

2023

## About this report

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St Clare's High School (the 'High School') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO), Maitland-Newcastle. The Annual School Report (the 'Report'), provides parents and the wider community with fair, accurate and objective information about various aspects of school performance and development. Additionally, the Report complements and is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the High School community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students.

Detailed information about the High School's improvement journey is documented in the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) which is developed, implemented and evaluated in consultation with key stakeholders. Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the High School directly or by visiting the High School's website. Information can be also be obtained from the My School website.

## Message from key groups in our community

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### Principal's Message

The St Clare's community takes pride in fostering exceptional citizens and empowering students to achieve their aspirations. With a clear commitment to Catholic faith development, inspired by Gospel Values and the exemplary lives of St Mary

endeavours, confident that they will carry with them the values and lessons learned at St. Clare's.

In saying goodbye, we also acknowledge and celebrate the positive impact of several staff members who have significantly contributed to St. Clare's over the years. To Phil Chalmers, Maureen Busby, Peter Nicholls, Peter Briscoe-Hough, Laura Boere, Stacy Posadas, Rachael Bartley, Leilannie Andrews, Angela Heiss, and Michael Knight, we express our gratitude and wish them all the best in their retirement and/or future pursuits.

Finally, our heartfelt thanks go out to everyone who played a role in making this school year a success. To our dedicated teachers and staff, thank you for your unwavering commitment to education. To parents, thank you for your continuous support and partnership. And to our students, thank you for contributing to the greatness of St. Clare's with the enthusiasm

evolving culture of the institution. Notably, the SRC has advocated for greater student involvement, leading to impactful changes such as the introduction of a leadership training retreat in 2023 and the upcoming junior SRC training day in 2024.

Appreciation is extended to the St. Clare's school executive for their commitment to fostering student voice across all aspects of school life. The diverse range of activities initiated and participated in by the SRC not only fosters a heightened sense of accomplishment among students but also contributes to the overall enrichment of the school community.









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## Managing Student Non-Attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The High School, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the

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been involved in professional learning opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes.

### Summary of professional learning at this school

Throughout the year teachers have participated in a variety of professional learning including school based, system based and external professional development courses.

In 2023 the following were Staff Development Days:

29/1/23 - Fair Treatment (HR Presentation)

29/1/23 - Curriculum planning and development

30/1/23 - Youth Mental Health First Aid

3/3/23 - Youth Mental Health First Aid

30/6/23 - Staff Spirituality Day

18/12/23 - CPR Training

18/12/23 - Curriculum planning

## Catholic Identity and Mission

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Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle participate, under the leadership of the Bishop and in partnership with parents and parishes, in the mission of the Church to provide quality education in the context of a living Catholic Christian tradition. Within this context, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle educate from and for vibrant, welcoming and diverse communities with a particular commitment to the poor; for justice, integrity and peace; and with hope for the future.:

At the heart of everything there is always Jesus Christ.

Catholic schools educate:

- From and for the community of faith
- From and for excellence in learning
- In a rigorous, creative and critical pursuit of truth

(Adapted from: The Catholic School's Office Diocesan Vision Statement, 2016)

St Clare's High School draws students from both Catholic and Non-Catholic feeder primary schools from across the Manning Valley and Great Lakes regions. This is a predominantly secular region and consequently over fifty percent of our students are from a non- Christian background.

We have been fortunate to be supported from our Parish priest Fr Kevin Corrigan and our Deacons Vince Ryan with formation of both staff and students.

In 2023, our School Improvement Goal (SIP) is improving the 'Catholic Culture' within the school. This goal

liturgies throughout the year such as Ash Wednesday and Stations of the Cross. The Catholic Culture also informs our schools distinctive spirituality including prayer and identity of our school's namesake St Clare as well as the example and values of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop from our founding Sisters of St Joseph.

Our Religious Education department has upgraded resources including new bibles sets for all classrooms and sacred spaces in each Religious classroom space. Additionally, our year 7 Religious Education classes have increased lessons from 6 to 7 lessons per fortnight.

Our charitable fund-raising appeals are centred and informed through our Catholic identity and in line with our Catholic calendar (Term 1: Lent- Project Compassion, Term 2: Winter Vinnies appeal, Term 3: Mary MacKillop fund appeal for local students and Term 4: Advent Vinnies appeal). Therefore, our staff and students are developing an awareness of purposeful and intentional Christian living.



Success Criteria have been embedded with students and many have seen improvements with student outcomes. Students and staff continue to benefit from Learning Walks and Talks.

