

ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL COLLEGE

Annual School Report to the Community

2006



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ABOUT THIS REPORT

St Mary's Cathedral College, Sydney is registered by the Board of Studies (NSW) and managed by the Catholic Education Office, Sydney, the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The Annual Report to the School Community for this year provides the school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The Report also outlines information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the school community during the year, and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school's Annual Development Plan.

Accordingly, the Report demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the school community and the Catholic Education Office, Sydney. This Report has been approved by the CEO, Sydney in consultation with the Regional Consultant who monitors that the school has in place appropriate processes to ensure compliance with all NSW Board of Studies requirements for Registration and Accreditation.

This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, yearbooks and other regular communications. The report will be available on the school's website by 30 June 2007 following its submission to the Board of Studies.

The contents of this report will be discussed at the first Parent and Friends Meeting of 2007.

Further information about the school or this report may be obtained by contacting the school on (02) 92350500 or by visiting the website at www.stmarys.Sydney.syd.catholic.edu.au

PRINCIPAL

DATE

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

St Mary's Cathedral College, situated on the edge of Sydney's CBD provides Secondary Education for students from more than 150 of Sydney's suburbs.

The redevelopment of the College, 1988– 1992 ensured modern facilities for approximately 700 students. Currently there are 760 students enrolled with an annual injection of new students into Year 11. 37%of the school population is in Years 11 and 12.

The College has an attached composite primary class of Year 5 and 6 students. All students in this class are successfully auditioned members of the St. Mary's Cathedral Coir. The Cathedral choir operates separately from the school.

The College has a long history dating back to the 1830's and has a fine reputation for providing a comprehensive education. A higher than average number of students in the College display a keen interest in music and so the College has numerous bands, orchestras and ensemble groups.

SCHOOL COUNCIL AND/OR PARENT REPRESENTATIVE BODY MESSAGE

St Mary's Cathedral College has an Advisory Council and an active Parents and Friends Association. The Old Boys Association is also active in supporting the College.

The Advisory Council meets 4 or 5 time each year. Within the framework of the Ethos of the Christian Brothers' Schools the Council consults, listens to and seeks feedback from the local community in order to enhance the effectiveness of the school. It networks with the wider church and Catholic educational community to optimise educational opportunities for the students. It provides feedback, support and advice to the Principal. The Advisory Council makes recommendations to the Principal.

The Council consists of two parent representatives, a member of the Christian Brothers' Leadership Team, the Parish Administrator, a Primary Principal, Representatives from the Catholic Education Office including the Regional Director or representative. The Principal is a member of the council.

The Parents and Friends Association meets each school month and comprises any parent or friend of the College who wishes to contribute to the wellbeing of the College. Election of Office bearers takes place each year.

During 2006 the P&F Association undertook to revise the Associations constitution. Using the Catholic Education Office template the committee thoroughly revised the constitution to better reflect their role in the school. The revised constitution was accepted by the association during 2006 and is available from the school.

The Old Boys Association holds two major functions each year, in May and October. The Association supports the school through financial contributions and attendance at all major school events.

SCHOOL FEATURES

The school features

- Catholicity,
- Edmund Rice Ethos,
- A long history, making it one of Sydney's oldest schools,
- Cultural diversity,
- City school with expensive transport links,
- Extensive music programs beyond the curriculum.
- Wide variety of sports and participation in CBSA Competitions
- Broad range of ethnic backgrounds,
- students from a wide variety of Sydney's Suburbs,
- Full range of academic achievement/ability.

St. Mary's Cathedral College plays a significant role in the life of Sydney city. Students from the school are regularly called upon to help with charitable collections around the city. Their musical ability is well known. During 2006 students were called upon to perform/sing at the 'Welcome Home to the Commonwealth Games Athletes' at the town Hall, and at the Lord Mayor's Lighting of the Christmas Tree where 35 choir members entertained the crowd of about 5000 by singing Christmas Carols.

CATHOLIC LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Mary's Cathedral College, Sydney follows the Archdiocesan Religious Education Curriculum and uses the student texts, *To Know, Worship and Love*, as authorised by the Archbishop of Sydney, George Cardinal Pell. The students performed well in Year 12 Studies of Religion and Catholic Studies Exams while the Year 6 students also performed well in the Archdiocesan Religious knowledge exam.

The Catholic Life of the school permeates all its activities and actions. As well as many opportunities for worship through whole school celebrations to Year Group and Class prayers, the students have undertaken many activities that display Catholic life in action. The Junior St Vincent de Paul Society is active among the Senior students, holding regular prayers/meetings and working at the Matt Talbot Hostel 3 day each week.

