

# Annual Report 2023



Catholic Schools  
Parramatta Diocese





## Acknowledgement of Country

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese acknowledges the Darug and the Gundungurra people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, people who have loved and cared for this Land for thousands of years.

We pay our respects to Darug and Gundungurra Elders, both past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

# About Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese

In the Parramatta Diocese, parish and school communities work together to provide faith-filled, welcoming and caring environments that nurture young people to grow in faith and learning.

The ongoing commitment of each of our 80 schools across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains is to provide high-quality Catholic schooling through improving learning outcomes for all students and promoting a professional and rewarding working life for teachers.

Under the pastoral leadership of the Bishop of Parramatta, the Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD, students and staff are encouraged to reach out to those most in need.

From the beginning of 2023, Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) became an incorporated company limited by guarantee with a new name, Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese Limited (CSPD). This change included a new governance framework with a Board of Directors and new company branding. These changes were made following an extensive independent review of the existing Diocesan governance structures and provide for increased accountability to key stakeholders and the community.

# Welcome

Dear Friends

The information in this report reflects the tremendous work by CSPD school and office communities in 2023 as they continued to deliver quality Catholic education across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains during a year of significant change for the organisation, with a new governance model and Board, a new name and branding, and a new Executive Director.

In keeping with our strong focus on synodality (Spirit-led discernment and action) and putting into practice deep listening, these changes have allowed all of us to work more closely with our colleagues in the Diocese of Parramatta, and across CSPD Support Teams and schools.

What is evident is our shared passion for the transforming benefits of education and the critical nature of building communities around our schools.

During this first year of the new governance model, CSPDL Board members visited more than half of our 80 schools, meeting with our dedicated and passionate teachers and the students who are benefitting from their teaching and leadership.

We move into 2024 with an even greater sense of common direction and purpose that will be crystallised in the development of a new organisation-wide strategy. Our focus will be on giving our students what they need to flourish, about their growth and development and that of each member of our staff, and striving for excellence in all things.

Education is an unrelenting commitment to every child and we thank everyone at CSPD for their ongoing ministry of leadership and outreach.

We look forward to continuing to make a difference for our students and increasing learning gains for all.

Yours in Christ



**Elizabeth Crouch AM**  
Chair  
Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese Ltd



**Jack de Groot**  
Executive Director of Schools  
Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese



**Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv DD**  
Bishop of Parramatta  
Diocese of Parramatta





the horse  
jumped into the bed, and said,  
"I'm going to be warm tonight."

The cow  
jumped into the bed, and said,  
"I'm going to be warm tonight."



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# CSPD at a glance



44,000+  
students



58  
primary schools



22  
secondary schools



5,803  
total staff



3,760  
teaching staff



1,385  
support staff



658  
system staff



2 trade and  
inquiry campuses



3 High Support  
Learning settings



1 virtual  
School of Now



6 co-located  
Early Learning Centres



52 Before and After  
School Care centres





VET programs across

**26**  
sites



## Finalist

Training Provider of the Year 2021  
Australian Training Awards

VET in Schools Student of the Year for the last

**3 years**

with the 2021 winner going on to win the NSW award (state)

## Winner

Training Provider  
of the Year 2021  
NSW Training  
Awards

CSPD students have won the NSW Training Awards (regional)  
School-Based Apprentice of the Year

**4 years in a row**  
(2020-2023)



## Silver

School Pathways to VET Award 2023  
CathWest Innovation College  
Australian Training Awards

## Bronze

Innovation in VET Award 2023  
St John XXIII Catholic College  
Australian Training Awards



**Winner**

School-based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year 2023  
NSW Training Awards  
(Regional Awards, Western Sydney/Blue Mountains)

VET in Schools Student of the Year 2023  
NSW Training Awards  
(Regional Awards, Western Sydney/Blue Mountains)



**80 schools across  
Western Sydney and  
the Blue Mountains**

# Governance

CSPD is committed to following standards of good corporate governance and business practices that are appropriate for its size, charity purpose and intent. It is also committed to complying with Australian laws and all requirements for its operations.

At the request of Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv DD, Bishop of Parramatta, an independent Review of Governance for the Diocese of Parramatta was undertaken from June 2020 to February 2021. This review noted that the Diocese of Parramatta would benefit from a new structure for the governance of Diocesan Catholic schools by creating an incorporated company limited by guarantee. The principles of the new model would centre around subsidiarity and the practice of synodality, which means working together.

One of the recommendations from the review was to change the name of Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) to Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD). This change presented an opportunity to more clearly communicate our Catholic identity and service to our communities across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains and to build on the service culture messages of 'confident', 'valued' and 'welcomed'. It would also support our work as a system of schools so we can offer the best possible support to students and school communities.

As part of the new governance framework, a Board of Directors (the Board) would replace the Diocesan Schools Council which operated in an advisory capacity only.

## Board of Directors

The Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese Ltd (CSPDL) Board was commissioned on the Feast of Pentecost, 5 June 2022, and took up its new role formally on 1 January 2023.

Until the end of 2022, the Board participated in an induction program to familiarise them with the organisation's current structure and activities, and broader operating environment. The Board is made up of community members who are highly-regarded leaders in their respective fields.

The Board's responsibilities are set out in the Board Charter. The Board is responsible for providing leadership and setting strategic direction, and has the authority to determine all matters related to the policies, practices, management and operations of CSPD.



# Elizabeth Crouch AM

## Chair of the Board



Elizabeth is Chair of the Sydney Children's Hospital Network, the Customer Owned Banking Association and SGS Economics and Planning, and a Non-Executive Director of ASX-listed ReadyTech Holdings and Bingo Industries. Elizabeth is also on the Boards of the NSW Institute of Sport and Health Infrastructure and Chairs the Audit and Risk Committees for the City of Sydney and IPART. She is also a member of the Audit and Risk Committee for the Western City Aerotropolis Authority and is an appointee to the Diocesan Finance Council for the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta.

Elizabeth is Emeritus Deputy Chancellor of Macquarie University and has held previous Non-Executive Director roles on the Boards of Chandler Macleod Group, McGrath Estate

Agents, RailCorp and the Macquarie University Hospital. She was previously on the Board of Western Sydney Local Health District and a Trustee of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Elizabeth spent 16 years with the Federal Government including with Federal Health and more than a decade in the private sector including as Chief Executive of the Housing Industry Association.

Elizabeth holds a Bachelor of Economics and a Master of Cyber Security. In 2019 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to higher education and the rail transport sector and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

# Michael Howard



Michael is General Manager at IDE Australia, a role held since 2015. IDE Water Technologies Ltd is a world-leading global desalination company headquartered in Israel.