St Clare's offers a wide range of course options in addition to the mandatory curriculum. Students are able to pursue courses of interest as an elective in Stage 5 and program of study in Stage 6. Guidance for students is available from the Careers advisor, Assistant Principal Learning and Teaching, Leaders of Wellbeing and Engagement and Leaders of Learning. Courses unable to be offered by St Clare's are available through distance education providers, for example specialised languages and agricultural studies. A number of Stage 6 students are also enrolled in TVET and SBAT programs of study.



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NAPLAN RESULTS 2023		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 9	Grammar and Punctuation	54%	56%
	Reading	63%	63%
	Writing	58%	58%
	Spelling	59%	71%
	Numeracy	61%	64%

Higher School Certificate (HSC) E403 758 75685 v5 7087 516987075 30338 57904 Tm(61%)ETBTf3 146



## Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

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### Pastoral Care Policy

The High School's pastoral care and student wellbeing policies guidelines and procedures are informed by the [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#).

The Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy 2022 aims to provide a framework for the policies, programs, resources and practices implemented at system and school level with the purpose of supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of students, and all within its school community. It refers to the overall climate of care that exists within a Catholic school.

The environment is designed to be safe and inclusive, one that promotes academic rigour. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents, and the wellbeing of all.

### Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy

The High School's policies and procedures for the management of student behaviour are aligned the CSO [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#) and to the [Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion Procedure](#). The dignity and responsibility of each person is promoted at all times along with positive student behaviours whilst ensuring respect for the rights of all students and staff. Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this High School. The High School does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by High School persons and non-High School persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the High School. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the High School's website.

### Anti-Bullying Policy

The Catholic Schools Office has established an [Anti-Bullying Policy](#) which is implemented by our school and all schools in the diocese. It provides a framework for school communities to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person. The CSO monitors the implementation of this policy.

The full text of the Anti-Bullying Policy may be accessed on the High School's website, the administration office or at the CSO website.

## Complaints Handling Policy

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has established a [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) which is implemented by our school and all systemic schools in the diocese. 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. CSO monitors the implementation of this policy.

The full text of the [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) may be accessed on the High School's website, the administration office or at the CSO website.

## Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

St Clare's High School prides itself on the quality of wellbeing and the associated programs it provides for the students in our care.

In 2023 there was particular focus given to the rights and responsibilities of all members of the community and the development of the whole student.

Raku Warriors ran during sport time. This group allowed students at risk to be creatively involved with Term based activities. By focusing on repetitive motions of individual ceramic works or handmade artwork/banners, students were able to relax and engage in mindfulness.

Delhuntie Youth Care was accessed to provide opportunities for students in year 10 to participate in a tailor made personal development and team building program onsite using the mobile 7 metre high Pinnacle unit. In addition year 10 participated in the Love Bites program addressing the area of consent and safe behaviours.

Wellbeing Journals were continued. These were used during CLARE time for years 7, 8, 9,10 and 11. They look explicitly at teaching our students how to develop the skills and competencies to grow their brain's abilities as well as teaching them how to acquire the skills of social emotional resilience so they can live life to the full.

The program within the journal comes from the Learning Curve and is a positive education wellbeing program. It focuses on six areas including positive emotions and gratitude, engagement and mindfulness, relationships and empathy, meaning and purpose, accomplishment and optimism and health and strength.

These journals were supported by regular whole year group sessions delivered by LOWEs at year meetings. Parent articles were included within the newsletters to provide information and support for the entire community.

In 2023 the position of Wellbeing Mentor was continued in the St Clare's community. It provided an opportunity for a more structured, logical and streamlined wellbeing program, informed by data from the 'Tell them from me' surveys, and feedback provided through the Student Representative Council.

The Wellbeing Mentors also took on the responsibility of leading the Student Representative Council. This provided the opportunity for raising the profile and impact of the SRC within the St Clare's community.

In addition they initiated several wellbeing programs including a working partnership with Bamara, implementing the Back on Trak in School's program, working specifically with our indigenous students and getting them fully engaged post COVID. Hannah's

data from both staff and students indicates that she has become an extremely valuable member of the school community.

## School Improvement

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The High School implements the system's review cycle of improvement which outlines the processes and benchmarks for creating the culture and practice of continuous improvement with students as the focus. Strategic Improvement Plans are future focused documents that map the High School's directions, aimed specifically at improving educational and wellbeing outcomes for all students through the following areas:

- Catholic Identity and Catholic Curriculum
- Learning and Wellbeing

Each year, the High School develops a Strategic Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. A copy of the school's Strategic Improvement Plan may be obtained from the High School administrative office.

