

School Advisory Council

Annual Report



MELBOURNE
ARCHDIOCESE
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

School: Aquinas College

Year: 2024

School Advisory Council Members:

Chris Leahy - Chairperson, David Broadbent - Principal, Rev Dispin John - Canonical Administrator, Richard Coker – acting Business Manager, Andrew Conway – Finance Representative, David Mutimer – Co-Opted Member (Primary Principals), Sharon Daley - Staff Representative, Katrin Webb - Student Representative, Joanne White - Parent Representative, Kerry Elliott - Parent Representative, Brodi Stone - Parents and Friends Network Representative, Royal Castellino– Parish Representative

The School Advisory Council Annual Report should acknowledge the activities, achievements and challenges of the council and committees over the past year, reference the council's evaluation, and indicate goals and focus for the following year.

School's Vision and Mission Statement

Inspired by Gospel values and mindful of our Catholic identity, our Vision is to ignite the fire of learning and shine as a beacon of excellence, hope and love in the world.

'Illuminare et Ardere'

Our Mission is to promote quality education while developing an awareness of God in our lives, the value and connectedness of all human relationships, a sense of justice, a hopeful spirit and a love of learning.

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Provide a summary of the council's evaluation process.

The SAC was presented and worked through three primary deliverables for the College in 2024; Master Plan, School Fee Adjustment and CIS Evaluation.

The assessment process and subsequent support for the College was consistent with previous years, driven by detailed information with full transparency and a collaborative approach.

The relationship between the College and SAC remains strong, maintaining the 2022 strategic goal; to increase visibility of the SAC across the College as an accountable partner.



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What activities were undertaken this year?

Enterprise Risk Management – notice of the top risks identified by the College key stakeholders, communicated via the Finance Committee

College Fee Review – annual SAC Seminar was dedicated to review of the justifications for increases and adjustments in College Fee’s commencing 2025

Masterplan – Kosloff Architecture presented on the Master Planning phase, including school community engagement, for SAC evaluation and comment

Child Safety – Standing agenda item.

CIS Evaluation – SAC provided input into the CIS evaluation process, including Chair Report, College presentation and interviews

How successful were these endeavors?

ERM – The SAC, via the Finance Committee, continue to provide Corporate Sector experience and advice on the structure of reporting risk and the process. This has been a strong and positive relationship

College Fee Review – with the provision of detailed financial statements and forecasting detail, the SAC is in full support of the College proposal for restructuring of the fees. It is the SAC’s view, with consideration of the revised MACS fee model, adjustment of the Government’s Capacity to Pay ranking and the current dynamic economic environment, that the changes are required to achieve the College objectives, respond to key risks and maintain the current framework for governance and fiscal responsibility, promoting growth for the College community.

Master Plan – the SAC are confident in the robust and inclusive process the College has taken in developing the Master Plan with Kosloff. Whilst the SAC has an invested interest in the vision for long term facilities growth of the College, the focus of discussion was on alignment of College priorities, overarching design guidelines and the commercial capacity of the College to deliver on the vision.

Child Safety – This is a standing agenda item with detailed reporting by Staff Representative; Sharon Daley. It is the view of the SAC that the College Leadership team prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of all students with the greatest level of significance.

CIS Evaluation – the CIS Review Team were complimentary of the detailed included in both the SAC report and presentation. The SAC understand the importance of the process for the College, with members committed to offering their support and independent view.



