

Holy Cross College Ryde  
Annual School Report to the Community  
2007



**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY CONTENTS**

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## **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

Holy Cross College, Ryde is registered by the Board of Studies (NSW) and managed by the Catholic Education Office (CEO), Sydney, the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The Annual Report to the School Community for this year provides the school community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The Report also outlines information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the school community during the year, and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school's Annual Development Plan.

Accordingly, the Report demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the school community and the Catholic Education Office (CEO), Sydney. This Report has been approved by the CEO, Sydney in consultation with the Regional Consultant who monitors that the school has in place appropriate processes to ensure compliance with all NSW Board of Studies requirements for Registration and Accreditation.

This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, yearbooks and other regular communications. The report will be available on the school's website by 30 June 2008 following its submission to the Board of Studies.

The contents of this report will be discussed at the term two Parents and Friends Meeting.

Further information about the school or this report may be obtained by contacting the school on 98081033 or by visiting the website at [www.holycrosscollege.org.au](http://www.holycrosscollege.org.au)

PRINCIPAL: MR. G. WILLIAMS

DATE: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008

## **MESSAGES FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES**

### **Principal's Message**

This year has been one of significant change for our school. A number of building projects are taking place that will have a considerable impact, not only on the physical appearance of the College but also on our curriculum offerings. A new Technology and Applied Studies facility will be completed during the first term of 2008. This has enabled us for the first time, to offer Food Technology as an elective to Year 9 and 10 students and Hospitality to Year 11.

### **Parent Representative Body Message**

The Parents and Friends Association (P&F) met at the College each term. Some of the initiatives this year included the organisation of social gatherings, consultation with the school Principal in relation to changes to school policies, fees and charges and changes to the supply of new uniforms.

The P&F raised funds through the fund raising levy. The P&F decided to spend this money on providing furniture and equipment for the new technology building under construction. The P&F also ran a very successful second hand uniform shop that enabled items of school uniform to be recycled and helped reduce uniform costs to parents.

Marion Cornish, President, Holy Cross College Parents and Friends Association. 2006-7

### **Student Representative's Message**

During term three, the Senior College Council members for 2007 were elected by the students and staff. Senior Council members attended a leadership camp to help clarify their roles and develop leadership skills. SRC members raised money for charity, donated blood and helped run school activities during the year.

Timothy Austin, College Captain 2007.

## **SCHOOL FEATURES**

Holy Cross College is located at 517 Victoria Road Ryde on a ten hectare site purchased in 1895 by the Patrician Brothers. The original main sandstone building remains the dominant feature of the site. It was opened in 1898 by Cardinal Moran. The College has seven feeder schools at Ryde, North Ryde, Gladesville, Hunters Hill, Drummoyne, Five Dock and Denistone. Students are divided into four or five pastoral classes. The teaching staff this year consisted of forty-four full-time and five part-time teachers. All teachers are fully qualified and accredited by the Catholic Education Office to teach in Catholic schools. There is one Patrician Brother in a non-teaching capacity, a fully qualified school counsellor and fourteen support staff employed to provide ancillary services.

Special Features of the College include:

- A commitment to Catholic values.
- Professional, well qualified and dedicated staff.
- Excellent teaching and learning facilities.
- Leadership in the use of Information and Communication Technology in teaching and learning.
- The Technology Enabled Class (TEC) Programme which incorporates the use of one to one notebook computers into classroom teaching.
- Comprehensive curriculum offerings including VET courses.
- Bands and music tuition.
- Broad sporting program.
- Extensive grounds and sporting facilities.

## **CATHOLIC LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Holy Cross College follows the Archdiocesan Religious Education Curriculum and uses the student texts, *To Know, Worship and Love*, as authorised by the Archbishop of Sydney, George Cardinal Pell. All students attended Religious Education classes and participated in the assessment programmes associated with each course.

A senior retreat was held at the start of term three for students commencing their HSC course and reflection days for all other students. Our senior students showed a real commitment during the retreat to becoming better Christians and left with a better sense of purpose in relation to their schooling. Successful reflection days were held for all other years.

