, as are simple Mass rituals and responses.

The Staff Spirituality Day was one of reflection on the sustaining power of faith, family and friends through life’s crises.

Ministry for Teachers I was attended by six teachers across various KLAs, and the REC attended Ministry II.

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established an Accreditation Policy for Staff in the Diocesan School System in respect to the Mission of the Church which is implemented by all systemic schools in the Diocese.
4. **Pastoral Care**

4.1 **Diocesan Policies**

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policies including Student Welfare and Anti-Bullying, which are implemented by all schools in the Diocese.

The implementation of these policies is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.

4.2 **School Implementation of Diocesan Policy**

Diocesan policies provide the framework for College developed policies. One notable example is the College Attendance Policy that has used the Diocesan Attendance Policy as its guide.

The College’s Attendance Policy was widely publicised to the whole school community—staff, students and in particular, the parent body. To ensure practices and procedures around school attendance were adhered to, the Attendance Policy was clearly presented at Parent Information Evenings. Support from the CSO was requested and provided when a student’s attendance did not meet expectations, plans to address and improve attendance were put in place and monitored.

In 2013 the Anti-bullying Policy was revised and an Excessive Expressed Distress (self-harm) Policy drafted.

The National Safe Schools Framework Audit Tool was administered to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment.

In 2013 the College Leadership Team attended the Suicide Postvention Workshop, the mental health educational initiative provided by headspace and a Suicide Postvention Response Plan developed.

4.3 **Pastoral Care of Families**

College lines of communication for parents and caregivers are clearly publicised and parents are encouraged to inform the College of any concerns or requests for support. Families are supported financially where necessary and specific requests are considered on a needs basis.

There is an extensive Pastoral Support Team, a full time College Counsellor and a Youth Minister. A College Welfare Team has been established to include the overseeing of pastoral needs of particular families.

Where appropriate families are linked to outside agencies to provide support such as Centrecare and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Hornsby.

There is a strong Parent Information and Involvement group, formally known as the Parent Network, that meets once a term to address appropriate educational topics and provide a social network; there is a Year 7 welcome BBQ, and parent representatives are allocated to each Year group.

The Diocesan Parent Council events, as well as events held by community organisations, for example the KYDS Drug Forum held at Ku-ring-ai Council Chambers, Gordon, are widely publicised.

4.4 **Resolving Issues**

The Diocese of Broken Bay has established a Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese.

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.
4.5 Work Health and Safety

Each school is required to implement and comply with the Diocesan School System Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS). This system reflects the current statutory requirements for WHS and complies with the Australian Standard for WHS Management Systems. The WHSMS adopted by the CSO for Broken Bay Systemic Schools has been designed to address general health, safety and welfare matters and also to take account of specific issues that apply to school communities. The management system supports the provision of a ‘safe and supportive’ environment for all students as well as taking into account the health, safety and welfare of staff, visitors and contractors to the school site.

Principals, in consultation with the relevant CSO personnel, are responsible for monitoring the school’s compliance with WHS legislation and for the implementation of the management system in keeping with the Catholic Schools Office’s Annual WHS Plan. External WHS system audits are conducted across a sample of schools each year to validate the implementation of the management system.
5. Excellence in Teaching and Learning

5.1 Quality Teaching and Learning

The St Leo’s commitment to quality teaching and learning is framed by its explicit school improvement agenda which is focused on improving student outcomes through staff knowing their subjects and how to teach them, and through staff knowing their students and how they learn. The St Leo’s internal Professional Learning program enabled teachers to continue refining their practice and their ability to use student data to diagnose student learning needs and monitor progress. Students in Years 7 and 8 developed their skills in using iPads as a tool for learning, and the trial of e-texts during the year was successful, so that e-texts will incrementally replace hard copy textbooks as the College moves towards one-on-one iPads. The well-developed Literacy Intervention program run by the Literacy Co-ordinator and community volunteers supported many Years 7 and 8 students to improve their basic Literacy. A key focus for teachers was the development of new teaching program in Years 7 and 9 English, Mathematics, Science and History in preparation for the implementation of the National Curriculum in 2014.