The Project Compassion collection, organized by the prefects, raised more than \$10 000 and many other organizations also benefited from the boys' efforts and generosity. These organizations included Youth of the Streets, Canteen, Amnesty, etc.

The College has also undertaken to fully participate in World Youth Day 2008. Initial Activities included attendance at the official launch of World Youth Day and whole school ceremonies at which the program was launched.

The students participated in the liturgical life of the Church with Masses and other celebrations of religious significance.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

St Mary's Cathedral College, Sydney follows the Board of Studies syllabus for each course offered (as required for Registration and Accreditation under the Education Act 1990) and implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Education Office. The curriculum, teaching and learning are informed by the priorities, goals and indicators outlined in the *Sydney Catholic Schools, Towards 2010 Strategic Leadership and Management Plan*, in particular: *Key Area 2* (Students and their Learning) and *Key Area 3* (Pedagogy). Staff at our school are committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning in all facets of the school curriculum.

Year 11 and 12 students participated in 31 different courses, while students in Years 9 and 10 choose from 10 elective subjects as well as mandatory courses in English, Mathematics, Science, HSIE, PDHPE and Religious Education.

The proximity of the city and all its educational opportunities assists the students. A comprehensive excursion program exists in all KLA's. Guest speakers are also engaged to attend classes and other selected groups.

A comprehensive Careers Program exists for all students. The Careers Adviser attends all Year Groups, from Year 5 to Year 12, providing relevant information. The Careers Adviser also coordinated Work Placements for students completing TVET Courses (Retail Operations and Information Technology). Other students also completed work placements with a view to assisting them with career choices.

Guest speakers were invited by the Careers Adviser to speak on a wide variety of topics, especially University options and Trades information. Students in Years 10, 11 and 12 attended Careers Expos and Tertiary Information Days.

The College also conducted its own Careers in sport Expo. 22 Schools from around Sydney attended as well as our own students.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN STATEWIDE TESTS

ELLA and SNAP

Students in NSW sat the English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) and the Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP) in March this year.

The test 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. Additionally, the results can be used by schools to monitor literacy and numeracy development through time.

YEAR	ELLA			SNAP
	Reading	Language	Writing	Numeracy
7				
School mean (2006)	92.0	91.3	91.6	89.1
State mean (2006)	88.9	88.8	88.8	84.7

These results show scores that are consistently above average. St. Mary's Cathedral College also undertakes ELLA and SNAP testing in Year 8 providing the opportunity to assess student improvement during their first year at the school. These results indicate not only an overall improvement of scores but also a healthy enhancement of scores as compared with other Year 8 students (See table Below).

YEAR	ELLA			SNAP
	Reading	Language	Writing	Numeracy
8				
School mean (2006)	94.5	92.1	93.4	93.2
State mean (2006)	91.2	90.1	90.4	87.7

National Benchmarks

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum acceptable standards for reading, writing and numeracy at particular ages. These are referred to as national benchmarks. The performance of the students in our school in the Year 7 English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) and in the Year 7 Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP) is compared to these benchmarks.

The percentages of students in this school achieving the national benchmarks are reported below.

	ELLA	SNAP
2006	95	88
2005	95	92

Students achieving national benchmarks were significantly higher when ELLA and SNAP Tests were attempted in Year 8 indicating an enhancement of student performance while in Year 7.

School Certificate results

The percentage of students achieving bands 4, 5 and 6 is reported against statewide performance in each of the subjects shown. Comparative performance with the 2005 cohort is also shown.

		English Literacy		Mathematics		Science		Australian History		Australian Geography	
		School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State
% in bands 4, 5, 6	2006	79.8	71.3	69.7	40.7	89	62.4	54.1	52	85.3	66.3
	2005	85	67	78	51	87	68	69	63	80	63

It is important to note the general downturn in State Performance in Mathematics, Science and Australian History.

St Mary's Cathedral College performance was comparatively significantly improved. More Band 6 results were achieved, by the students, than in any other year since the introduction of this system.

49	Band 6 results were achieved	in 2006.
30		in 2005.
23		in 2002
22		in 2001

English Literacy remains a focus for the Stage 4 and 5 programs. A large number of students from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (254) provides a significant challenge for all teachers. All courses remain above State Average. Australian History results are not as far above average as Australian Geography but this may be attributed to the pattern of course presentation.