Whole school liturgies were held to celebrate the opening of the school year and the Feast of the Holy Cross. Years 10 and 12 participated in Graduation Masses. Year groups attended Mass at St. Charles' Parish Church every Friday morning and opportunities were given for students to attend Reconciliation on a regular basis. All staff and students participated in prayer during the year. Students collected money for a number of different charities and participated in St Vincent de Paul winter and Christmas appeals.

## SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Holy Cross College follows the Board of Studies syllabus for each course offered (as required for Registration and Accreditation under the Education Act 1990) and implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Education Office. The curriculum, teaching and learning are informed by the priorities, goals and indicators outlined in the *Sydney Catholic Schools, Towards 2010 Strategic Leadership and Management Plan*, in particular: *Key Area 2 (Students and their Learning)* and *Key Area 3 (Pedagogy)*. Staff at the school are committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning in all facets of the school curriculum.

The school offers fifteen Board of Studies mandated and approved School Certificate Courses and twenty five Higher School Certificate Courses. Courses offered at both the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Level. The number of students in each of these courses varies according to resources and interest. The school offers HSC Extension Courses in English, Mathematics and History.

*Particular features of the school's curriculum include:*

- TEC Program – The program enables students from Years 7 and 8 to engage in learning through technology aimed at developing their technological capabilities. Each individual student has sole use of a laptop computer for use at school and home. Students participate in activities that are developed to incorporate a variety of information and communication technologies.
- Learning Support Programs – The College provides a comprehensive range of valuable learning support services. These include: Individual and small group instruction in each Key Learning area; assignment support; examination support; individual education programs; transition programs; work experience opportunities and professional consultation with outside educational agencies.
- VET Programs - The College has an extensive VET program where students at the HSC level are provided opportunities to participate in VET courses offered at the school and at the surrounding TAFE Colleges. Courses offered at the School level include: Construction, Information Technology and Business Services.
- Whole school approach to Literacy and Numeracy – The College has a whole school plan to promote and develop literacy and numeracy skills. This includes testing all year 7 students in reading, writing and numeracy. A full analysis of both SNAP and ELLA each year is completed to identify areas of need and develop appropriate strategies. A reading program operates on a daily basis with assistance from teachers and parent volunteers.

*Particular features of the school's co-curricular program include:*

1. Band and music tuition.
2. Gifted and Talented and Student Acceleration programs
3. Elite Sports program
4. Environmental Group
5. Public speaking and debating
6. Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
7. Chess club and competitions

Additional to the formal curriculum is the school's involvement in community service activities which include:

Red Cross Blood Bank, Patrician missions, Caritas, Youth Off the Streets, St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal, Bandana Day, Red Nose Day.

The school's homework centre, which was opened in 2005, continues to expand in student numbers, particularly in the weeks leading up to exams. The centre is housed in the school library where students have access to a wide range of learning resources including computers with access to the Internet and the College's intranet. Teaching staff volunteer to supervise the centre, which closes at 5:00pm.

## **STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN STATEWIDE TESTS**

### **ELLA and SNAP**

Students in NSW sat the English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) in March and the Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP) in May this year. The test results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. Analysis of these results assists school planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs. Additionally, the results can be used by schools to monitor literacy and numeracy development through time. ELLA and SNAP will be replaced by the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) from 2008.

The following table details the school's performance in ELLA and SNAP over time as compared to all students in the state.

	ELLA: Literacy		SNAP: Numeracy	
	School mean	State mean	School mean	State mean
2007	89.8	89.0	86.8	85.1
2006	89.3	88.8	84.5	84.7
2005	88.9	88.7	85.7	85.0

Students continued the long term positive trends in both ELLA and SNAP results by again performing above state average in both tests. These results indicate that students entering the school in Year 7 have, in general, been well prepared by their primary schools for the first year of high school.

### National Benchmarks

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum acceptable standards for reading, writing and numeracy at particular ages. These are referred to as national benchmarks. The performance of the students in our school in the Year 7 English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) and in the Year 7 Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP) is compared to these benchmarks. The percentages of students in this school achieving the national benchmarks as compared to previous years are reported below.

