

# Strategic Statement

## 2020-2025

### Introduction and process

The Strategic Statement 2020-2025 is both a self-review of current practise at OLSH Wadeye and a vision for the future.

It was developed by the Senior Leadership and CALT over the period Terms Three-Four 2019 and Term One 2020. The main body of the report was written by the Principal. In March 2020 it was distributed to a wider group of people for comment.

The Document is based on the *Catholic Education Northern Territory School Improvement and Renewal Framework* and the dimensions of:

Catholic Identity

Teaching and Learning

Leadership

Pastoral Care and Well-Being

Finance Facilities and Resources

### Catholic Identity

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is a school that is both Aboriginal and Catholic. These two elements are at the core of all we do.

*On becoming Bishop of Darwin, I visited Wadeye and sat down with the Elders. I asked for advice on things I needed to know in order to be the bishop they wanted me to be. After a lot of talk and silences, Theodora said, "Bishop whenever you speak about us, or for us or on our behalf, the first thing you need to remember is that we are a catholic community." I went to respond, but Theodora went on, saying, "Bishop, that's not WHAT we are, but WHO we are"!!!!*

*Bishop Emeritus Eugene Hurley*

**The school's commitment to Catholic Ethos is demonstrated by:**

- Strong relationships with the Parish, supporting the Parish in its activities and the school leadership - CALT meeting regularly, formally and informally with the Parish
- The school starts meetings and classroom sessions with prayers
- There are many visual displays of Catholicism such as pictures and prayer tables etc
- The school, working in partnership with the Parish in the area of Sacramental programs
- The school offers substantial, planned Religious Education curriculum in line with CEO NT policies and guidelines
- The school seeks to employ active Catholics for teaching positions
- The way people are treated within the school and in contact with the school reflects the values of the Gospels and the intentions of Catholic Education NT  
*Sharers of the Vision*
- The school provides a minimum of one Catholic Identity staff meeting a term and a full day once a term; the school meets its obligations in terms of staff accreditation

### **Challenges the school faces**

Some non-local staff have little Catholic background.

Supporting and running a Religious Education program in Murrinhpatha.

### ***Recommendation***

***The school continues to strive to maintain and develop its Catholic Identity through developing Religious Education appropriate to our context as a bilingual Aboriginal School.***

***That continued action is taken so that all staff working at the School understand, support and develop the Catholic Identity of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr Catholic College.***

***That the school continues to maintain and develop close relationships with Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish.***

***The Catholic Identity elements of the school be reviewed in 2021.***

## Teaching and Learning and Community and Culture

Given OLSH's position as a bilingual Aboriginal school it is helpful to combine the dimensions of Teaching and Learning and Community and Culture.

### Two-way learning

The diagram below developed in 2007 depicts a Wadeye approach to two-way learning. Current programs at the school aspire to meet the aspirations of this approach.

We aim to create strong Catholic Aboriginal people grounded in their own culture and language partnered with a strong education in Westerners ways and knowledge.

Activities and approaches that are implemented to enact this vision:

- **Reading resources**

The vast majority of resources produced for the Murrinhpatha Literacy Program are based on cultural knowledge of the Thamarrurr region; natural environment, family and kinship, country and dreamings, local history etc. and have strong links to the Northern Territory indigenous languages and Cultures Curriculum.