The Australian operation supports the company's focus on developing large-scale desalination plants in mining, industrial and municipal sectors. Prior to IDE, Michael was General Manager and then Managing Director of Chatoyer Holdings Pty Ltd, an SME (small to medium-sized enterprise) involved in the design and manufacture of modular water treatment systems, and supply of environmental spill containment products. He was previously Director and founding joint shareholder of Waycon Services Pty Ltd, established in 1986 to provide engineering and trades labour hire, project delivery and mechanical services to the construction, manufacturing, heavy engineering and mining sectors which grew to over 300 employees. This followed 11 years of working

on projects in the mining and construction sectors with a major Australian engineering and construction group.

Michael's business experience covers the many facets of SME business development and growth from start-up to mature operating business. This has included developing business opportunities across varying market sectors, project delivery, commercial and contract negotiations, client interface, positioning major project opportunities, managing and coordinating project tender submissions, and development of joint venture teaming arrangements for major project opportunities.

He is currently a Non-Executive Director of Bowls NSW and Board Member - Advisory to PCT Global Pty Ltd. Previous board positions include Director (10 years), Vice President (2 years) and Chairman (5 years) of Castle Hill Bowling Club Ltd.



## Scott Jenkins



Scott has been Chief Financial Officer at Australian Catholic University (ACU) since January 2014, responsible for driving corporate strategies, financial high performing teams, treasury, procurement, insurance, financial planning, and reporting to the Board.

Scott is an accomplished C-suite executive with experience leading financial strategy and delivering corporate strategy at a range of diverse businesses, including private companies, start-ups, not-for-profits, and large multinational companies. Scott has worked across diverse sectors including higher education, mining, advertising, pharmacy, energy and insurance, across the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

Scott was appointed as a Board Member in September 2023.

## Greg Jones



A school principal for 25 years, Greg has a vision of educational provision built around quality learning and teaching, student wellbeing and strong governance structures that involves the school community in shaping the culture and direction of the school. Greg is the Chair and founding Principal of Peninsula Community of Schools (PCS) involving a number of schools working collaboratively to enhance public education on the Northern Beaches. He also received ministerial appointment to oversee the community consultation and re-establishment of Hunters Hill School and Erskineville Public School.

Greg was an education partner with Panasonic Australia to develop an interactive whiteboard for classroom use that was sold worldwide and became the interactive board in NSW schools. He acted as Chief Education Officer, School Improvement, Northern Sydney Region, responsible for supporting schools in developing school improvement targets. Greg was a leader in 'Revitalising Inner City Education', an inclusive education focus responsible for community consultation, implementation and integration of a support unit for students with physical disabilities at Balmain High School.

Greg has received a number of accolades in the education sector including NSW Primary Principals Association, Professional Award 2017 for 'Excellence in School Leadership', Director General's Award 2011 for 'Outstanding Service to Public Education', Director Generals School Achievement Award, 1997 'Commitment to Equity of Student Outcomes' as Principal of Truscott Street Public School and a number of other awards tied to his position as Chair of the PCS.

Greg is an Emeritus Council Member of Macquarie University and has held various governance positions at Macquarie University and Northern Beaches Council and community.



## Anthony Karam



Anthony is the executive chairman of TMA Group of Companies. He was appointed Managing Director of Ticket Manufacturers Australia Limited in 1996 and was the Managing Director of Mark Sensing Limited in 2008.

In November 2008 he was appointed to the board of Parking Australia Ltd, where he served for over 7 years, and in 2015 was appointed Vice President of Parking Australia. He also holds a number of director positions in Australia, New Zealand, USA, China, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

In 2011, Anthony was appointed a member of the Diocesan Finance Council for the Maronite Eparchy of Australia and then in 2014 to the Board of the Australian Maronite Professional Council Limited where he served for 3 years.

Anthony is a member of several industry associations including the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply, the Property Council of Australia, the Security Providers Association Australia, and the Australian Security Industry Association Ltd.

## Emeritus Professor Marea Nicholson AM



With more than 40 years' experience, Professor Marea Nicholson AM has made a significant contribution to governance, teaching and learning including special education, school counselling, teacher education and particularly child protection in Catholic, Government and Independent schools. She has been involved with the Australian Catholic University and its predecessor colleges since 1987 including leadership in course design and program coordination, and professional development. She was appointed to the position of Associate Vice-Chancellor (NSW/ACT) in 2009, and Emeritus Professor in 2019.

In 2012, Marea received the Rotary International Award for Vocational Excellence in recognition of her dedication and the pursuit of excellence

throughout her career. In 2016 she was successful in obtaining NSW Government funding to establish two business incubator spaces on both North Sydney and Strathfield Campuses. In 2020 Marea was appointed a Member (AM) of the Order of Australia for significant service to education, and to professional standards.

Marea has had numerous leadership roles within education including Chair of Catholic Religious Australia's Education Committee and Chair of Initial Teacher Education Council. She is currently a Good Samaritan Board Chair and a member of National Catholic Education Commission and the Committee of Religious Institute and Ministerial Public Juridic Person School Authorities Australia (CORMSAA).



## Nicole Patterson

Nicole commenced working with Westpac Banking Corporation in 1998. Since 2012, she has been the Head of Finance for the Westpac Group's three charitable foundations with responsibility for their financial governance. Prior to this, Nicole held a number of senior finance and project management roles across Westpac Group, including BT, St George Bank and Westpac's retail and business divisions.

Prior to joining Westpac, Nicole worked in the Audit & Assurance Practice of Price Waterhouse in both Sydney and London on

a range of audit and transaction advisory assignments, specialising in the financial services sector. Nicole is currently a director of Loreto Normanhurst School Board and UNE Foundation Limited.

Nicole holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting & Finance) from UNSW and a Graduate Diploma in Local & Applied History from the University of New England. She is also an Associate member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants.



## Maria Pearson

Maria had a 42-year career in Catholic Education. Prior to retirement in 2019, Maria spent 15 years as the Principal of Mount St Benedict College. Maria has held other leadership positions including as the Pastoral Care Coordinator at St Dominic's College Kingswood, Administration Coordinator and Co-curriculum Coordinator at St Leo's College Wahroonga, and Deputy Principal at Our Lady of Mercy College (OLMC) Parramatta.

Maria was the President of the Association of Catholic Principals NSW from 2012-2018,

NSW Director of Catholic Secondary Principals Australia from 2013-2018, Member of the CEC (NSW) Education Committee and Member of the CLRI Education Policy Committee between 2015 to 2017. She was also a member of the Catholic Independent Schools Employment Relations Reference Group until 2019.

Maria has held various directorship positions including Seton Villa Ltd, Edmund Rice Special Education Services and the Broken Bay Diocese Schools Board.



## Very Rev Robert Riedling EV



Fr. Robert Riedling was appointed as the Dean and Administrator of St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta in 2021.

Fr. Robert lived overseas for a period of time before returning as a parish priest in the Diocese of Parramatta.

