



St Patrick's College Ballarat

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2023 – 2025

**“Blessed are those who find wisdom,  
those who gain understanding”.**

Proverbs 3:13

# Context

St Patrick's College is a Catholic day and boarding school for boys in Years 7 to 12 in the Edmund Rice tradition, founded in 1893 and conducted by Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA).

Our College is named after St Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, who brought Christianity to the Irish people. Born in England in the late 4th Century, he was later ordained a Bishop and arrived in Sloane, Ireland on 25 March 433. By the time of his death on 17 March 461, he had established many monasteries, churches, and schools.

St Patrick is said to have used the three leaves and stalk of the shamrock to explain the concept of the Holy Trinity, three persons in one God.

Patrick was a humble, pious, gentle man, whose love and total devotion to and trust in God should be a shining example to each of us.

Central to the mission of the College is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of all our students and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. The College is committed to achieving excellence in all its forms.





# Acknowledgement

The community of St Patrick's College, Ballarat acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which the school is built, the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation.

We respect their ongoing connection to the land and waterways, we are inspired by their wisdom and spirituality, we recognise that this land continues to be sacred to them and we pay respect to Elders past and present. We recognise and embrace the role the College plays in supporting emerging leaders from all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations.





# The College Pillars

This Strategic Plan is a working document designed to guide the St Patrick's College community, as it continues to strive towards providing every student with a liberating education, characterised by excellence, joy, grounded and informed as a Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition.

**St Patrick's College is inspired and informed by its commitment to Four Pillars, which remain the bedrock of a St Patrick's education. These Pillars are:**



Faith



Tradition



Excellence



Joy

## Future Focused, Optimistic and Joyful

St Patrick's College remains the only boys' school in Ballarat. It has proudly been a Catholic day and boarding school for boys since 1893, serving the educational needs of the young men of Ballarat and those from well beyond. It is a beautifully resourced school in terms of its staff and educational infrastructure and is known for many things, including its energy and sense of community.

Our mission is to provide an engaging, enjoyable and holistic education for boys that liberates them and leads them to a wisdom for life. A St Patrick's College education is informed by the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice and characterised by justice, service, compassion, respect, discernment and excellence. We stand on the shoulders of the work and efforts of the Christian Brothers who established the College and its reputation, the many dedicated staff and outstanding students who have called St Pat's their place at some time over the last 130 years. As the current custodians of St Patrick's, we are committed to achieving excellence in all that we do with and for our boys, honouring the efforts of the many who have been before us.

The College stands strongly on its Pillars of Faith, Tradition, Excellence and Joy and as an EREA school, we are guided by the Four Touchstones as outlined in The Charter, as well as the EREA Learning Statement. We are conscious of the role St Patrick's has played in educating many in the Ballarat community and seek to further enhance our place as a school of educational excellence as Ballarat continues to expand as a leading regional city in Victoria.

We seek to contribute significantly to the formation of young adults who are confident, compassionate, respectful, authentic, relational, and optimistic about the future and their place in it, and the contribution they will make to society.

At St Patrick's we value and honour character, compassion and community.

We relish the joy and rewards of our work, contributing to and witnessing the formation and growth of our students. Proud of our wonderful College community, we remain hope-filled and entirely optimistic about the future of our students.

**Mr Steven O'Connor**  
Principal



# Our Vision and Mission

**Educating hope-filled, compassionate and confident young men for their place in the world.**

Inspired by the good news of Jesus and the charisma of Blessed Edmund Rice, St Patrick's College educates the whole person – mind, body, heart and soul – and through this, liberates our students and equips them with resilience, good humour and character, commitment, compassion and wisdom which both enables and ennobles them to contribute significantly to the world.



