



**MARY
MACKILLOP
CATHOLIC
COLLEGE**

ENGAGING MINDS

IGNITING HEARTS

SERVING OTHERS

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Precis of Summative Performance Appraisal Report

Chris Gabbett
Principal

Review years 2019 - 2022

This is the report for the first contract period review of the performance of Chris Gabbett in his role as the principal of Mary MacKillop Catholic College, Highfields during the period of 2019-2022. The Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic Schools—Principals Performance and Development Procedure, informed the summative performance appraisal process.

This review was held on 1 March this year at the College.

The purpose of the summative performance appraisal is to

- a) review the principal’s previous annual self-review reports and the related evident-based data in the context of the TCS Leadership Framework and the TCS Principal Role Description
- b) ensure accountability to the College community, the parish community and TCS
- c) make commendations and recommendations to the principal for future professional learning goals.

This was a very comprehensive and inclusive process and the College thanks all who took part so willingly. In total, 169 stakeholders completed the 360-degree survey. This survey measured Chris against the leadership dimensions of the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office.

The day of the review involved four members of Toowoomba Catholic Schools;

Mr John Coman	Senior Education Leader (SEL) Panel Chair
Mr Jim Midgley	Director: Education Services Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (TCSO)
Mr Peter Cuskelly	Principal, Our Lady of the Southern Cross, Dalby
Mr Jim Brennan	Principal, St John’s School, Roma

The panel interviewed all College staff, Parish Priest - Fr Brian Noonan, parents, students from across the College and members of the Parent Partnership Forum. In total, more than 90 people were interviewed on the review day.

Please see below the Commendations taken verbatim from the report under each leadership domain. The numbers are reflective of the 360-degree survey, with 5 being most successful.

Religious Leadership: 4.5

Commendation

Chris is to be commended for leading the processes that have embedded the charism of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop in the life, language, and processes of the College. The conviction of his faith translates into Chris’s every action and interaction and is lived as well as professed. The impact of this is summed up in a parent commendation from the TCS 360-degree feedback report.

"He has added to the religious and spiritual development of the students and parent/carer community through his thorough knowledge of and faith in Catholicism." (Parent)

Educative Leadership: 4.42

Commendation

It is evident to the panel that one of Chris's great strengths is educative leadership. He has been able to work with the school community to create a strong vision for the future that is based on academic success and driven by a strategic analysis of and response to learning and wellbeing data.

The academic rigour of the growing secondary section of the school has seen very good performances of the first two year 12 cohorts in the new QCE system. Along with the provision of significant choice in the senior curriculum and junior secondary, the College is now seen as a viable option when compared to other schools.

Staff and Community Leadership: 4.22

Commendation

There is no doubt from all interviewed that Chris is perceived as an excellent leader of MMCC. He leads by example, is gentle and approachable, yet willing to have difficult conversations to ensure that the College continues to achieve as a hallmark within the Highfields community. Chris's staff perceive his protective instinct for them and the students as astonishing, and this paternal instinct is greatly valued.

As a man, Chris is perceived as a fine role model for the young people in the care of the MMCC community. The students know that Chris is there, they know him, and he knows them, which is an outstanding reflection in a College with the size and complexity of MMCC. *"People are very important to him – and they know it."* (Secondary teacher)

Chris's presence in the classroom, playground, rugby field, and community is exemplary.

"He knows everyone's name" (Parent) is a trait that is consistently referred to by staff and community alike. His connection with all students, including the boys that trouble some staff, is well respected, and the support in focusing students on their development and learning is well spoken of. *"10/10 for presence."* (Secondary teacher)

Organisational Leadership: 4.31

Commendation

Chris's organisational leadership is best encapsulated in this comment - "*A steady hand on the helm of a well-run ship*". Chris has led many improvements in the daily organisation of the College and has assembled a team of senior, middle leaders and administration staff who are increasingly working together for the efficient operation of the College.

"Chris is seen as very hands-on in his organisational leadership. He works closely with the business manager to set 5-year budgets and keeps an eye on current and long-term cashflows. He uses various technological platforms to inform strategy, meets regularly with the ELT as a team and individually to ensure he is informed of issues while setting targets and a vision for each facet of the college." (Leadership team member, TCS 360-degree feedback report)

Strategic Leadership: 4.35

Commendation

Collaborative development of the strategic plan has been the cornerstone of Chris's transformative leadership at the College. Strategic leadership is one of Chris's many strengths and he ensures that the strategic plan remains in the forefront of planning considerations and informs the Annual Action Plans. These documents are clearly "living" documents and are referred to by staff and parents alike. In Chris's own words in his self-review, "*The new strategic plan will provide a really solid roadmap for us in what will be a crucial phase of building*".

Chris's vision and oversight of master planning the future development of the College facilities, especially given the restrictions and difficulties presented by the current footprint of the College is to be commended.

The report also gave several recommendations for the future. These are outlined below.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Chris is to be congratulated on the impressive improvements he has led in a short time in the daily operation of the College, collaboratively developing a vision for the future and making that concrete through the strategic plan development process and the associated AAPs. Chris brings to his leadership a personal style where each person is welcomed and valued and where he has worked to embrace the messenger who tells him something he would prefer not to hear. All of this is underpinned by a Chris's character, integrity, intellect and above all mature Catholic faith. There is no doubt that Mary MacKillop Catholic College is distinctively Catholic with Chris as its principal.

Area	Recommendation
<p>Enrolment of special needs students</p> <p>Concerns have been raised about the enrolment processes for special needs students and the preparedness and capability of staff to support the learning needs of these students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a review be conducted with TCSO Inclusive Education staff • to determine strategically how to enhance staff capability and willingness to educate children with diverse abilities • to ensure that the TCS Enrolment Application Procedure including the provisions for the enrolment of students requiring support for additional learning needs in fully implemented.
<p>Transparency of funding and resourcing allocations</p> <p>No doubt a legacy of the introduction of secondary education to MMCC in the past is an opinion in the primary sector that resources, staffing, and funding is concentrated towards the secondary area of the College.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst this is the reality of infrastructure development in a developing College, it is recommended that there is greater transparency in the allocation and distribution of funds, staffing and resourcing. Alignment of this to the P-12 staffing workbook and funding distribution from TCS would create greater understanding for concerned staff.
<p>College identity</p> <p>There is a perception that while the culture of the College is ever-improving, it may well be the time to <i>“develop a new identity for our college, a new P-12 identity rather than a primary school that is growing into a secondary.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the concept of developing a new College identity as a P-12 school be further explored and enacted as appropriate. • Support the College leadership team in establishing unified, explicit, and clear P-12 management and messaging
<p>Principal wellbeing</p> <p>There was a consistent message from staff and parents alike that they are concerned regarding Chris’s personal wellbeing as he continues to navigate complex situations in the College, whilst guiding his staff in such an excellent manner. It was noted that Chris makes considerable effort to care for his community and look after the wellbeing of others. In contrast, Chris’s dedication to the students, staff and community is seen as somewhat unsustainable, and there was a collective call for Chris to care for himself and his family to the same extent with which he commits to his work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris discusses with the relevant SEL strategies to explore how to achieve a better balance between work and home to care for his own wellbeing.