Fr. Robert, who was ordained in June 2005, has lived almost his entire life in the Diocese. He was born in Penrith and grew up in the Blacktown area. He joined the seminary in 1999 and was ordained a deacon and priest at the Cathedral, now in his care.

Following his ordination, Fr. Robert served in the parishes of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Greystanes, St Michael's, Blacktown South (before it became Mary, Queen of the Family Parish), and Padre Pio Parish, Glenmore Park.

## Geoff Officer



Chief of Operations & Finance  
Diocese of Parramatta  
Bishop's Nominated Observer

## Past Members

John Vassallo, Sue Walsh and The Hon. John Watkins AM were members of the Board from inception but retired during the 2023 year.

## Board Committees

Three Board committees were established to assist the Board in executing its duties:

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Mission, Learning and People Committee
- Infrastructure and Property Committee



# CSPD Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

The Board delegates authority to the Executive Director of Schools and the other members of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to carry out the objectives of CSPD in compliance with our stated values, delegated limits of authority and Board-approved policies. Members of the ELT are responsible for implementing the strategic objectives and operating within the risk appetite set by the Board and for the day-to-day operations of CSPD and its 80 systemic schools.

## 2023 Executive Leadership team:

**Executive Director of Schools** *(from 30 January 2023)*

**Deputy Executive Director of Schools and Director Strategic Delivery** *(to 28 February 2023)* then **Deputy Executive Director of Schools and Director Learning** *(from 1 March 2023)*

**Director Finance and Infrastructure**

**Director Mission** *(to 5 September 2023)*  
then **Acting Director Mission**

**Director Wellbeing**

**Director Data Intelligence** *(to 16 October 2023)*  
then **Chief Information Officer** *(from 20 November 2023)*

**Director People and Culture** *(new position from 12 March 2023)*

**Director Communications and Engagement**  
*(new position from 16 October 2023)*

**Director Legal and Governance** *(new position to commence in 2024)*

The People and Culture team became a Directorate in early 2023, demonstrating the priority we place on both people and organisational culture. We have been investing in growing our talent team to support recruitment and we continue to work towards a new Human Resources Information Management System.

In October 2023, two other key areas - Communications and Engagement and Legal and Governance - were also elevated from team to directorate level. The work of these directorates will become increasingly important as we implement a new strategic direction for the organisation in 2024.





# Student achievement

## NAPLAN

Since 2023, NAPLAN results have been presented against four proficiency standard levels, departing from the previous numerical bands and national minimum standards. Noteworthy observations from the CSPD 2023 NAPLAN results comprise an increase in the count of schools outperforming the state average across all Domains (Reading, Writing and Numeracy) and Year Levels (Years 3, 5, 7 and 9).

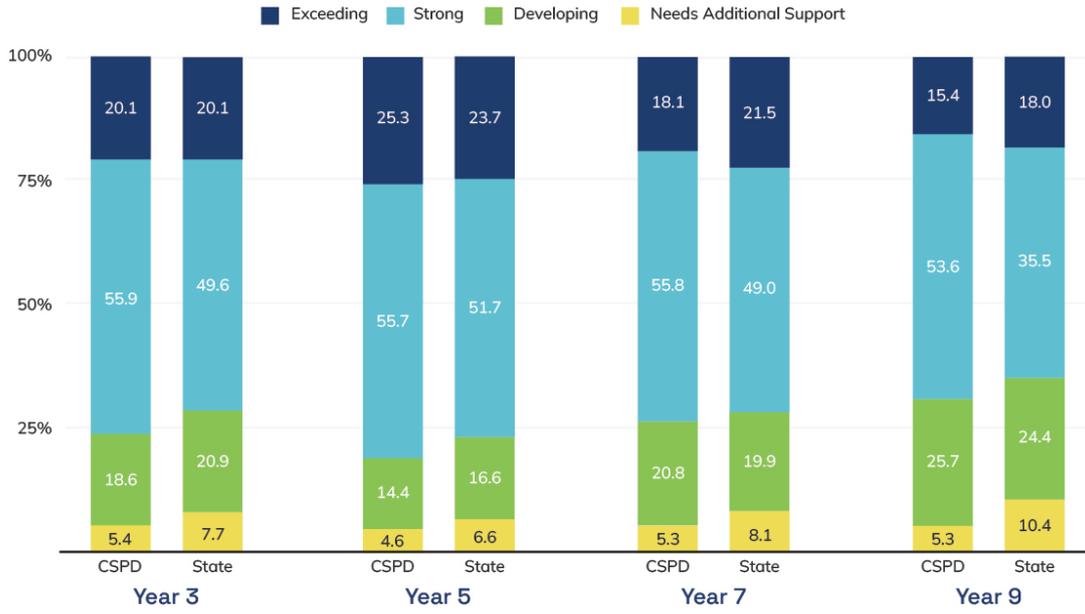
CSPD has consistently met or exceeded proficiency standards. The proportions of students whose results are deemed “Proficient”, which means they fall in the “Exceeding” or “Strong” categories, are higher than the state across all Year Levels and Domains. Furthermore, CSPD has demonstrated effectiveness in reducing the percentage of students requiring additional support, outperforming the state in this aspect for all Year Levels. Notably, the 2023 NAPLAN outcomes underscore significant achievements, especially in Writing, marking the most favourable results since 2015.

Significantly, the 2023 NAPLAN dataset has shed light on the imperative for CSPD to increase the transition of students from “Strong” to “Exceeding”, particularly in the area of Numeracy.

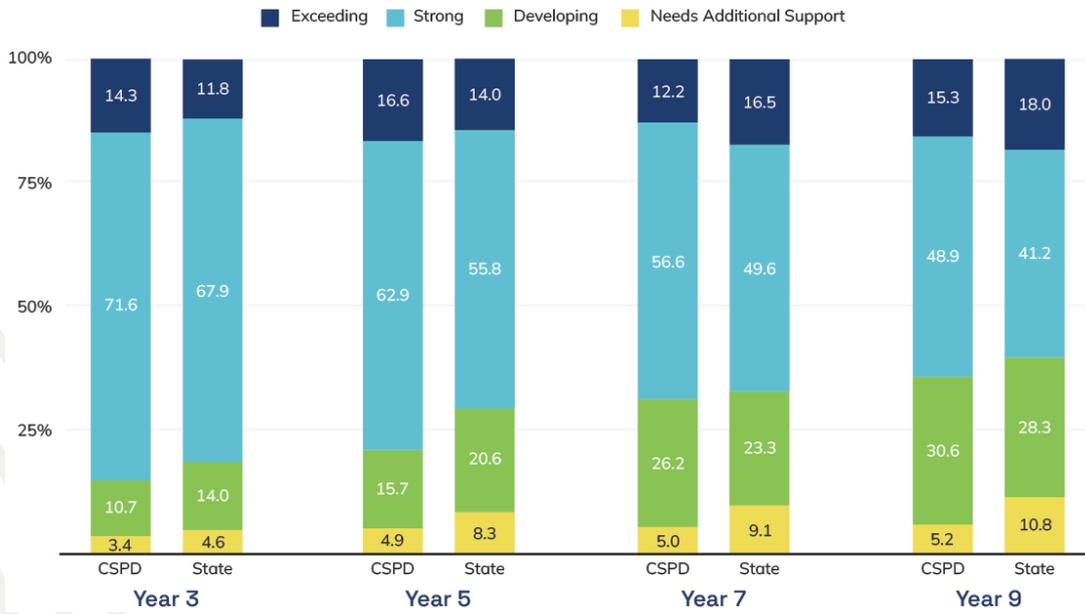
These insights from the 2023 NAPLAN data have significantly influenced and contributed to CSPD’s priorities, encompassing the cultivation of a performance-driven culture, evidence-based explicit teaching methodologies, and the implementation of flexible learning environments.

