



CATHOLIC EDUCATION  
Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn

# Annual School Report to the Community 2015



## St Mary's War Memorial School West Wyalong

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### **Principal**

Mrs Robyn Akehurst

## Section One: Message from Key Groups in our Community

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### Principal's Message

St Mary's War Memorial School is proud of its achievements and the role we play within our community. We can't help but be impressed with each child's growth and development. Students, teachers, support staff and families are to be congratulated on the progress that has been clearly achieved in 2015 in all academic areas. It is also evident that the students also have shown themselves as caring and loving young people who always strive to respect others. We are also very grateful for our many volunteers, parents and grandparents, who support our school and assist the students. Their contributions are valued and we appreciate their efforts in ensuring that our school provides the best possible opportunities for all students in their academic, social, sporting, cultural and spiritual development. We congratulate one of our 2015 teachers who was nominated by the P & F for a Canberra Goulburn Catholic Education Award in recognition of her wonderful work in using best contemporary practice. Her work ensures excellence in teaching and learning at St Mary's. As a school we are dedicated to nurturing each child to achieve their personal best as God intended.

### Parent Body Message

Being part of the the parent group of St Mary's School is a rewarding experience. The parish, parents and staff members pool their individual skills and experiences in the best interests of our students. The School Board assists with the budget and monitoring the financial performance of the school. Tight disciplines have allowed St Mary's to modestly improve its financial position such that it is now in a position to incrementally build its reserves and simultaneously advance some of the outstanding maintenance projects that need to be addressed.

The Board has continued to enhance the governance and procedures, building on the existing strong foundation. We aim to meet best practice in terms of what other School Boards can achieve with the use of clear and accurate information and respectful interaction.

The capital works and maintenance programs continue to enhance the school environment, with further significant projects completed in 2015 and being planned for next year. The facilities are well utilised by current students and clearly valued by new students and families.

### Student Body Message

Senior students were asked to reflect upon their school. This is a summary of their responses.

- St Mary's is a great school. We have a very friendly environment with lots of things to do. We also have small classes which help us to concentrate with our learning. Our teachers are very nice and they teach you in a way so that you can understand the work.
- I like my school because the teachers make it easier to learn because we learn in groups and we all get a turn at answering. We are very nice and social.
- Our school is fun because we get to play and learn at the same time.
- The SRC and P & F have helped upgrade our playground.
- Everyone is kind and caring towards each other and we are all friends.
- I like our wonderful tech. Its a great tool because we can complete our work quickly. You get to bring your own iPad which is awesome.
- Things I like about St Mary's is that we all work together in class, we all help each other and we all listen to our teachers.
- The thing I like most is my class mates.

## Section Two: School Features

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St Mary's War Memorial School is a Catholic systemic Co-educational School located in West Wyalong.

It is the students and their families that are the heart of this school and they are the reason why St Mary's staff foster genuine relationships with all members of the school community. We encourage a sense of co-operation among our members and this is demonstrated through courtesy, good manners and respect for one another. As professionals we treat each other with care and concern in all we say and do, and in doing so, provide excellent modelling for the students.

Our Vision and Mission statement guides us and dictates the culture of our school. It is as follows:

- Plant the Seed
  - Sowing Christian Values and Nurturing Relationships
- Nurture the Growth
  - Cultivating Excellence and Rising to Challenges
- Celebrate the Harvest
  - Appreciating Success and Celebrating Achievements

St Mary's staff affirm the role of parents as the prime educators of their children. We promote involvement of parents in policy making and school activities. We support the desirability of a high co-relation between home and school values. Throughout the year the school offers opportunities designed to assist and affirm the role of parents.

Our school continues to achieve on the academic front, with the latest NAPLAN results indicating continued improved growth and strong performance relative to our peers. Teaching and learning continues to foster this growth. The move to embrace technology with the intuitive iPad platform continues to be well received by students and teachers.

As well as their scholarly achievements, our students perform extremely well in their extracurricular activities with fantastic participation and performances in basketball, athletics, football, choir, annual musical, at community events and the Aspirations program. This success occurs as a result of the dedication of the teaching and support staff and with the contribution of the families who organise, support and transport students all over the state to participate in these forums.

St Mary's School is part of the school system operated by the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn. The Catholic Education Office employs staff. Our St Mary's staff, with the support of the Catholic Education Office Canberra, evaluates our structures and processes so that there is a strong link between the values the School espouses and its actual practice. St Mary's War Memorial School has Registration and Accreditation from the Minister of Education and Training and BOSTES. This means that regular accountability audits support St Mary's School as meeting all the requirements. At St Mary's War Memorial School teaching and learning meets the AITSL Standards and all teachers have accreditation that complies with BOSTES guidelines.

