

AQUINAS COLLEGE



STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2023

RETHINKING AQUINAS: A NEW DIRECTION

Welcome to Aquinas College. We are delighted to share with you our Strategic Priorities for 2021-2023.

Established in 1894, the College is a Catholic day and boarding school for boys in the Edmund Rice tradition. As a School owned and governed by Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), the local community and Principal are empowered with the responsibility of plotting the future course of the College; a course that best captures the Vision, Mission and Values of the College. In doing so, we use the EREA Charter as a guiding document to the College's purpose and identifies four touchstones linked with the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice that underpin the ministry within Aquinas College. These touchstones are:



Liberating Education -

We open hearts and minds through quality teaching and learning experiences. Through critical reflection and engagement, each person is hope-filled and free to build a better world for all.

Gospel Spirituality

We invite all people into the story of Jesus and strive to make his message of compassion, justice and peace a living reality within our community.

Inclusive Community

Our community is accepting and welcoming, fostering right relationships and committed to the common good.

Justice and Solidarity

We are committed to justice and peace for all, grounded in a spirituality of action and reflection that calls us to stand in solidarity with those who are marginalised and the Earth itself.

OUR VISION

Founded in values espoused in the Gospel, Aquinas College seeks to transform the hearts and minds of students through education — to build a more just and inclusive local and global community through presence, compassion and liberation.

OUR MISSION

Aquinas College offers a Liberating Education, based on a Gospel Spirituality, within an Inclusive Community, committed to Justice and Solidarity.

OUR VALUES

Faith in action; Justice with compassion; Service with generosity; Respect for all; Excellence every day.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Academic excellence for the 21st Century underpins our vision through liberating teaching and learning practices, ensuring wellbeing, safety and student voice.

Character and Leadership through Service and Advocacy are central to the future work of students and adults.

An Experience of Faith which recognises the divine in every person's search for meaning, models equality and listens and responds to those experiencing powerlessness.

Community Growth that nurtures life, reconciliation and diversity, fostering solidarity, justice and peace in the world.

OUR PARADIGM SHIFTS

Inspired by the Spirit in urgently responding to current realities and alternative futures, EREA commits to:

A movement for Reconciliation, walking together for mutual liberation, valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowings and recognising Australia's shared histories, cultures and achievements.

An ecological movement towards new ways of thinking and acting about human beings, life, society, the earth and our relationship with creation.

A movement towards freedom where **diversity** in all its forms is welcomed and celebrated as a gift so that the unique behaviours, aspirations and needs of all are valued equally.

An evolution in language, which allows us to give expression to our stories and beliefs, listen to others, re-imagine our rituals, create new meanings and facilitate transformation.

OUR ENABLERS

So that our schools are empowered to achieve their transformational goals, and guided by the principle of subsidiarity, Aquinas College commits to:

Respectful Relationships within our workplaces and learning environments, professional processes and communication, and collaborative partnerships within the community.

A high standard of clarity and support concerning **Governance, Compliance, Risk and the Wellbeing** of our students and staff.

The Prudent Stewardship of financial performance, strategic management of the resources entrusted to us and transparency in our operations as we support the mission of Catholic Education in the Edmund Rice tradition.

Contemporary, Innovative and Sustainable growth in response to ever-changing educational and social landscapes, extending the experience of the charisma of Edmund Rice.

THE AQUINAS LEARNING JOURNEY

Our new Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023 builds upon our previous plans to advance our vision and purpose. The Strategic Plan remains centred upon the Aquinas College student undertaking an Aquinas Journey, '**Aquinas Learning Journey**'. Boys will continue to travel within a balanced contemporary education that will equip them academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially and in doing so helping them become men for others in the Edmund Rice Tradition. The core of their journey however has gained a greater focus on **Mission, Identity and Student Advocacy and Voice**.

TAKING ACTION

The Strategic Plan focuses on the following four key dimensions, each consisting of several proposed outcomes:



DIMENSION:	Mission, Identity and Voice
SCOPE:	This strategic dimension includes health, wellbeing, pastoral care, quality and character of Catholic life; personal excellence, mentoring, leadership programs, faith formation, prayer, liturgy and sacraments, community service, advocacy groups, retreats and immersions.
Strategic Actions - Guided by research and best practice, we will:	
1. Ensure opportunities for the Aquinas College community to engage with the theology of our environmental advocacy and sustainability endeavours , e.g. bringing “Laudato Si” to live within the works of the Sustainability Group.	
2. Prioritise Student Voice in reconciliation and future direction of the College through engagement, and continue the growth of the student leadership councils, ensuring a consistent approach across all three schools.	
3. The development of a College Character Education Program that focuses upon staff, students and parents.	
4. Creation of an Aquinas College Social Vision that focuses on various issues of equality and social justice, both locally and internationally, that aligns with our distinctive values-based identity (Mission) and contributes to a better and fair society.	
5. Establish an Aquinas Society to create spaces for dialogue and respectful debate among our Aquinas College community, broader society and expert guest speakers to enable people to be agents of change in creating a more just society — beginning with awareness-raising, education and ultimately inspiring advocacy and social action.	
6. Contextualise the Religious Formation programs with the Aquinas College Learning Journey V2 in order to integrate core focus areas of our Catholic Identity, Student Leadership programs and our Edmund Rice Movement.	
7. Review Management of Student Behaviour Policy to ensure standards are appropriate, explicit with clear consequences/actions with an expectation of respectful language, and courtesy.	