# CSPD Proficiency vs State

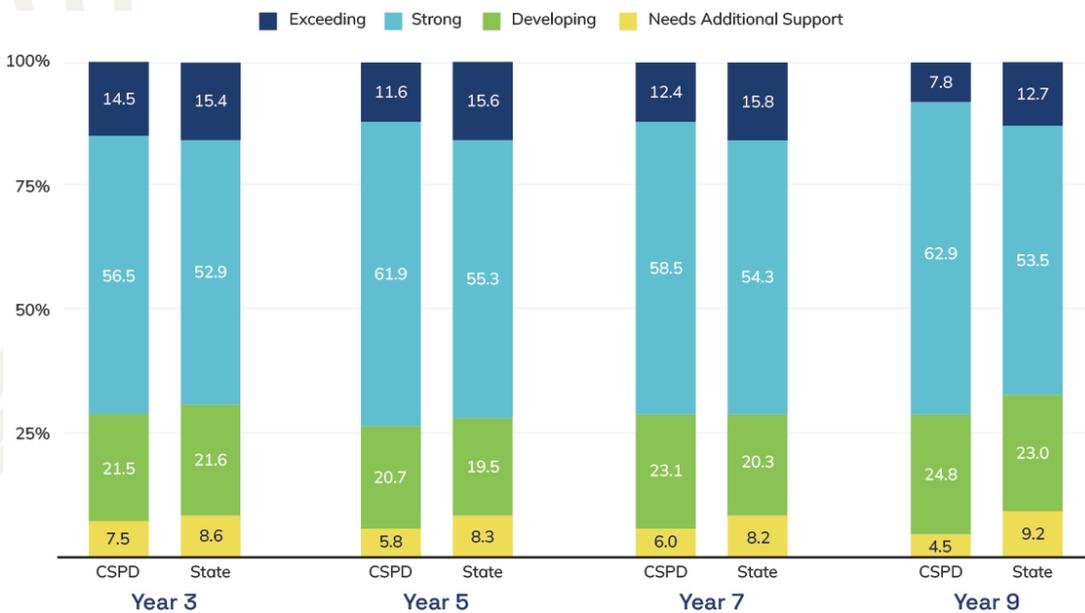
## Reading



## Writing



## Numeracy



# Celebrating our HSC highest achievers

Two CSPD students achieved HSC 'First in Course' awards, which were presented at a ceremony on Wednesday 13 December 2023 hosted by Minister for Education The Hon. Prue Car MP.

Cerdon College Merrylands student **Diya Badawi** was not expecting to top the state in Italian Continuers and said her Mum cried when she received the news.

"It was extremely unexpected because I'm not Italian, I'm Lebanese," she laughed.

Diya said the achievement is the culmination of great teaching that began in primary school at St Patrick's Primary Guildford. She was so well supported by her teacher at Cerdon, Maria Marando, that she could see how the hard work paid off.

"There are not enough words to describe Mrs Marando as a teacher. She is so experienced and so passionate about what she does that I was just motivated to make her proud," Diya said. "She was so supportive and kept telling me that she knew that I could do well. Mrs Marando really goes above and beyond and knows how to get the most out of us."

A teacher of 25 years, Maria Marando said she felt a "great sense of personal satisfaction" seeing one of her students achieve the top result.

"I've been very lucky to teach Diya and the girls in this class from Year 7, so to see them grow and develop and improve their skills is just absolutely amazing," Maria said. "That's what makes my job so incredibly rewarding. You see them go from strength to strength and achieve these phenomenal results."

Another Cerdon student, Annalise Reynolds-Pace, topped both Italian Continuers and Italian Extension in 2022 under Maria's teaching.

"It's an incredible feeling (to have two students in a row be first in the state). I feel like I'm winning the Lotto," Maria said.

Cerdon College Principal Lisa-Maree Browning said she was proud of Diya's achievement which reflects the high quality learning and teaching at the school.

"Congratulations to Diya on her magnificent achievement. This is the result of hard work, perseverance and a love not just of language, but of learning," Lisa-Maree said.

"For two years running Maria Marando has led her students to the highest level of success - First in State! Passionate about learning and with a love of languages, Mrs Marando is an expert teacher, dedicated to her students - caring about their learning and tailoring instruction to deliver the best possible for each student in her class."



**Patrick Iskander** from St Andrews College Marayong got what he described as the 'unexpected' news that he had achieved First-in-Course in Mathematics Standard 2. However, his mum, Madlin Aboelsaad, said she knew his love of Maths was unique.

"He has been working really hard and to achieve this incredible mark makes me the proudest mum ever," she said. "Throughout the HSC when he was studying other subjects his idea of taking a break was doing math equations! He and his younger sister both just love mathematics and would spend time together quizzing each other."

Coincidentally, Patrick's younger sister Lexi, who is in Year 9 at St Andrews, was also receiving an award at school the same day Patrick attended the First-in-Course ceremony. Madlin said she was proud of how her children encourage each other and the support they receive at St Andrews.

"They have an incredible Principal and his Maths teacher was just so encouraging and always telling Patrick that he is more than capable of doing the work," she said.