## Our Commitment

We seek to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which young people are connected, respected, and listened to. We remain committed to the importance of respectful relationships as a core aspect of our educational offering. St Patrick's College is committed to child safety and

the care, safety and wellbeing of our students are the foundations of our policies, procedures, and practices. We remain committed to working towards and achieving genuine reconciliation with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

# Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition

All Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) schools and entities across Australia are informed by and committed to The Charter and the Four Touchstones, inspired in turn by the Charism of Blessed Edmund Rice. The Touchstones provide a consistent direction and set of goals across all EREA schools and settings.

As a Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition, St Patrick's College is committed to and inspired by the four touchstones:



## Liberating Education

We open hearts and minds through quality teaching and learning experiences, so that 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.

Four touchstones artist acknowledgement: Vicki Clark, Mutthi MutthiWemba Wamba. Designed for EREA Congress, 2012.

## The EREA Learning Statement

In addition to The Charter, EREA has recently launched its Learning Statement: 'Implementing Liberating Practice: to Co-create a Better World'. Liberating Practice involves explicitly co-creating the learning conditions, dispositions and relationships to enable deep listening, confidence, agency and freedom.

Achieving Liberating Practice involves the following six elements:

- 1. Liberating Pedagogies**  
within safe and flexible learning spaces, supported by positive relationships, the learner is free to participate in and lead experiences in collaborative processes, critical thinking and creative problem solving.
- 2. Liberating Spirituality**  
in exploring meaning and purpose in life, the learner is free to grow in their understanding of themselves, and their relatedness with God, others, Earth and creation, through experiences grounded in wonder, awe, contemplation and action for justice and the common good.
- 3. Liberating Achievement**  
when excellence and improvement are viewed in a variety of ways and evidence of success is gathered, interpreted and celebrated holistically, the learner is free to pursue a strengths-based learning pathway informed by high expectations and personal ambitions.
- 4. Liberating Learning Design**  
where schools design and develop innovative learning environments, whether physical and/or virtual, the learner is free to access and engage in multiple pathways and contribute to a dynamic, connected educational community.
- 5. Liberating Potential**  
when learning experiences are informed by each person's story, strengths and passions, the learner is free to contribute to and participate in challenging, individualised learning plans that orient their goals towards personal growth.
- 6. Liberating Voice and Agency**  
when individual voice is deeply listened to, respected and included in decision-making processes, the learner is free to develop the confidence, resilience, optimism and agency to fully determine their learning aspirations.

The College's Strategic Plan embraces these elements as foundational and is committed to embedding these into our practice, as well as allowing them to inform our future-focused and hope-filled aspirations and strategies.

# Our Strategic Objectives

Aspiration – Educating and Leading our boys towards wisdom



## Key Focus Areas



**Faith, Life  
and Culture**



**Teaching  
and Learning**



**Pastoral Care  
and Wellbeing**



**Community**



**Staff Organisation  
and Development**



**Sustainable and  
Financially Viable Future**





## Faith, Life and Culture

We aspire to teach for the love of wisdom, inspiring each student with the desire for learning so much, he will delight in becoming a life-long learner.

We endeavour to interweave faith and reason at the heart of all our endeavours, witnessing the truth, goodness, and beauty of the Christian vision of life, culture, and history.

### Specific priorities in Faith, Life and Culture include:

1. Inspiring all in the community with faith's transcendent and transcending vision of God's Kingdom.
2. Developing all that is human, founded on the Christian knowledge that all people are made in the image of God.
3. Cultivating human values animated by the person, life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus, who gives life and meaning to our every adventure.
4. Advancing relationships through communion and community, where joy-filled collaboration between the College and the Ballarat Diocese, staff and students, College and families, Church and society, humanity and God's creation, are defining characteristics of the College.
5. Embracing the Catholic worldview and Catholic Social Teaching throughout our curriculum, enabling the College to share in the integral formation of young men capable of making free and responsible choices, open to the truth, goodness and beauty that informs the meaning of life.
6. Growing and enduring as living witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus, so the community deepens its love of wisdom and its passion for truth.
7. Flourishing in the faith that perfects knowledge, the hope that perfects freedom, and the charity that perfects justice.