Projections for 2007 are calculated presuming the S.C. Tests remain at the same degree of difficulty as 2006.

School Certificate Targets for 2007

Performance Bands		English Literacy	Mathematics	Science	Australian History	Australian Geography
Bands 4, 5, 6	School Target (2007)	80%	75%	89%	60%	85%

Higher School Certificate results

The percentage of students achieving bands 4, 5 and 6 is reported against statewide performance in each of the subjects shown. Comparative performance with the 2005 cohort is also shown.

		Studies of Religion 1		English Standard		English Advanced		General Mathematics		Mathematics	
		School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State
% in bands 4, 5, 6	2006	90.3	77	45.4	33.7	84.6	82.3	67.1	49.5	79.5	64.9
	2005	100%	84%	40%	34%	98%	90%	80%	58%	71	64%

52 Band 6 results indicated a significant enhancement of learning outcomes. An external analysis of the school's HSC Results (De Coursey) indicated enhancement in all KLA and in 94% of courses offered. Students from St. Mary's Cathedral College achieved overall results above the state mean in 24 of the 30 Board of Studies courses.

Mathematics remains a high achieving subject with results in Ancient History and Business Studies showing significant improvement. All 3 Computing Studies Courses have achieved above state average results each year since the start of the new system of assessment (2001). Music students have also achieved results above state average over the last 6 years.

Results in Industrial Technology have been outstanding during the last 2 years. In 2006 these students were on average 13.45% above state average.

Higher School Certificate Targets for 2007

Performance Bands		Studies of Religion 1	English Standard	English Advanced	General Mathematics	Mathematics
Bands 4, 5, 6	School Target (2007)	95%	50%	90%	80%	80%

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHER STANDARDS

Professional learning

The staff at St. Mary's Cathedral College undertake external and internal Professional Learning each year.

Internally the school is part of the School Review and Improvement Framework, introduced by the Catholic Education Office at the start of 2006. As part of this program the staff targeted 4 of 30 components. The other 26 components will be selected across the next 4 years.

It was found that considerable improvement had been noted in

- Reporting Student Achievement,
- Catholic Life and Culture,
- Rights and Responsibilities.

The area of 'Provision for Students' Diverse Needs' was deemed to require future emphasis.

Apart from their own studies the 18 staff members were HSC markers during 2006. A number also took part in ELLA, SNAP and School Certificate marking.

Teacher Standards

The following table sets out the number of teachers on this staff who fall into each of the three categories determined by the Board of Studies:

Teacher Qualifications	Number of Teachers
1. Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	56
2. Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	0
3. Those not having qualifications described in 1 or 2 above but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate relevant knowledge.	0

All staff members are fully qualified. A low rate of teacher turnover has resulted in the school employing very few new scheme teachers. Only one teacher was a beginning teacher during 2006.

The College provides space for music tutors who undertake a comprehensive tutoring program with approximately 180 students.

TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION

The average teacher attendance rate during 2006 was 96.14%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave.

The Teacher retention rate from 2005 to 2006 was 90.91%.

High rates of teacher retention and attendance are considered a sign of staff teamwork and common purpose.

The changing nature of the curriculum and a high teacher retention rate over the previous 5 years indicates that a lower rate of staff retention should be expected over the next 3 years.

Only one staff member is a 'beginning teacher'.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION

Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate during 2006 was 94.7% per day.

Attendance rates drop during the winter months.

Proportionally the number of students absent is consistent across Year Groups with Year 7 showing the least percentage of absenteeism.

Parent notification of student absence, before each day commences, has increased during 2006 with encouragement given to parents to undertake notification through the school office.

Retention Rates

81% of the 2004 Year 10 cohort continued onto Year 12 (2006).

The vast majority of students who did not continue to Year 12 took up apprenticeships with the assistance of the Careers Adviser. 3 students changed schools.

POST SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

Typically 60 – 70% of students who leave school at the end of Year 12 progress to university. 82 students from the 2006 HSC class were offered university places at the start of 2007. One student was successful in winning a UNSW Co-op scholarship, considered to be the most valuable of all Australian University Scholarships.

A very limited number (about 3%) defer their university studies to travel overseas, undertaking a GAP year or other travel that involves visiting their country of birth or background.

Of the students who do not go on to university the vast majority take up TAFE Courses and/or find employment using family contacts.

A comprehensive Careers Advice Service conducted within the school is significant in students discovering their post school options, scholarship opportunities and employment prospects.