5.2 Student Achievement

Students in Years 7 and 9 undertook tests as part of the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in May this year. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. Analysis of these results assists school planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs.

Several points should be noted:

• **In Year 7**, students placed in Band 4 are achieving below the national minimum standard. Students in Band 5 are achieving at the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 6-9 are performing at a standard deemed above the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 8 and 9 are “at proficiency”.

• **In Year 9** students in Band 5 are achieving below the national minimum standard. Students in Band 6 are achieving at the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 7-10 are performing above the national minimum standard. Students in Bands 9 and 10 are “at proficiency”.

• Students who were exempted from any test were deemed not to have met the national minimum standard in that test area.

• State data for band distributions is sourced from the School Measurement and Reporting Toolkit (SMART2), developed by NSW Department of Education and Communities. All national data and state figures for the percentage at or above national minimum are sourced from the NAPLAN Summary Report (Preliminary Results for Achievement) published by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). All school data is sourced from SMART2. Because figures are rounded and exempted students are not included in Band distributions, percentages may not add up to 100.

• In the 2013 cohort, there were (167) students in Year 7 and (157) students in Year 9.

Detail on school performance is provided in the following tables. Band distributions and percentages of students achieving the national minimum standard are outlined separately for Years 7 and 9. Additional information can also be accessed from the My School website (http://www.myschool.edu.au/).
Band Distributions (%) – Year 7

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<th>Band 5</th>
<th>Band 6</th>
<th>Band 7</th>
<th>Band 8</th>
<th>Band 9 (+)</th>
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Band Distributions (%) – Year 9

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NAPLAN

The improvement seen in the NAPLAN results from 2008 to 2011 was sustained in 2012. St Leo’s has significantly fewer students performing in the lowest two Bands in all areas tested in both Years 7 and 9. Similarly, in the top two Bands in all areas tested, students in Years 7 and 9 performed better than students across the State.

Compared to statistically similar schools, as demonstrated in the My School data, student achievement in all areas tested was again at least similar to, but mostly exceeded that of students in similar schools. This sustained improvement can be attributed to a number of strategic decisions. Firstly, NAPLAN data is closely analysed each year to inform programs and instructional design within English classrooms. Secondly, a focused Literacy and Numeracy intervention that has been in operations since 2010, targets those students identified through a variety of strategies as most needing support. Thirdly, the role of the Literacy Co-ordinator has evolved to include the development and implementation of a continuum of Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation teaching and learning strategies across Years 7 and 8. Additionally, there is a focus on developing Reading and Writing skills.
Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

In 2011, the NSW Minister for Education announced that School Certificate tests would not continue beyond that year. From 2012, eligible students who leave school before receiving their Higher School Certificate will receive the NSW Record of School Achievement (RoSA). The RoSA has been designed to provide grades for all Stage 5 (Year 10) and Stage (Preliminary) courses completed during secondary education. Nine (9) students at the College requested a RoSA in 2013.

Higher School Certificate

HSC students in 2013 achieved above State average in 72% of courses, and there was a notable upward trend in students performing in Bands 5 and 6 in all courses. The top ATAR was 98.05 and 36% of students achieved an ATAR of 85 or above. The Visual Art Major Works of three students were nominated for ARTExpress, and one of these was successful. 51 students were named in the Distinguished Achievers List.

5.3 Extra Curricula Activities

Students participated with enthusiasm in a wide range of extra-curricula offerings during 2013. Sportsmen and women were able to develop their skills both in the internal sports programme and through various representative sports, and those enjoying cultural pursuits engaged in the many practice and performance opportunities on offer through the Music and Drama Faculties. Debating and Public Speaking drew strong interest from students, as did the Duke of Edinburgh program.