# LEARNING

## Teaching and Learning

As an educational institution first and foremost, we hold our boys' learning and growth at the heart of all we do. By committing to providing them with excellence in education, we liberate them to fulfil their own personal calling.

Through the implementation of research-based learning and teaching practices, we strive to develop programs that are both innovative and robust, within a framework of best pedagogical practice and curriculum design. St Patrick's College understands the impact that implementing evidence-informed instructional practices has, in driving excellence in educational outcomes.

Our curriculum is delivered alongside an inclusive and engaging co-curricular program, for a holistic educational experience in which students, as emerging global citizens, are encouraged to explore and discover their unique strengths and talents. In the coming years we will continue to adopt new technologies and learning methodologies, expanding and broadening pathways for student learning. The College will implement a proven success model for continuous improvement in teaching and learning, whilst continuing to celebrate each student's personal progress and success in learning.

### Specific priorities in teaching and learning include:

1. Implementing a proven success model for continuous improvement in teaching and learning, applying research-based and best practice pedagogy and curriculum design.
2. Developing a systematic approach to differentiation, including use of data and tracking, so that every student is known and understood, enabling the best possible instructional decision-making for every boy.
3. Expanding and reviewing pathways and curriculum offerings, to ensure a contemporary and rigorous boys' education, where every student's unique strength and talent is supported and celebrated.
4. Through the implementation of the explicit teaching of writing, enhancing literacy education at the whole school level.
5. Gathering and responding to student survey data, to understand learners' experiences and needs in the classroom. Through this, empowering students to become advocates for their own learning.
6. Honouring our commitment to the Reconciliation Action Plan, by both ensuring the authentic integration of Indigenous perspectives in all aspects of our curriculum, and by actively supporting all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in achieving their learning goals.
7. Continuing to foster a deep respect and aspiration for scholarship, which understands its place as a fitting response to God's gift of reason and intellect. Through this, we seek to become a centre of excellence in teaching and learning.



# WELLBEING

## Pastoral Care and Wellbeing

We will continue to prioritise pastoral care and wellbeing, creating optimal learning environments for students to flourish and foster a culture of positive behaviour. Using a strengths-based approach, we aim to build on our inclusive culture, respectful relationships, and the development of self in every student.

### Specific priorities in Pastoral Care and Wellbeing include:

1. Fostering an environment in which all students and staff are accepted and feel safe, included, heard, valued, and respected.
2. Effectively supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students academically, emotionally and culturally through authentic engagement with the Reconciliation Action Plan.
3. Ensuring all faculties of wellbeing within the College work together to ensure inclusive communities and equal access to programs for all students.
4. Fostering a culture where boys are active participants in learning, community, pastoral care and wellbeing programs.
5. Developing and embedding a holistic pastoral program, based on positive education approaches and the respectful relationships program, providing a modern and research-informed approach to the development of student wellbeing for boys and their formation.
6. Prioritising the role of student voice in all aspects of the College, including culture, decision making, teaching and learning, child safety, leadership, ritual and celebration.
7. Embracing contemporary research into student wellbeing, along with student wellbeing data, to reflect and guide professional conversations and future planning.
8. Creating a wellbeing program for staff that promotes and complements Professional Learning Communities and creates positive cultures, promoting a shared understanding of the importance of pastoral care and wellbeing.
9. Developing diverse opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate authentic leadership.



# COMMUNITY

## Community

The community of St Patrick's College is central to its very existence and it one of its great strengths. We remain committed to honouring and nurturing community involvement and connection, in all its forms. We believe that students who are positively connected to their school are often the most productive and experience the greatest sense of reward and satisfaction. We celebrate and honour the commitment and work of our outstanding staff. We continue to nurture the partnership between home and the school, knowing that parents are the primary educators of their children. And we relish our relationship with our Old Collegians who continue to support the work of the College and its aspirations.