DIMENSION:	Teaching and Learning
SCOPE:	This strategic dimension includes curriculum and co-curriculum design; academic and vocational programs offered; timetabling; study skills and independent learning; assessment and reporting; eLearning and use of technology in the curriculum; homework policy; specialist music program, work experience, careers advice, academic value-added: improvement: personal best.
Strategic Actions - Guided by research and best practice, we will:	
1. Review, implement and monitor the College’s curriculum and co-curricular provision , ensuring a positive, boy-friendly model, for all levels of ability, that better reflects and provides for the demands and expectations of parents, the future of students and the changing nature of Australia, whilst accommodating a Term 4 Rollover.	
2. Investigate the establishment of a Boys’ Learning and Literacy Centre which promotes literacy, ICT capabilities, a range of learning styles, the development of a student-centred enquiry process and learning/study skills. Investigate possible links to research in residence programs with UNDA and Murdoch, staff coaching and PLCs, student research and councils etc.	
3. Develop a Student monitored College portfolio to record participation and achievement in all dimensions of life at the College	
4. Development and implementation of a blended curriculum model in Year 11 & 12 to accommodate the introduction of the Aquinas Link — providing a greater priority on preparing students for post-school life.	
5. Development of a career development framework and curriculum for Year 9-10 students that balances breadth of curriculum and skill development as a transition into Year 11/12.	
6. Developing and implement a research-based pedagogical framework for teaching boys that is well understood and applied by all teachers. Parents and student education around this framework would also be important.	
7. Develop a whole staff approach to mental health and wellbeing of boys and their parents. Use of current research, PD time and messaging to ensure boy-centric T&L and pastoral care is the priority.	

DIMENSION:	Formation of Staff
SCOPE:	This strategic dimension includes professional, career and leadership development and faith formation for all staff; coaching and mentoring of staff; standards and skills for teaching and pastoral care; staff induction, staff communication and participation; staff recognition celebration, staff well-being.
Strategic Actions - Guided by research and best practice, we will:	
1. Develop a two-term induction & mentoring program for all new staff.	
2. Integration of all whole staff events/programs –appreciation awards, farewells, planning, staff Christian service, retreat and advocacy.	
3. Continued emphasis on Staff Professional Portfolios and Teacher Performance Management to align with staff professional development program standards of personal excellence.	
4. Teaching Staff Learning Committee to coordinate the implementation of strategies to improve boys’ learning and effective practice standards.	
5. Conduct a review of teacher expectations and workload in light of MS and SS rhythms, ensuring the quality of teaching and learning remain a high priority.	
6. To develop a clear and accountable plan for staff expectations for co-curricular hours.	
7. Continue to develop ICT capabilities of staff and students to enable wider access to learning opportunities beyond the classroom.	

	DIMENSION:	People, Resources and Community
	SCOPE:	This strategic dimension includes parent partnership and communication; boarding community; involvement of former pupils; formation for parents, community relationships; links to schools, parishes, charitable organisations, higher education institutions and government. In addition, it includes all aspects of space, buildings, grounds and facilities — including information technology; staffing, funding and resources; environmental sustainability; safety and security; governance, risk and compliance.
Strategic Actions - Guided by research and best practice, we will:		
PEOPLE	1. Staff: develop systems and programs that support the attraction, retention and professional growth of staff.	
	2. Parents & Old Boys: acknowledge and enhance the significant role of parents and Old Boys in the life of the College through renewed programs of religious, parenting, fathering and cultural engagement.	
	3. EREA Formation: consolidate and broaden the range of adult formation opportunities for staff and parents.	
	4. Develop a parent code of conduct in consultation with the school board — including sanctions for breaches.	
	5. Creation of a purposeful marketing/publicity campaign.	
RESOURCES	1. Data & Communication: consolidate an integrated and accessible information and communication system to inform and support College staff, enhance partnerships with parents and build community.	
	2. Facilities & Infrastructure: complete and implement a new College Master and Development Plans that improves learning, optimises space and ensures a beautiful, functional school environment.	
	3. Finance & Fundraising: maintain a prudent approach to financial management, investigate and plan for changes to income streams and work with the College Foundation to establish a financially viable and effective fundraising program to realise long term objectives.	
	4. Develop an Environmental Sustainability Plan that reduces our environmental footprint by 20% before 2023.	
	5. Refurbishment of some staff offices to allow for more open plan, collaborative and functional working spaces.	
COMMUNITY	1. Creation and implementation of a College Social Vision.	
	2. Enrolment & Bursaries: complete a new business plan that articulates a future vision for the student demographic profile, renew the enrolment processes of the College and expand the Bursary Program.	
	3. Companionship: build and maintain relationships with EREA ministries and the broader Catholic Church with particular focus upon parish life.	
	4. Establish national and global partnerships and collaboration with other Schools.	
	5. Develop a working relationship with NDUA, Public Universities and agencies and TAFE to enhance curriculum and post-school opportunities, and to encourage staff to grow further professionally.	
	6. The establishment of a community hub to provide opportunities for community engagement with the College. (E.g. community choir, performing arts school, swimming etc).	