ENROLMENT POLICIES AND PROFILES

The full text of school enrolment policies may be accessed via:

- Archdiocesan Enrolment Policy
- Archdiocesan Policy on the Enrolment of Students with Special Needs
- The school web-site
- School Administration Office

There were no changes made to the enrolment policies during the year.

The school traditionally draws students from about 150 of Sydney's Suburbs. Students enrolling into Year 7 come from about 60 schools. Approximately 35% of students enrolled into Year 7 come from the designated Feeder schools, as designated by the Catholic Education Office. The trends continued through 2006 and will also be maintained into 2007.

The College is comprehensive and so a full range of academic abilities was found among the Year 7 students in 2006.

Music is a special focus of the College so some students were attracted to the extensive music programs, both curricular and extra curricular, conducted by the College.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Student Welfare Policy

The full text of the school Student Welfare Policy may be accessed via:

- Archdiocesan Pastoral Care Policy for Catholic Schools (2003)
- School website
- School Administration Office
- An abbreviated edition of the Student Welfare Policy may be found in the student planners.

There were no changes made to this policy during the year.

Discipline Policy

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. The school does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by school persons and non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the school.

The full text of the school Student Discipline Policy may be accessed via:

- School website
- School Administration Office
- An abbreviated version of the College's Discipline Policy may be found in the student planner.

There were no changes made to this policy during the year.

Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy

The full text of the school Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy may be accessed via:

- School website
- School Administration Office

There were no changes made to this policy during the year.

SCHOOL DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT AND TARGETS

The school community, mainly through the advice of the staff targeted the following components for improvement during 2006.

- Reporting and student achievement
- Provision for the diverse needs of the students
- Catholic Life and Culture
- Rights and Responsibilities

Staff ranking of the success of these initiatives indicated very high success in Reporting and student achievement, satisfactory progress in Catholic Life and Culture and Rights and Responsibilities and limited success in the Provisions for the diverse needs of the students.

INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

The values of Respect, and Responsibility have always been central to the school's life and culture.

During the year many regular and special actions took place to promote these values.

The College has a wide ethnic mix among its student and staff population. Tolerance and understanding are reinforced regularly and many people comment on the evident calm, maturity and acceptance shown by all students.

The College Concert, held in the Sydney Town Hall, exemplifies teamwork, respect, responsibility, tolerance and using your talents.

PARENT, TEACHER AND STUDENT SATISFACTION

During 2006 the College received an abundance of applications for enrolment.

Year 7 numbers have remained constant at 117. More than 180 applications were received. Apart from the 108 students from Year 10 who applied to advance to Year 11, another 85 applications were received. 155 students were accepted into Year 11 from the 193 applicants.

These strong enrolment figures indicate a high level of satisfaction from parents and students. The vast majority of students who attend the school travel passed other s Secondary School to attend St Mary's each day.

Retention rates in Years 8, 9 and 10 also indicate a high level of satisfaction.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT (2006)

Catholic Schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Sydney Catholic Education Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the 148 parish primary and regional secondary schools. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school and for the Archdiocesan system of schools. In addition, the financial accounts for each school and for the Catholic Education Office are audited annually.

A summary of the income and expenditure reported to the Commonwealth Government for 2006 is as follows:

INCOME	\$million	EXPENDITURE	\$million
Parents' Contributions 1	\$(CEO to provide]	Education & School Support	\$(CEO to provide]
Commonwealth Government 2	\$(CEO to provide]	Total Salary Costs	\$(CEO to provide]
State Government 2	\$(CEO to provide]	CEO Administration & Support 3	\$(CEO to provide]
Government Targeted Grants	\$(CEO to provide]	Surplus	\$(CEO to provide]
Interest and Other	\$(CEO to provide]		
Total Income	\$(CEO to provide]	Total Expenditure	\$(CEO to provide]

Notes

1. Parents' Contributions include Archdiocesan tuition fees of [CEO to provide]. School Charges & Building Levy & P&F contributions of [CEO to provide].
2. Income from Commonwealth and State recurrent government grants is received by the Catholic Education Office on behalf of the schools. Staff Salaries are paid from this income.
3. CEO Administration and Support excludes salaries which are included in total salary costs.

Parents' contributions to our school as reported in the school's annual Financial Questionnaire for 2006 was:

Archdiocesan Tuition Fees received	\$(CEO to provide]
School Based Fees	\$(CEO to provide]
Other Income (eg. Parents & Friends, Trading & Building Levy)	\$(CEO to provide]
Total	\$(CEO to provide]