## Section Three: Catholic Identity and Faith Formation

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Our school follows the Archdiocesan Religious Education Curriculum, *Treasures New and Old*.

### Religious Life & Religious Education

St Mary's War Memorial School is a community of faith based on belief in God and a Christian way of life. Staff of our school are committed Christians and our school community is committed to Christian values and excellence in education. The spirit and values of the Gospel determine the atmosphere of the School. St Mary's School was founded in 1896 by the Sisters of Mercy and now provides education from Kindergarten to Year 6. Under the patronage and protection of Mary the Mother of Jesus, St Mary's School fosters an environment that allows justice, peace and love to flourish. The teaching practices, liturgies and celebrations enable the students and staff to recognise the relevance of the presence of Jesus in our lives. As a school community we are called to witness to the spirit of the Gospel in our daily lives.

Developing personal spirituality has an important place in the life of the school and there is a depth of spirituality within our school that is great to experience. The Parish Priest and the Religious Education Coordinator work closely with the teachers and students leading spiritual support through prayer, liturgies and the preparation and celebration of the sacraments in the school. Preparation for the sacraments also provides an opportunity to celebrate, discuss and share faith with parents. Children so naturally connect with God especially when adults can be a witness to the joy that prayer and service through faith can bring. Staff members take turns to prepare and lead a prayer session at staff meetings and teachers pray with their classes at the start of each day. Students are strongly encouraged to also develop their personal spirituality with regular class and whole school masses. Each year one professional development day is dedicated to staff spirituality.

To foster a genuine and caring interest for all, and to further ensure that the school is promoting Christian values and practices all day, every day, staff and students at St Mary's are committed to the *Making Jesus Real* program. Each week the whole school comes together to look closely at how we are actively living as Christians. A teacher will lead the session and introduce the topic. This is followed by students working in small Kindergarten to Yr 6 groups promoting genuine relationships across the school.

A further aspect to catholicity of our school is the staff and students developing awareness of our need to be involved in social justice.

We are very blessed to have a Catholic school where faith in God can be discussed and shared with children throughout the educational journey.

## Section Four: Student Profile

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### Student Enrolment

The School caters for students in Kindergarten to Year 6. Students attending this School come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2015:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
46	59	3	105

\* Language Background Other than English

### Enrolment Policy

The Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn has established an *Enrolment Policy for Catholic Schools*. The Catholic Education Office monitors the implementation of this policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements.

Information about enrolling in a Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn may be accessed at the [Catholic Education Office](#) website.

### Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for 2015 was 94.37%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group	
Kindergarten	95%
Year 1	93%
Year 2	94%
Year 3	96%
Year 4	94%
Year 5	95%
Year 6	94%

### Managing Student Non-attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The School, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, School staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

School staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the School community;
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance;
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance;
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the

consequences of unsatisfactory attendance;

- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented;
- documented plans are developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern;
- the Catholic Education Office designated School Services Officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom School strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

## Section Five: Staffing Profile

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The following information describes the staffing profile for 2015:

Total Teaching Staff*	Total Non-Teaching Staff	Combined Total
9	4	13

\* This number includes 4 full-time teachers and 5 part-time teachers.

Percentage of staff who are Indigenous	0%
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### Professional Learning

In 2015 the teachers participated in the following professional development.

- personal spirituality and prayer as a whole staff. The leadership team also took advantage of other opportunities in this area.
- implementing iPad technology into teaching and learning with an emphasise on using technology to significantly redesign and create new tasks previously inconceivable
- deepening their understanding of the importance of best practise pedagogy for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum
- embed the Understanding By Design model when planning for teaching and learning

### Teacher Qualifications

All teachers are qualified as required by the relevant authorities.

## Section Six: Academic Profile

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. An analysis of these results assists School planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs.