	ELLA		SNAP
	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
2007	98.1%	97.2%	79%
2006	89.8%	96.3%	81.1%
2005	87.9%	92.2%	82.7%

The percentage of students achieving National Benchmarks is pleasing and continued to improve for reading and writing. The percentage of students achieving Numeracy Benchmarks while still high declined from the previous two years, which indicates that additional work needs to be done in this area.

### School Certificate results

The percentage of students achieving bands 4, 5 and 6 is reported against statewide performance in each of the subjects shown over time.

	% of students in bands 4, 5, 6									
	English Literacy		Mathematics		Science		Australian History		Australian Geography	
	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State
2007	78%	73%	37%	46%	62%	61%	53%	61%	76%	72%
2006	85%	72%	46%	41%	83%	63%	65%	53%	82%	67%
2005	63%	68%	66%	52%	79%	70%	70%	65%	61%	61%

These figures indicate an overall positive trend in that the school is generally able to achieve results above the state average. The results in 2007 were not as good as in previous years and strategies will be put in place to ensure the 2008 cohort's results reflect the positive long-term trend.

The following targets have been set for 2008 by the school indicating the percentage of students attaining performance bands 4, 5 and 6 for selected subjects.

2008 Targets				
English Literacy	Mathematics	Science	Australian History	Australian Geography
76%	43%	64%	60%	76%

### Higher School Certificate results

The percentage of students achieving bands 4, 5 and 6 is reported against statewide performance for particular subjects in the table below. Comparative performance with the 2005 and 2006 cohorts is shown.

	% of students in bands 4, 5, 6					
	2005		2006		2007	
	School	State	School	State	School	State
Studies of Religion 1	65%	84%	75%	77%	59%	78%
English Standard	51%	34%	49%	34%	56%	39%
English Advanced	89%	90%	89%	82%	93%	89%
General Mathematics	64%	58%	69%	50%	68%	59%
Mathematics	61%	64%	78%	65%	64%	70%

On average, 61% of students achieved in Bands 4,5 and 6 across all subjects. Approximately 50% of courses offered were above state average and the following courses were over 4% above state average: English Extension 2, Information Processing Technologies, Visual Arts, Italian Continuers, Construction and Information Technology.

The following targets have been set for 2008 by the school indicating the percentage of students attaining performance bands 4, 5 and 6 for selected subjects.

2008 Targets				
Studies of Religion 1	English Standard	English Advanced	General Mathematics	Mathematics
70%	53%	90%	65%	64%

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHER STANDARDS

### Professional learning

All teachers have been involved in professional development activities during the year. These activities are designed to develop the skills and understandings of staff to improve student outcomes. Professional development can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific inservices, meetings and conferences.

The school held four whole staff days in 2007. The content of these days was as follows: A whole school approach to pastoral care and discipline, resuscitation and first aid, developing information technology skill for classroom teachers, reviewing the annual plan and goal setting for 2008 and improving teaching pedagogy by involvement in the Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS) Project. Subject meetings are held for all faculties at least twice each term.

In a system of schools, costs incurred for professional development activities can be expended from a variety of sources. These sources include the Federal Government and the Catholic Education Office. The school's average expenditure per teacher in 2007 on these activities was \$340.94. This figure has been calculated by CEO and reflects expenditure on casual release days and professional development activities in particular categories.

### Teacher Standards

The following table sets out the number of teachers on this staff who fall into each of the three categories determined by the Board of Studies:

Teacher Qualifications	Number of Teachers
1. Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	49
2. Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	0
3. Those not having qualifications described in 1 or 2 above but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate relevant knowledge.	0

## **TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION**

The average teacher attendance rate during 2007 was 97%. This figure does not include teachers on planned leave. The teacher retention rate from 2006 to 2007 was 90%. Most of the teacher movement resulted from teachers wishing to gain more experience in different schools to improve their prospects of gaining a position of responsibility in the future.

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION**

### **Attendance Rates**

The average student attendance rate during 2007 was 91%.