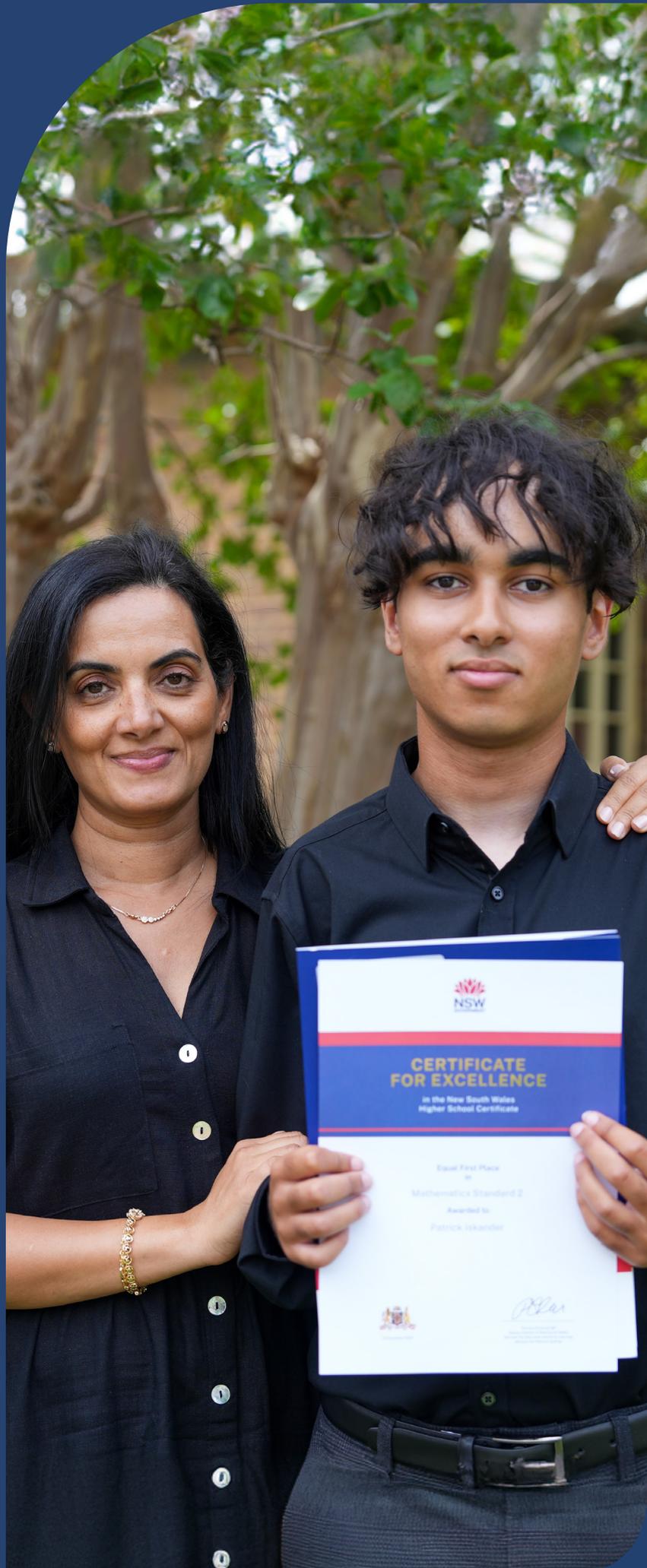
Patrick credits the support of his teacher Mr Speechly, his mum and in particular his sister with this incredible achievement.

"It took a lot of hard work but I really thank my teacher for all his support and encouragement and especially Lexi who would practice questions with me."

St Andrews College Principal Dr Stephen Kennaugh said: "Everyone at St Andrews is very proud of Patrick and is delighted for his family. Patrick has always been a hard-working student but wasn't always the person who won the awards at the College. It is through hard work, determination, the feedback from staff and the learning environment that Patrick has thrived."

CSPD Executive Director of Schools Jack de Groot is extremely proud of Diya and Patrick, and the achievements of the Class of 2023.

"All our schools place a very high value on academic achievement," Jack said. "Young people in Greater Western Sydney deserve the very best opportunities in life. Great HSC results are just one way of making sure that we give our students every option for the future."



# Welcoming our newest teachers

In March each year, CSPD recognises our newly appointed school and office leaders and beginning teachers at a special Commissioning Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta.

We welcomed 190 new teachers to the Diocese in 2023.

In a stirring homily, Bishop Vincent said: "I am grateful for your 'Yes' to the call of service to the young people in our learning communities across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains."

For many of our new teachers, their own positive school experience and love of learning have fueled their desire to help others reach their full potential through education.

Starting her career teaching Year 1 at St Michael's Primary Baulkham Hills, Laura Obilinovic developed her interest in teaching after years of coaching basketball and watching young people grow in understanding and confidence as a result.

"I hope to be able to develop that same love of learning in my students so that they finish the year with the confidence to go out and find information for themselves...As a teacher, I would love to reach a point in my career where I am able to mentor beginning teachers. Although this is a few years down the track, it will have meant I will be successfully supporting my future students and in a place where I can pass on all the tips and strategies I will have picked up over years of experience."

Isabella Sabbouh from St Patrick's Primary Guildford had already made strong connections with students and staff in a few short weeks at the school: "Each day I get to work with inquisitive young minds, eager to learn and share their ideas with me and it makes me feel as though I have a second home. I love to be influential in students' lives, inspiring and motivating them to achieve their potential."

At St Agnes Catholic High School Rooty Hill, new teachers Merna Orah and Yasemin Kurt

commenced their first year of teaching as part of the conditional accreditation program that allows them to continue studying while gaining valuable experience in the classroom.

"I've always had a passion for education because there is just so much potential for students through their learning," said Merna. "I wanted to be a part of making a difference for students."

For Yasemin, who completed an undergraduate degree in Medical Science, teaching is an opportunity to share her love of science with students in Years 7 and 10: "It's so great to teach something that I am passionate about and amaze them with new concepts. Watching students develop their love for science is something I would love to see."

To further support our future beginning teachers, in late 2023 CSPD announced the launch of the **2024 CSPD Teacher Scholarship Program** aimed at current Year 12 students at CSPD schools looking to commence a full-time primary or secondary teaching degree at an Australian university in 2024.

This initiative is part of a new Early Careers Engagement strategy that will continue to develop into 2024 and beyond.

Under the scholarship program, eligible students have the opportunity to receive financial support, paid employment (practicum) in a CSPD school, and access to exclusive mentoring and support programs. This includes \$5000 towards tuition per calendar year of full-time study and a new laptop on commencement of their teaching degree.

Five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are among the 102 recipients of the inaugural scholarship program. These recipients will be supported and empowered in their cultural learning journey so they are culturally competent and embed cultural safety when practising in the classroom and in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities throughout their careers.



# Outstanding Vocational Education and Training (VET) offerings

2023 was another very successful year for CSPD VET students and staff. Students in our secondary schools achieved outstanding results in both qualifications and HSC examination results. Some of the highlights are shown below.

Students had access to 19 different VET courses in areas such as Active Volunteering, Business Services, Construction, Entertainment, Fitness, Hospitality, Sports Coaching and Retail.

VET courses continue to provide an important pathway for students to attain competencies and knowledge and can prepare them to progress to a career in their area of speciality.

A number of individual students and schools were recognised at regional, state and national awards ceremonies.

The CSPD VET Support Team provided focused support to teachers and school leaders to continue to enable quality VET outcomes.

2023 also saw the continued refinement of Canvas as our learning management system to both provide timely support to teachers and ensure consistent access to quality VET resources.