### Key Improvements Achieved

Catholic Formation and Mission: St. Clare's has actively fostered strong partnerships with local parishes and Parish priests. The school has dedicated significant resources to social justice outreach initiatives and the establishment of high-quality community collaborations, reflecting its commitment to Catholic values. This commitment is evident in impactful endeavours such as the engagement with the Saint Vincent De Paul Society, close collaboration with the local RSL sub-branch, and active participation in the local Catholic Community Kitchen.

The implementation of a data wall, highlighting student literacy performance, has driven the development of tailored strategies to enhance student learning. Notably, a new year 10 class structure for 2024 has been designed with a clear focus on addressing specific student learning needs. The data wall serves as a starting point for learning walks and talks, providing opportunities for staff to engage in collaborative reflection on student learning and teaching practices. In 2023, an extensive implementation of learning walks and talks has been extended to all teaching staff, offering insights into the learning environment throughout the school and incorporating the voices of both students and teachers.

The ongoing success of the Gifted and Talented program at St. Clare's is evident through its positive evolution in recent years. This program supports both students and teachers in adopting a more targeted approach to teaching and learning for gifted students. Projects such as the Artist in Residence and Writer in Residence initiatives provide additional opportunities for students excelling in these areas to nurture their talents and pursue their passions within the school setting.

In an effort to better support indigenous students, St. Clare's has forged a connection with the BAMARA group, which administers a program to facilitate the transition to work for indigenous students. Additionally, the school proudly introduced its first indigenous dance group, with plans for further growth in 2024.

#### Priority Key Improvements for Next Year

Continue to Align all meetings as a time for Professional Development and teacher collaboration.

Continue to develop an informed approach to the use of data to ensure improved student outcomes. Through the Schools Pedagogical mentor, Wellbeing mentor, Gifted Education Mentor and Middle leaders.

Continue to Incorporate the Clarity project across St Clare's, including Co- construction of Success criteria and further development of learning walks and talks.

Implementation of the Year 10 new learning structure, teacher collaboration opportunities, cross curricula learning opportunities and development of targeting learning goals for individual and groups of students.



## Community Satisfaction

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Consultation with parents, students and teachers is valued and sought. Their feedback contributes to the planning and the achievement of improved outcomes for students. This year, the High School has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the High School from parents, students and teachers. The school undertakes extensive surveying of all stakeholder groups annually. This data is shared with the school community and contributes to the priorities for future planning.

### Parent satisfaction

Parent surveys were undertaken during open days, via the school newsletter, as part of COSI and the 'Tell Them from Me' survey conducted by the Diocese.

Parents note the high expectations the school has of their sons and daughters and the willingness of staff to help the young people in their care to achieve great results. Some parents would like to see the school provide more time to other extra-curricular learning opportunities, and opportunities for parent engagement in the school community.

Parents see St Clare's as having a good reputation in the community and operating within a safe environment. They also value the enforcement of the rules and the expectation that students will be respectful of each other and the learning environment. This has been represented by our increasing enrolments over the past two years with an expected enrolment figure of 665 in 2024.

Some parents want there to be a better flow of communication between parents and teachers and would like to see more effective information about their child's learning reach home on a more regular basis. The school continued to put in a number of new initiatives in 2023, with regular posts, made through compass, Facebook, Instagram and the fortnightly newsletter. We are still looking at other opportunities to better engage with our parents, carers, and community members in 2023 through the implementation of the FACE structure in 2024, this would include conducting parent forums on topics important to the school community and providing opportunities for parents and community member to participate in whole events.

### Student satisfaction

Information has been collected from student exit surveys, Tell Them From Me survey' data and face to face student conversations in CLARE lessons.

Students felt that teachers were responsive to their needs and encouraged independence. That there was a

They were able to build positive relationships with their teachers especially their Leader of Wellbeing and Engagement and had someone they could go to if they were in need.

A major strength of the learning environment at St Clare's is the strong rapport that is developed between students and teachers in the senior years and the strong sense

## Financial Statement

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This School Financial Information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire.

School Financial Information for the 2023 year is detailed below:

Recurrent and Capital Income 2023	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants <sup>1</sup>	\$9,406,377
Government Capital Grants <sup>2</sup>	\$0
State Recurrent Grants <sup>3</sup>	\$2,621,578
Fees and Private Income <sup>4</sup>	\$2,522,685
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$20,633
Other Capital Income <sup>5</sup>	\$697,713
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$15,268,986</b>

Recurrent and Capital Expenditure 2023	
Capital Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$65,271
Salaries and Related Expenses <sup>7</sup>	\$10,761,664
Non-Salary Expenses <sup>8</sup>	\$4,387,480
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$15,214,415</b>

### Notes

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita current 0 0.75 100.0 0.75 137.79 682.9
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END OF 2023 REPORT