The College has in place a well-developed system to monitor and track student attendance. Absences from school without explanation are followed up and parents informed of any concern in relation to attendance.

### **Retention Rates**

90% of the 2004 Year 10 cohort continued onto Year 12 (2007). Students left at the end of Year 10 to transfer to other schools, take up employment opportunities or attend TAFE. Students who left during Years 11 and 12 did so mainly to take up employment opportunities.

## **POST SCHOOL DESTINATIONS**

The 87 students who sat for the HSC in 2007 received 32 offers for admission to university courses. The number of students who took up these offers or received subsequent offers is not known nor is the number attending TAFE and entering the workforce.

## **ENROLMENT POLICY AND SCHOOL PROFILE**

The school follows the Archdiocesan Enrolment Policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. Children from all families who are prepared to support Catholic ideals and principles may be considered eligible for enrolment. Priority for enrolment is given in a specified order as outlined in the full policy document, however special consideration may be given to individual cases. All parents are provided with an enrolment package that includes CEO and school policy statements. Enrolment fees are made up of the Archdiocesan tuition fee, the parish school levy and local fees and charges. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

The student population at the February Census 2007 was 634 students. There were 112 students in Year 7, 106 in Year 8, 112 in Year 9, 122 in Year 10, 95 in Year 11 and 87 in Year 12. There were 259 students (41%) from a Non-English Speaking Background and 433 students were Catholic (68%).

The full text of enrolment policies may be accessed via:

- [Archdiocesan Enrolment Policy](#)
- Archdiocesan Policy on the Enrolment of Students with Special Needs
- School Administration Office
- Enrolment Package

The CEO enrolment policy was revised in 2007 to accommodate legislative requirements relating to the enrolment of students with special needs.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

### **Student Welfare**

The student welfare policy is based on the Archdiocesan Pastoral Care document: *Pastoral Care Guidelines for Catholic Schools (2003)*. In this document, the dimensions and features of pastoral care are described, as well as approaches to policy formulation, review and implementation. This document is the key reference point for the school's Pastoral Care policy. Related documents include: *Countering Harassment of Different Kinds, Dealing with Illegal Substances in Schools, Dealing with Prohibited Weapons in Schools*.

The school's network of pastoral care measures is based on the principles of restorative justice. The full text of the College's Pastoral Care Policy is given to each family upon enrolment and can also be found in the Student Diary for 2007.

The full text of pastoral care policies may be accessed via:

- [Archdiocesan Pastoral Care Policy for Catholic Schools \(2003\)](#)
- School Administration Office
- Student diary

There were no changes made to the school policy during the 2007 school year.

## **Discipline Policy**

The full text of the College's Discipline Policy is given to each family upon enrolment and can also be found in the Student Diary for 2007. Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this school. The school does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by school persons and non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the school.

The full text of Student Discipline Policies may be accessed via:

- [Archdiocesan Pastoral Care Policy for Catholic Schools \(2003\)](#)
- School Administration Office
- Student diary

There were no changes made to the school policy during the 2007 school year.

## **Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy**

The school adopts the Archdiocesan guidelines for resolving concerns and complaints from parents and caregivers. The policy is based on procedural fairness and recognises that parents and caregivers must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory environment. The scope of the guidelines encompass children's learning, behaviour and welfare, school organisation and management, and student health and safety issues.

The full text of Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policies may be accessed via:

- [CEO public website](#)
- School Administration Office

There were no changes made to this policy during the 2007 school year.

## **SCHOOL DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS**

Each year an Annual Plan is developed and the staff then directed to develop appropriate strategies to implement the plan. The plan can be viewed on the College's web site. Priorities from this year's plan were:

### **Catholic Life and Culture**

- Vibrancy of liturgy, sacramental and prayer life
- Opportunities for staff, students and parent spirituality
- Community service and social justice outreach program
- Engagement with Religious Congregations, their spirituality and charisms
- Involvement in Archdiocesan celebrations and initiatives
- Preparation of students for their engagement in world youth day.

### **Educational Potential**

- Approaches to raising student achievement
- Framework for intervention for individuals and cohorts
- External test results – analysis and response
- Use of target setting to improve student achievement
- Tracking student achievement K-12 and in post – Year 12 pathways.