## NSW Training Awards

### Regional Awards, Western Sydney Blue Mountains

#### Finalist VET Trainer/Teacher of the Year:

Taryn Grima  
Business Services  
Catherine McAuley  
Westmead



#### Finalists VET in Schools Student of the Year:

Olivia Myers  
Hospitality  
Bede Polding College  
South Windsor



Katelyn Smith  
Primary Industries  
Caroline Chisholm College  
Glenmore Park



#### Winner VET in Schools Student of the Year:

Montayah Astruc  
Human Services (NSW Health)  
Caroline Chisholm College  
Glenmore Park



#### Winner School-based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year:

Joshua Sammut  
Sport and Recreation  
St Andrews College  
Marayong



# NSW Training Awards

## Finalist VET in Schools Student of the Year:

Montayah Astruc  
Human Services  
(NSW Health)  
Caroline Chisholm College  
Glenmore Park



# Australian Training Awards

## Bronze: Innovation in VET Award

St John XXIII  
Catholic College  
Stanhope Gardens



## Silver: School Pathways to VET Award

CathWest Innovation  
College  
Emu Plains and  
Mount Druitt



# HSC VET Examination Results



**2nd in State**

**Business Services Examination**

*(Cerdon College Merrylands)*

**Entertainment Industry Examination**

*(Cerdon College Merrylands)*

**Human Services Examination**

*(EVET NSW Health/Caroline Chisholm College Glenmore Park)*



**4th in State**

**Business Service Examination**

*(Nagle College Blacktown)*

**Information and Digital Technology Examination**

*(St Andrews College Marayong)*



**5th in State**

**Human Services Examination**

*(EVET NSW Health/ St Columbas College Springwood)*



**8th in State**

**Business Services Examination**

*(St John XXIII Catholic College Stanhope Gardens)*

# Life in Abundance:

## Human Flourishing in the Way of Jesus

In 2023 CSPD launched a Formation Foundation Document for schools titled Life in Abundance: Human Flourishing in the Way of Jesus. This document was the result of an extensive collaboration of school, system and chancery leaders, led by Prof. Br David Hall.

The document articulates a vision of excellence in Formation that invites all members to offer their gifts to the shared mission of Catholic education. It aims to ensure that all CSPD staff, whatever their role, are equipped with knowledge, understanding and skills to be effective in their shared ministry.

The Formation Foundation Document is written for religious leaders in schools to guide them in the design and delivery of formation programs and events for staff, students, and parents and carers that are of the highest quality and have the greatest impact.

The launch of the Formation Foundation Document was also supported by significant additional resourcing for school communities to build their capacity to use it well. This included additional release time for Religious Education Coordinators, the introduction of a Faith in Action Team Coordinator for every school community, and the piloting of new senior religious leadership roles named Directors of Catholic Identity and Mission in 13 of our school communities.

This additional resourcing aims to enable all school communities to engage deeply in the Life in Abundance: Human Flourishing in the Way of Jesus document and use it to develop excellent formation opportunities for their communities.

As they do so they will be supported by their annual school improvement plans where school leaders will target specific areas of formation development for their local context, guided by relevant data and shaped by the Formation Foundation Document.

# Supporting student and staff wellbeing

In its second full year of operation, the Wellbeing Directorate continued its trajectory of growth, both in terms of the level and professionalism of service offered to students and schools and in the development of policies, procedures and resources to support the work of wellbeing across our Diocese.

The team now comprises over 140 specialist teachers, social workers and psychologists who work in each of our primary and secondary schools. In 2023, the Wellbeing Directorate facilitated the launch of two significant CSPD wellbeing documents that will influence the direction and implementation of student and staff wellbeing initiatives.

The Staff Wellbeing Policy and Staff Wellbeing Framework were launched in May 2023. These documents represent a significant statement by CSPD about the importance and value of all of our employees. The documents clearly state our shared commitment to making work as healthy, safe and inclusive as possible. The Policy acknowledges that working in the mission of education, on behalf of the Catholic Church, is rewarding yet complex. The Framework describes five ways that schools and office teams can work together to create the best possible conditions for people to thrive at work. The five themes are Leadership, Engagement, Agency, Value and Innovation.





The Student Wellbeing Framework (SWF) was released in July 2023 to the entire CSPD community. The Framework has been several years in development and provides research-based effective practices that we know can have an impact on student safety, wellbeing and belonging. The connection between learning and wellbeing is clear and the Framework will bring structure and substance to school planning for wellbeing in collaboration with students and their families. Essentially, it details the five themes (Leadership, Inclusion, Partnerships with Parish and Family, Support and Student Voice) and 25 practices that will enhance the wellbeing outcomes of all our students in our Catholic Learning Communities.

To ensure that System Leaders are provided with high-quality professional learning to support student wellbeing outcomes, a Wellbeing Symposium was facilitated in November 2023. Dr Helen Street, Honorary Fellow at The University of Western Australia, presented the concept of contextual wellbeing, emphasising the pivotal role of cultivating connections and a sense of belonging among staff, students and families. A series of workshops followed, covering diverse topics such as 'harnessing student voice', 'building stronger foundations to support a multi-tiered system of support', 'staff wellbeing', 'anxiety', 'wellbeing hubs' and 'SchoolTV'. Wellbeing Counsellors and school leaders engaged in an in-depth immersion into the realm of Wellbeing for Learning, sharing insights and fostering collaboration. The Symposium's collaborative spirit was further exemplified by a wealth of ideas and future challenges as school leaders planned strategies to meet the wellbeing needs of students in their local context.





# Investing in future learners

In 2023, CSPD prioritised the crucial task of enhancing educational infrastructure for our students. We actively listened to the evolving needs across our diverse school communities and realigned our investment accordingly, unlocking greater opportunities for all.

Through meticulous planning, considered consultation and sound financial management, we developed the CSPD Infrastructure 10-Year Capital Framework. This innovative blueprint delivers a holistic approach to fostering quality learning environments and equitable opportunities across every school within the Diocese over the next 10 years. It offers a clear direction on where and when capital investment is needed, focusing on the following key areas:

**Equity:** Ensuring all students have access to excellent facilities and resources.

**Growth:** Accommodating rising enrolment and catering to future needs.

**Universal Preschool:** Preparing for the implementation of this important initiative.

**Support Services:** Investing in non-infrastructure programs essential for student development.

The framework will unfold in three distinct phases, with strategic business cases, stakeholder engagement and comprehensive master plans for 28 schools commencing in late 2023.

Stakeholder engagement remains a cornerstone of our planning process. We deeply value the support of our school leaders and look forward to working together as we fulfil the growing demand for quality Catholic education in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

# Listening to our schools and their communities

This is the sixth consecutive year CSPD school communities have participated in the annual Tell Them From Me (TTFM) online survey, which is a suite of three surveys targeted at students (Year 4 to Year 12), parents and carers, and teachers.