5.4 Professional Learning

The well established action research approach to Professional Learning at St Leo’s was strengthened during 2013 with all staff engaging in individual research on a specific identified need within one or more of their classes. The high calibre of teachers’ research demonstrated their skill as research practitioners and their capacity to use data and research to develop responsive teaching and learning practices. Teachers researched such topics as effective feedback, way of motivating reluctant learners, improving basic Literacy and study techniques. Two senior staff members presented a paper on the Leo’s approach to Professional Learning at John Hattie’s Visible Learning Conference in Brisbane. Many teachers participated in Professional Learning offered by external providers such as Professional Associations, and five teachers achieved accreditation through the New South Wales Institute of Teachers.
6. Strategic Initiatives

6.1 2013 Priorities and Achievements

Our priorities for 2013 were set by The College Strategic Plan. This plan was the lens through which we completed our preparation for the introduction of the Australian Curriculum in 2014.

In 2013 the College continued to strategically increase the participation and understanding of the College community by providing opportunities for faith development, Liturgy and Mission. The explicit link between the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the College Mission and Values was made via daily links between the contemporary life of students and the teachings of Jesus.

Staff previously undertook detailed professional learning in the importance of “knowing their students” in order to improve student learning outcomes. In 2013 the focus was upon individual staff designing their own research projects using student data. Reflection and collaboration became a source of improved teaching for them. The learning by staff from this project was invaluable for them, both individually and in the shared learning environment of the College.

In 2013 work commenced on the first stage of renovating College facilities and premises. The renewal of the Science Block started and was due to be completed in Term 1 of 2014. The next stage will proceed after that, and should include work on the renewal of Blocks A and B and the Library.

6.2 2014 Priorities and Challenges

The College priorities for 2014 are outlined in our College Strategic Plan. In 2014, the renewal of buildings and facilities will present an ongoing challenge for the effective daily life of the school. Ensuring the quality of learning for students and the welfare of the whole community will be pre-eminent during this year of important facility renewal.

In 2014 the College Mission goal is to focus upon centring the Values of the College on the life and times of Jesus. This will, necessarily, include increasing student leadership participation in social justice activities.

In Learning and Teaching, the focus in 2014 will be upon specific implementation of Literacy strategies in Writing and Reading that are aligned to the DET Literacy Continuum Outcomes. As a College, we will also focus upon student outcomes in Mathematics with the objective of aligning student goals in Mathematics to their achievement.

An important pastoral goal for the College in 2014 will be to focus upon quality relationships between all members of the College Community. A special focus will be placed upon adolescent mental health issues and how the school can be well placed to assist families in an ever changing world.
7. Parent Participation

7.1 Introduction

The St Leo’s Catholic College Board has strong parent representation and provides an informative parent voice, particularly in terms of strategic direction and teaching and learning parent education. The areas of focus of the Parent Information and Involvement group continue to grow and include Literacy and Numeracy Support for students, the Dish for the feeding of the homeless of the Hornsby area, co-ordination and promotion of social events and representation at significant College events such as Open Day.

The Parent Information and Involvement group have their own section in the Pride, the College newsletter.

7.2 Parent Satisfaction

The number of parents attending Parent Information and Involvement evenings continues to grow as does the number of parents volunteering to support College events. A formal survey was conducted in December 2013. The results are indicative of a parent body that have high satisfaction with the College in the areas of:

- Promoting quality teaching and learning through teachers knowing their subject and teaching it well.
- Positive relationship between staff and students.
- Appropriate homework levels.
- IPad/laptop program assisting children’s learning.
- Providing a safe and supportive environment for children where they are listened to and valued.
- Confident in the school’s anti-bullying program.
- Wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Quality communication methods including website, College newsletter The Pride, and staff emails, all of which are informative and helpful.
- Feedback to parents including reports, parent/teacher nights and communication with staff is timely and informative.
- Choosing St Leo’s College for my child was the right selection of secondary school.

Consistent with Board of Studies requirements, financial income and expenditure for this school is shown in the graphs below. More detailed financial data is available on the "myschool" website at http://www.myschool.edu.au. Diocesan system financial reporting can be found in the Diocesan school system Annual Report, which will be available at http://www.csodbb.catholic.edu.au

The contents of this annual report have been validated by the School’s consultant, Ray Werren.