### **Integration of ICT**

- Student's use of ICT as a tool and processes for learning
- Integration of ICT across the curriculum
- Implementation of ICT 'Acceptable Use' Policies
- Multi model learning.

### **School Climate, Learning, Environment and Relationships**

- Culture of high expectations for students and staff
- Motivating students to learn
- Celebration of student achievement
- Well-ordered, managed and calm school environment
- Engagement with external academic opportunities
- Inclusiveness and cohesiveness of the school community
- Sense of identity and pride in the school
- Quality of relationships.

### **Overall Compliance with Legislative and Other Requirements.**

- Policies, programs and practices for compliance with all legislation
- Board of Studies requirements for Registration and Accreditation
- CEO policy and curriculum requirements
- VETAB
- Commonwealth Educational Accountability for schools.

As well, the College set achievement targets for School Certificate and Higher School Certificate results (see Student Performance).

Evaluation of the plan took place during term four by the school staff and Executive.

The following components have been targeted for 2008:

Key Area 1: 1.1 Vision and Mission

Key Area 2: 2.2 Rights and Responsibilities

Key Area 3: 3.6 School Climate, Learning Environment and Relationships

Key Area 4: 4.2 Professional Development of Staff

Key Area 5: 5.2 Use of Resources and Space

Key Area 7: 7.1 Planning and Improvement

## **INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY**

The Pastoral Care Program addressed topics designed to promote respect and responsibility in the school. These included bullying, racism, harassment, gender roles and study skills. Year 11 participated in a driver education program run by the NSW Police. A leadership camp was held for Year 12 leaders where the responsibilities of their positions was investigated and discussed.

## **PARENT, TEACHER AND STUDENT SATISFACTION**

The surveying for the *IDEAS* Project indicated that parents had the most positive view of the school, followed by students and then teachers. Parents provided a positive response to almost all the questions asked in the survey. Students were generally positive in their responses but said the school could do more to promote a sense of pride in the school, promote the school in the local community and develop transparent decision making processes. Teachers thought the school used technology well to enrich learning experiences, attempted to cater for the needs of the full range of students, celebrated the contributions of individuals and groups and had open lines of communication to parents and students.

## 2007 Financial Statement

Catholic Schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Sydney Catholic Education Office submits to the Australian Government a financial statement on behalf of the 147 parish primary and regional secondary schools. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school and for the Archdiocesan system of schools. In addition, the Financial Report of the Sydney Catholic Education Office is audited annually by Moore Stephens. A summary of the income and expenditure reported for 2007 is as follows:

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>\$million</b>	<b>%</b>
Parents' Contributions 1	\$ 112.9	20.0%
Commonwealth Government 2	\$ 304.8	53.9%
State Government 2	\$ 115.6	20.4%
Government Targeted Grants	\$ 20.1	3.6%
Interest and Other	\$ 12.2	2.1%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 565.6</b>	

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>\$million</b>	<b>%</b>
Education & School Support	\$ 136.5	24.1%
Total Salary Costs	\$ 422.2	74.7%
CEO Administration & Support 3	\$ 4.2	0.7%
Surplus	\$ 2.7	0.5%
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$ 565.6</b>	

### Notes

1. Parents' Contributions include Archdiocesan tuition fees of \$52.3 million, School Charges, Building Levy & P&F contributions of \$60.6 million.
2. Income from Australian and State recurrent government grants is received by the Catholic Education Office on behalf of the schools. Staff Salaries are paid from this income.
3. CEO Administration and Support excludes salaries which are included in total salary costs.
4. The Total Building Loans and Commitments as at 31 December 2007 were \$182 million.

Parents' contributions to this school as reported in this school's Annual Financial Questionnaire for 2007 submitted to the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations were:

Archdiocesan Tuition Fees received	\$ 649,465.00
School Based Fees	\$ 560,467.00
Other Income (eg. Building Levy, Parents & Friends, Trading & Sundry)	\$ 333,410.00
	<b>\$ 1,543,342.00</b>