TTFM is an internationally recognised online survey designed to provide opportunities for school communities to provide feedback on their experiences of our schools, focussing on student engagement, wellbeing, teacher collaboration and parent feedback. TTFM has become one of the primary indicators of customer experience in schools.

TTFM can provide a basis to inform school improvement, taking into account key drivers of student outcomes and applying them to the unique context of an individual school. Data is refreshed and generated with each new survey.

2023 CSPD results returned to pre-COVID numbers with a 10% increase in parents and carers completing the survey. With ongoing programs from Safeguarding, students are reporting they feel safe and listened to. Parents and carers are returning to school grounds and feel welcomed.

Survey Respondents	2023	2022	2021	2020
Secondary Students	14,560 (66%)	15,742	16,278	14,096
Primary Students	8,069 (83%)	7,978	8,150	8,249
Parents and Carers	6,319 (10% increase)	5,763	5,686	5,774

# Listening to our staff

With an ongoing commitment to creating the best possible experiences for our staff, we delivered our annual Employee Engagement Survey in Term 3, 2023.

We achieved a 53% response rate, significantly increasing our staff participation by 12% from 2022. Our employee engagement score remained stable at 69%.

Our strengths highlight that we have strong foundations to build from. These include having an organisational culture where the behaviours of our staff and leaders demonstrate a strong alignment with our Catholic Mission. Our staff have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, they have the resources to do their work, and there is a collaborative team spirit in the way that work is done.

In line with what our staff have told us, our areas of focus include co-designing an organisational strategy that incorporates the voices of staff and students, increasing the presence and visibility of our System Leaders, enhancing our communication, and launching initiatives that foster greater work-life balance and improved wellbeing for our staff.

These actions aim to make our workplace one where our staff feel supported, connected and empowered to achieve high performance, in the pursuit of excellence for our students.



# Workplace gender equality

In 2023 the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), under the new *Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Act 2023*, changed its requirements for reporting and produced two new reports that allowed CSPD to compare our performance with other like organisations for the first time.

## Key insights:

- CSPD performs well in comparison to our industry peers. However, there is room for improvement particularly in the upper quartile of our workforce (primarily leadership roles)
- Most of CSPD's employees (~90%) are engaged under pay structures dictated by industrial agreements for which pay by role is structured the same regardless of gender
- Our gender composition in non-management roles is 80% female and 20% male, which is typical for education
- In management roles this is 61% female and 39% male and in key management personnel roles 40% female and 60% male
- Appointments and promotions into management roles for women is higher than the current rate with 70% of appointments into these leadership roles in the reporting period being women
- Our full-time female employees make up 73% of the workforce and 90% of our part-time workforce.

# Our positive obligation to prevent sexual harassment

A number of changes to Australian workplace laws related to sexual harassment in the workplace came into effect in 2023, including a new positive duty to eliminate sexual harassment as far as possible.

In support of these changes, CSPD redoubled efforts to make clear its commitment to prevent and appropriately respond to sexual harassment in the workplace.

Our System Leaders (Principals, Assistant Principals, Directors, Heads and Chiefs, and Learning Leaders) have a mandatory responsibility to meet this positive duty requirement.

In late 2023, System Leaders were required to attend an information session run by the People and Culture - Employment Relations (ER) team and then deliver a high-level training session to their own teams on sexual harassment before the end of the year.

In our schools, leaders were also required to complete a risk assessment by December 2023. The People & Culture directorate completed this assessment for office-based teams.

The ER team developed key resources to assist System Leaders with meeting the positive duty to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace including:

- System Leaders' Guide - responding to a sexual harassment complaint
- Staff Training Material on Preventing Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Harassment Workplace Risk Assessment
- Sample email to staff for work events
- Workplace Poster.

All leaders and staff were reminded that wellbeing support is also available for all staff members and their families through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) if this topic brought up concerns for them.

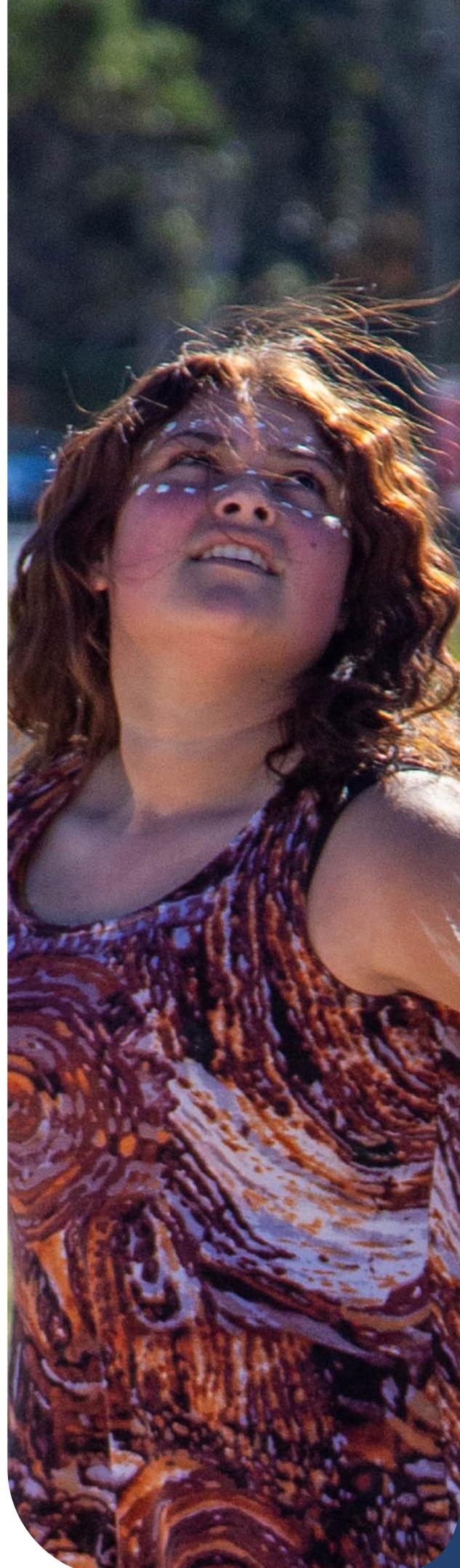
# Our strong commitment to Reconciliation

## Cultural & Ceremonial Leave

As part of CSPD's commitment to reconciliation, we introduced our Cultural and Ceremonial Leave Policy available to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to help them meet their cultural and ceremonial obligations. These obligations may include Sorry Business, NAIDOC Week or other events of significance. This policy aligns with our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) (currently in development) and boosts our efforts to further support First Nations employees at CSPD.

## Establishment of RAP Roles

CSPD has established two roles that will develop, lead and operationalise strategies that support the successful delivery and implementation of CSPD's Innovate RAP. The RAP Project Manager will be responsible for the overall management of the RAP with our Senior Reconciliation Action Plan Advisor responsible for supporting and leading First Nations employment initiatives and deliverables in our People & Culture Directorate.