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<p>Highlight the greatest achievement(s) of the council.</p>	<p>With the College recognised for its affordability, low annual fee increases, fixed Capital Levy and generous Sibling Discount, support for a fee restructure had the potential to challenge standing views of key stakeholders between the College and SAC.</p> <p>Through the provision of detailed performance data, end of year forecasting and budget expectations, the SAC and College worked collaboratively to evaluate the risks and key drivers, ultimately resulting in full SAC support for the proposed increases.</p> <p>The SAC would also like to thank the following retiring members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brodi Stone - P&F Representative • Joanne White – Parent Representative / Capital Projects • Katrin Webb - Student Representative <p>Each making a valued contribution during their time</p>
<p>List any committees or working groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Risk Committee • Tennis Court Re-Development • Parents and Friends
<p>What were their activities?</p>	<p>F&R Committee: in addition to the traditional review of Financial Reports including Income and Expenditure, Balance Sheet, Cash, Loans and Capital Expenditure, the F&R introduced Enterprise Risk and Management. The ERM focused on the evaluation of existing templates, processes, and the alignment with MACS Risk strategy.</p> <p>Tennis Court Re-Development: Lead by the Project Control Group (PCG) with Joanne White representing the SAC, Aquinas has successfully completed the works on the tennis courts on the Eastern boundary of the College.</p> <p>Parents and Friends: as an integral part of the College community, the P&F Network contributes and supports a number of key initiatives, including; capital fundraising, contributions to the Aquinas Bursary Fund, funding the students Generations in Jazz jacket, sponsoring learning initiatives and other student events.</p>



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List the key achievements or decisions made by these committees.

F&R Committee: after years of consistent representation and support, the challenge for 2023 was to re-establish key stakeholders and build on past templates. With thanks for the interim support of Amy O'Connor, the SAC and F&R Committee welcomed the introduction of Andrew Conway as Finance Representative. The College has also appointed Richard Coker as the Acting College Business Manager, Richard commenced in Nov 2023. The SAC is confident in the continued value of the financial reporting process with the introduction of Andrew and Richard to Committee

Tennis Court Re-Development: The 3 multipurpose courts have been completed with synthetic grass, tensile shade roofing and lighting. The clubrooms have also been redeveloped as a Learning Space.

Parents and Friends: the Treasury is strong with fundraising initiatives contributing towards initiatives such as the music jackets and provision for family hardship contributions.

Student Representation

Catrin Webb provided informative and integral input as our student Ambassador on the SAC in 2024. Her contributions specifically in relation to inclusivity, wellbeing and sustainability initiatives were highly valued and we thank her for her commitment across the year.

Outline/summarise the council members' presence at school functions.

Council Member attendance included the following:

- Café N9Ne – each student spends a week working in Café N9Ne
- Evening of Excellence
- Year 12 Valedictory Dinner
- Year 12 Graduation Night
- Information Evenings & Subject Selection Events.
- Student Excellence Evening

In addition, the SAC contributed to the College Light House newsletter sent out to all families. The aim was to highlight areas of involvement and support for the College

The following functions of recognition have been deferred to 2025

- Leading Lights – recognising and acknowledging the outstanding achievements of former students in their specific vocation
- Honour Roll evening - recognising former students of the College who have shown exceptional leadership and commitment in society



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List any challenges the council encountered.	In principle, the SAC did not experience any restrictive challenges which distracted or diverted the group from its function.
How were the challenges overcome?	The SAC takes a consultative approach based on the diverse experience of our members.
Was any expert advice invited onto the council? Who, for how long and for what purpose?	Master Plan - The College engaged Kosloff Architecture for the Master Plan. This is a continuation note from 2023.
What are the goals of the council for next year?	<p>Communication – increase SAC visibility within the College community, ultimately developing the SAC and College partnership profile, this will include SAC attendance at the College Open Day in 2025</p> <p>Enterprise Risk – clearer understanding of the risks and potential impacts on the College with the view to leveraging the SAC member experience, providing support in minimising the potential for the risk occurring or its consequence</p> <p>Child Safety – maintaining a standing agenda item to discuss child welfare, highlighting its importance from a leadership perspective.</p> <p>Environment Social Governance (ESG) – initial discussions in preparation for Government reporting in 2027</p> <p>Leadership – Chris Leahy will end his Chairpersonship at the end of the 2024 school year. Andrew Conway has been elected Chairperson for 2025, after 2 years as the SAC Finance Representative. Andrew and Chris will continue their representation on the Finance and Risk Committee in 2025</p>
What will be the main focus?	Heighten SAC financial acumen to assist in effectively applying the skills required to provide informed commercial input to the challenges over a 3-5 year horizon, regarding fee adjustment and the Master Plan.
Did an evaluation of the council take place?	No formal evaluation has taken place, however ongoing iterative review of the SAC contribution towards College initiatives has been consistent with MACS standards.