The tables below show the percentages of students who achieved particular skill bands in numeracy and the aspects of literacy. The School results shown are compared to students nationally. Literacy is reported in four content strands (aspects): Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Numeracy is reported as a single content strand.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2015		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 3	Reading	41%	48%	18%	11%
	Writing	38%	47%	0%	7%
	Spelling	47%	41%	6%	15%
	Grammar and Punctuation	59%	52%	12%	11%
	Numeracy	35%	34%	6%	15%

NAPLAN RESULTS 2015		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 5	Reading	31%	34%	31%	18%
	Writing	15%	19%	15%	18%
	Spelling	23%	33%	8%	15%
	Grammar and Punctuation	38%	36%	8%	17%
	Numeracy	23%	28%	8%	16%

## Section Seven: School Review and Improvement

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Each year, the School develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. The plan is drawn from the School's Strategic Plan and informed by the Internal School Review process. The School engages in an annual evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness against these external standards in collaboration with the Regional Consultant.

### Key Improvements Achieved in 2015

In 2015 we have extended the "bring your own device " to school. Each child, from K to Yr 6, has his or her personal iPad that is used as an educational tool ensuring that the learning at St Mary's is at the forefront of educational reform. This initiative has only been possible because teachers, parents and the Canberra Goulburn Catholic Education Office have had trust in the integrity of the school and our ability to ensure that this initiative would be successful. Teachers and support staff have demonstrated willingness to implement new tools into their lessons. This has involved spending time learning how to best combine the technology, the student and the content to achieve syllabus outcomes and to be confident in their own ability. We are grateful to the families for providing the financial resources necessary for this initiative and ensuring that the iPads are looked after and that their child's use of this device is safe and stays within acceptable use guidelines.

### Priority Key Improvements for 2016

In 2016 St Mary's will continue to further foster innovative learning. Teachers will all undertake extensive professional development in best practice pedagogy including looking at new ways to foster growth in inquiry and collaborative learning so as to engage all students more fully, in all lessons, all day. Cooperative learning activities calls all students to be actively involved in learning, to work with others in productive ways and develop relationship skills. We will also explore how to embed philosophy in lessons so that learning is extended to fully include personal questioning and deep level thinking. As we know the world is changing at a rapid pace and our children need a range of extensive skills to live full, productive and happy lives. We will also be extending the *Making Jesus Real* Program by implementing a program that focuses on providing the students with skills that will enable them to take greater responsibility for their own personal safety and wellbeing.

## Section Eight: School Policies

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### Student Welfare Policy

The heart of Pastoral Care at St Mary's War Memorial School encompasses concern for the spiritual, intellectual, social, physical, emotional, aesthetic, moral and cultural wellbeing of each person. Making time for others and affirming each individual develops a sense of personal worth and can make us all feel that we have gifts to offer the School Community. Pastoral Care is everyone's responsibility. Behaviour Management is conducted with the dignity of all members of our community in mind. Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. In addition, we do not sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons to enforce discipline at our school.

St Mary's pastoral care of students means we try to:

- make each child feel important, special and cared about,
- reinforce student achievements,
- take an interest in every child affirming their strengths and their family,
- know where each student is at developmentally so as to cater for their needs in a positive manner,
- help students feel at ease in new situations,
- show respect and understanding,
- be available, and be a good listener

The full text of the School's Student Welfare Policy may be accessed on the School's website or at the Administration office.

### Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy

The Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn Catholic Education Office has established a *Complaints Policy* which is implemented by our school and all systemic schools in the Archdiocese. The rationale for the policy is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of our contemporary world. The Catholic Education Office (CEO) monitors the implementation of this policy.

The full text of the *Complaints Policy* may be accessed on the Catholic Education website at <https://cg.catholic.edu.au>.

St Mary's School is committed to ensuring that workplace behaviours are consistent with its values and principles and support the overall mission of the Catholic Church and Catholic Education. We are committed to ensuring that the processes in place enable for the speedy resolution of grievances and disputes. The process is based on consultation, cooperation and negotiation. Wherever possible, decisions should be made at the lowest possible level, closest to the affected persons. All complaints are to be treated seriously, and conducted in a fair, impartial and professional manner, affording procedural fairness to the parties concerned. The parties should be informed of the process, timeframe outcome and any action to be taken, if appropriate.

The school follows the Catholic Education Policy as listed on the CE website.

## Section Nine: Community Satisfaction

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The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, the School has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers.

### Parent Satisfaction

In a 2015 survey of parents the following comments were received.