### Specific priorities in Community include:

1. Reviewing and developing strong communications and marketing strategies that promote the strengths of the St Patrick's College community, its achievements and the role it plays in providing the best education for boys in Ballarat.
2. Further developing our commitment to supporting the growth and formation of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
3. Ensuring that boarding remains a strong, viable and attractive option for students and families.
4. Enhancing our partnerships with all feeder primary schools.
5. Continuing our commitment to and partnership with the College's Old Collegians' Association.
6. Exploring partnerships with industry and professional organisations to further enhance the educational offering of the College.
7. Exploring opportunities for parents and friends of the College to become more deeply involved in the life of the College and its community.





# DEVELOPMENT

## Staff Organisation and Development

St Patrick's College remains proud of its teaching and support staff. The greatest asset of the College is its staff, and we remain committed to promoting excellence and supporting our outstanding staff in their work at the College.

**Specific priorities in Staff Organisation and Development include:**

1. Attracting, developing and retaining quality educators and support staff to strengthen the educational experience of all boys and their families.
2. Developing a professional learning plan for staff which aligns with the strategic priorities of the College.
3. Acknowledging the professional and personal significance and value of staff through relationships, trust, care and empowerment.
4. Implementing effective people and culture management strategies.
5. Identifying areas of growth in line with the AITSL Professional Standards for Teachers relevant to the school-wide improvement program.
6. Recognising and understanding our connections and commitments beyond the College community to support our ambition and capacity to be the best boys' school in Victoria.
7. Celebrating the uniqueness of each individual member of staff through positive relationships and good humour.
8. Encouraging staff to lead courageously, both in and out of the classroom.
9. Developing the capacity of non-teaching members of staff, recognising the essential role they play in the College community.



# FUTURE

## Sustainable and Financially Viable Future

Responsible stewardship of our resources and environment, including the prudent management of the College's finances, is both a spiritual and social imperative as reflected in Pope Francis' encyclical letter 'Laudato Si'. The College commits to responsibly and wisely managing our resources to ensure that we have the best educational facilities possible and that we are proactively prepared for the needs of the future.

### Specific Priorities in Sustainable and Financially Viable Future include:

1. Successfully delivering the Performing Arts Centre as part of the Capital Works plan for the College.
2. Revising the College's Master Plan to ensure that the educational facilities are in line with the vision and direction of the College and are environmentally sustainable.
3. Leadership in environmental stewardship – encouraging student initiatives and taking on and promoting further environmental practises around the College.
4. Ensuring our ICT infrastructure is regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets the demands of a future-focused and contemporary teaching and learning strategy.
5. Maintaining short-term and long-term financial and business plans responsibly to ensure that the College continues to be viable and prosper into the future.
6. Ensuring that all compliance, regulatory and sustainability frameworks are in place in accordance with EREA Governance principles.



# St Patrick's Breastplate

'The St Patrick Breastplate', (adapted from the Lorica of St Patrick) is St Patrick's poem of faith and trust in God.

I arise today  
Through God's strength to pilot me;  
God's might to uphold me,  
God's wisdom to guide me,  
God's eye to look before me,  
God's ear to hear me,  
God's word to speak for me,  
God's hand to guard me,  
God's way to lie before me,  
God's shield to protect me,  
God's hosts to save me.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,  
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,  
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me,  
Christ in the eye that sees me,  
Christ in the ear that hears me.

*St. Patrick (ca. 377)*

**We too, humbly place our faith and trust in God as we continue our work as a school, striving to achieve exceptional outcomes with and for our boys, leading them to wisdom and understanding.**





EDMUND RICE EDUCATION  
AUSTRALIA

St. Patrick's College  
1431 Sturt Street, Ballarat, Victoria  
T 03 5331 1688 | E [info@stpats.vic.edu.au](mailto:info@stpats.vic.edu.au)  
[stpats.vic.edu.au](http://stpats.vic.edu.au)