# Training the next generation of IT specialists

In collaboration with the Australian Training Company for 23 years, the CSPD IT traineeship boasts a commendable 87% completion rate among its 695 trainees, surpassing the statewide average of 59.5% in NSW (with a target of 65%). Notably, the program emphasises gender equality, inclusivity for people living with disability and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

An IT traineeship offers a dual approach with both on- and off-the-job training in the IT industry, providing practical and valuable workplace experience. Participants benefit from exposure to the latest technologies, enhancing their IT knowledge and skills. This hands-on experience prepares them for a thriving IT career and nurtures a supportive professional work environment, potentially leading to ongoing employment post-traineeship. The program also opens avenues for accessing government financial support, making it an attractive prospect for those aspiring to excel in the dynamic field of information technology.

In 2023 we saw 29 Certificate IV graduates from the Traineeship Program, six of whom were successful in obtaining a 12-month employment contract with CSPD, and more than 20 Certificate IIIs progressed to Certificate IV for 2024.

Kenan Al Bramawi won the 2023 Certificate III Trainee of the Year Award. Kenan completed his traineeship at St Margaret Mary's Primary Merrylands. His supervisor Daniel Maunick, Learning Technology Support Teacher said: "Kenan consistently exhibits exceptional communication skills and personal presentation. In both written and oral communications, he demonstrates clarity, conciseness, and effectively conveys ideas and information to staff and students alike. His ability to listen attentively and respond thoughtfully shows a deep respect for others' opinions

and perspectives. He operates efficiently and effectively communicating and collaborating with each and every member of staff. Kenan's focus on punctuality is commendable, as he is always on time for commitments, showing a high level of respect for others' time."

Chadi Karam, a trainee at St Andrews College Marayong, won the Certificate IV Trainee of the Year Award. His supervisor Yosif Mihaljeciv, Schools Technical Support Officer said: "Chadi seamlessly managed tasks across dual campuses, without having to be micromanaged. He actively looked at different ways to constantly upskill himself through the course he was completing, researching new and emerging technologies and brainstorming ways to implement these technologies at St Andrew's College."

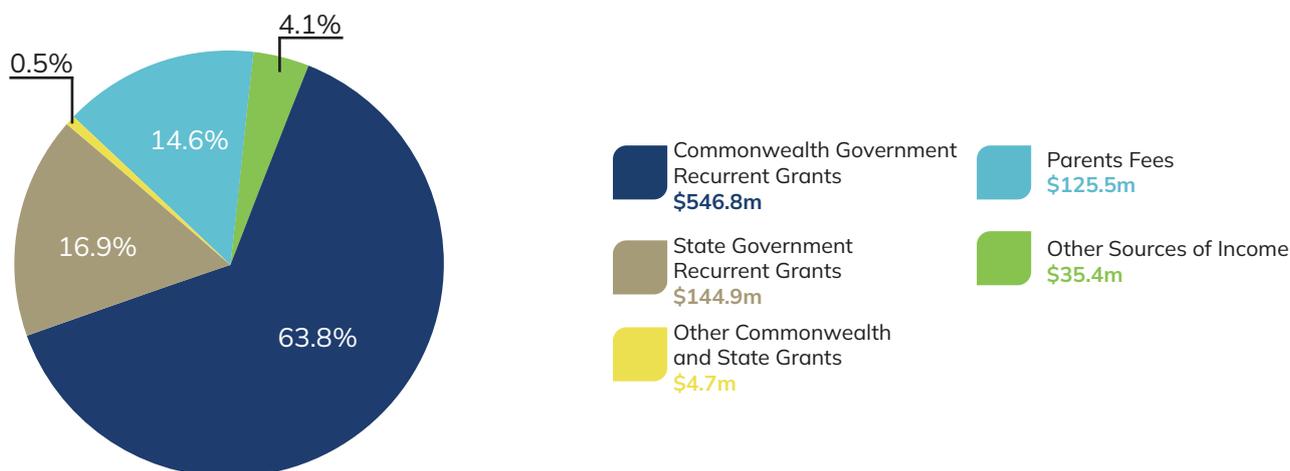


# Detailed statement of revenue and expenditure

1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

Operating revenue	\$ '000
Commonwealth - General recurrent grants	546,775
State - General recurrent grants	144,852
Other Commonwealth and State grants	4,723
Parent fees	125,487
Investment revenue	24,031
Other revenue	11,373
<b>Total operating revenue</b>	<b>857,241</b>

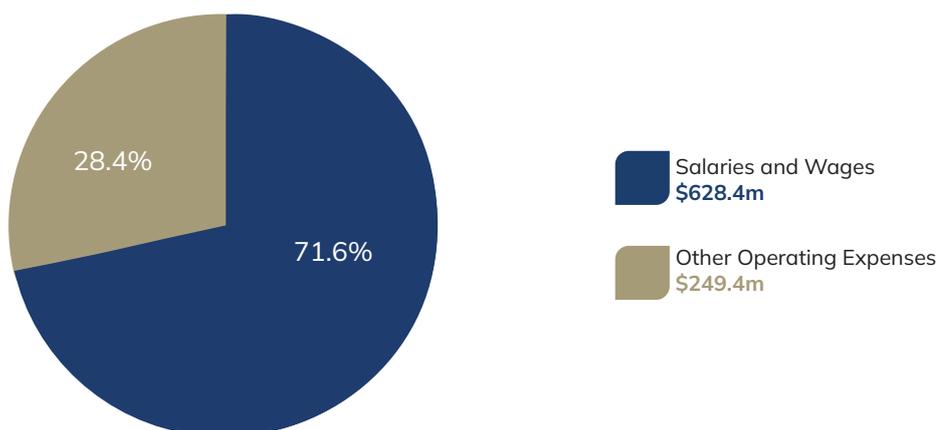
Operating expenditure	\$ '000
Salaries and wages costs	628,444
Depreciation	65,533
Other expenses	183,899
<b>Total operating expenditure</b>	<b>877,876</b>
<b>Deficit from operations before capital</b>	<b>(20,635)</b>



## School building program

Capital Revenue	\$ '000
Commonwealth and State capital grants	12,213
Diocesan school building fund net revenue	23,059
Interest subsidy	917
<b>Capital revenue</b>	<b>36,189</b>
Interest expense	(23,803)
<b>Total capital revenue</b>	<b>12,386</b>

Capital expenditure and repayments	\$ '000
Capital expenditure	85,948
Repayments of borrowings	12,373
<b>Total capital expenditure and repayments</b>	<b>98,321</b>
<b>Net capital outflows</b>	<b>85,935</b>
<b>Other capital expenditure</b>	<b>12,634</b>









Catholic Schools  
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