- We believe St Mary's has a good culture and my kids feel comfortable in this environment. I also think the teachers show a lot of care for the students.
- We like St Mary's culture, the teachers and the pastoral care shown to our children.
- St Mary's School knows all the children well and all teachers aim to help each child reach their full potential.
- I like the school and the teachers and my child benefits from being there.
- We are happy with the school.
- St Mary's provides a quality education in a small personalised environment.
- St Mary's offers the best environment for our child's needs.
- Teachers at St Mary's offer encouragement and provide a supportive family oriented environment.
- I have enrolled my children in St Mary's as it has an emphasise on values and character building which I believe to be vitally important.
- Our children attend St Mary's because we prefer our children to attend a religious school which values manners and kindness.
- We are extremely happy with the school.
- St Mary's provides a Christian education.
- My daughter and I love everything about St Mary's.

### Student Satisfaction

Students at St Mary's War Memorial had the opportunity to complete a survey rating aspects of their school. The following comments were all rated as '*agreed.*'

- There is a caring environment at our school.
- The school is well maintained.
- Students are helped with their work when they are having difficulties.
- Students are expected to act responsibly.
- Expectations and rules are clearly explained to students.
- Student management is fair but firm.
- Students are expected to improve their standard of work.
- Students do interesting things in class.
- Teachers put a lot of energy in preparing our learning.
- Students have opportunities to be involved in activities outside the classroom.
- The school has adequate resources.

### Teacher Satisfaction

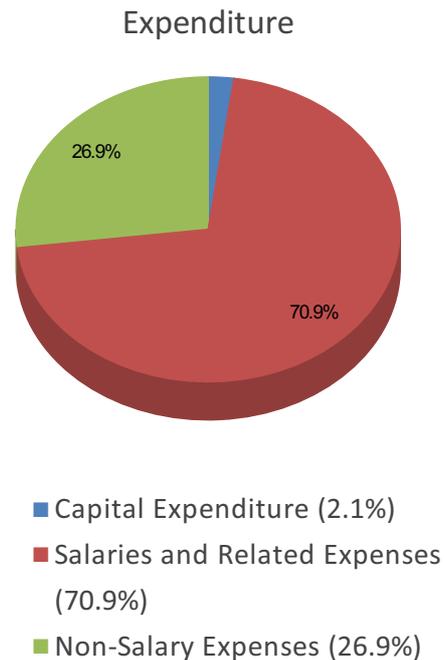
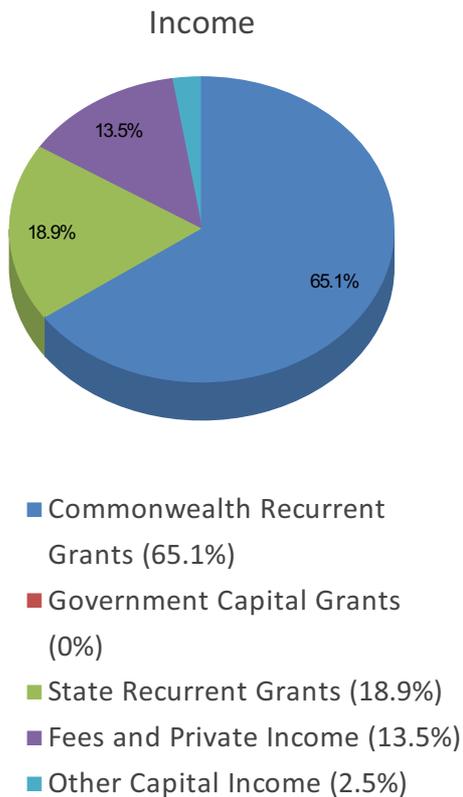
Teachers at St Mary's War Memorial had the opportunity to complete a survey rating many elements of their work. The following comments were all rated as "*agreed or strongly agreed.*"

- Teachers have opportunities for professional development and are able to influence

decisions affecting their work.

- Teachers have recognition from their colleagues and feel like professionals at work.
- The school encourages democratic decision-making and there are clear goals and expectations at my school.
- Teachers work in a supportive environment and feel their role in the school is important.
- Teachers are committed to the school and the school has a positive ethos.
- Teachers display trust in the administration of the school and believe that the leadership staff are open and understanding. Change is planned and executed well.
- Teachers say that communication is effective at their school.
- Teacher's performance is reviewed professionally and as a staff the teachers are good examples to students.
- Our school encourages student responsibility, student management at the school is consistent and conflict at our school is handled well.
- Our school encourages a climate conducive to learning .

## Section Ten: Financial Statement



RECURRENT and CAPITAL INCOME	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$877,154
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$0
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$254,542
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$181,476
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$33,601
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,346,773</b>

RECURRENT and CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$33,601
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$1,109,105
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$421,259
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$1,563,965</b>

### Notes

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.
3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income.
5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture

and Equipment.

7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.