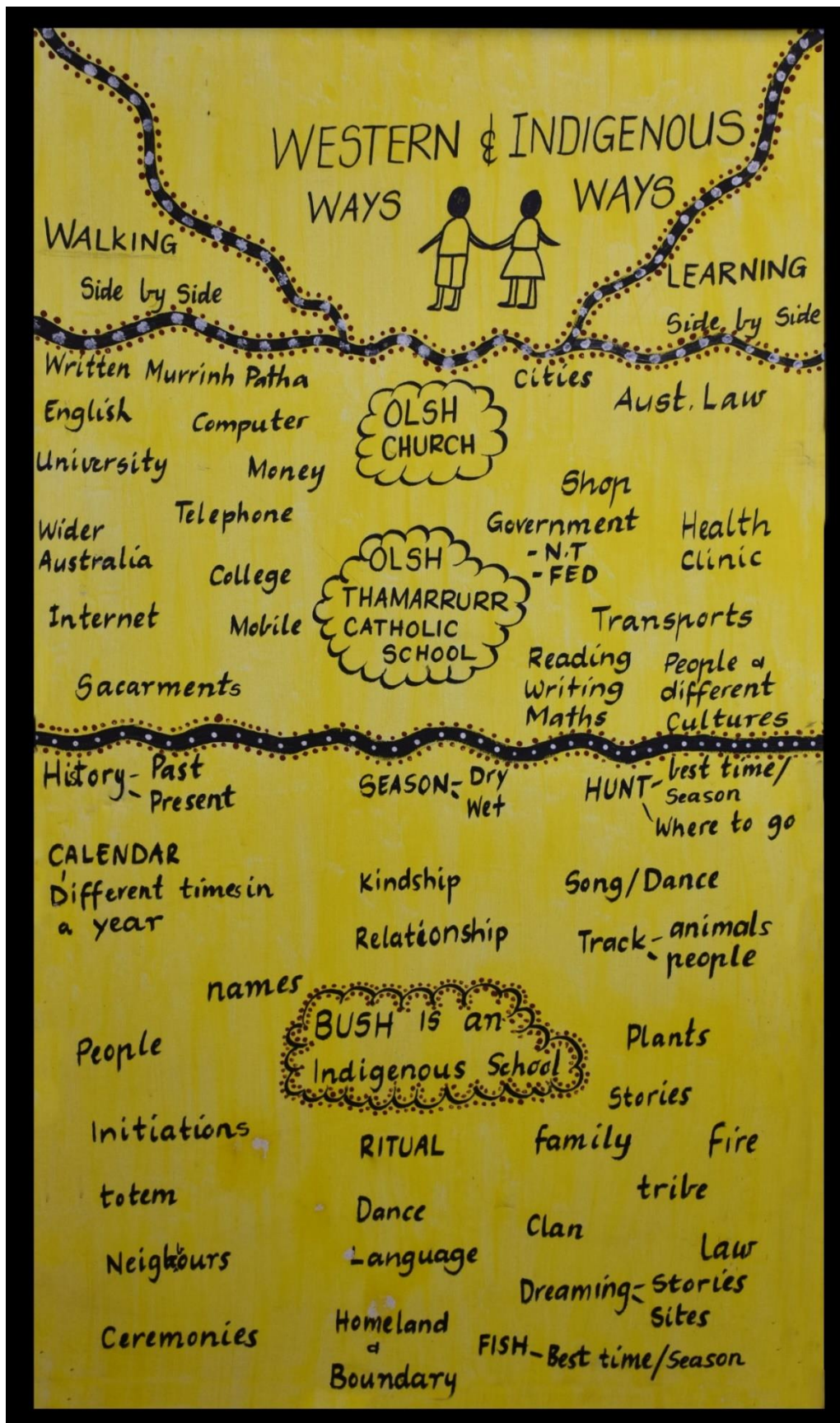
- **Trips to country**

All students are taken on *trips to country* where cultural knowledge is taught

- **Culture programs**

The school operates regular cultural programs which includes dance, craft and traditional cooking. The cultural programs involve payments to local elders and other community members. This has been complicated in the past.

## Two – Way Education: Western and Indigenous Ways



## Bilingual Education

OLSH TCC delivers Murrinhpatha language and literacy classes. We utilise the Northern Territory Indigenous Languages and Cultures (NT: ILC) curriculum. Specifically, we use the First Language Maintenance (L1M) pathway and the Cultural Knowledge and Content curriculum. In the early years monolingual Murrinhpatha instruction accounts for 50% of instruction (alongside a two-way L1/L2 approach) before becoming a specialist subject area from Year 3 onwards. In preschool and FAFT where possible we aim to deliver all instruction in children's first language. We teach literacy through strong Murrinhpatha language and the cultural content of Wadeye and the Thamarrurr Region. Our approach is built upon an understanding that "culture is at the heart of teaching Indigenous languages and cultures in the Northern Territory" (NT: ILC, p. iv). We aim to strengthen and develop children's Murrinhpatha language and that children become literate in Murrinhpatha first with an understanding that these skills can be transferred to the acquisition of English literacy.

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is a bilingual school. It uses the **Step Program**.

In recent years the teaching of Murrinhpatha has expanded into senior primary and secondary classes.

All Religious Education classes are taught in Murrinhpatha

The success of Bilingual Education at OLSH depends on a number of factors:

- Support and understanding from the Senior Management of the school and the Catholic Education Office.
- A well-resourced Literature Production Centre.
- A commitment to high quality on-going professional development of local educators.
- The promotion of Murrinhpatha in the school and the community.

### ***Recommendation***

***The school continues to commit to implementing and further developing a two-way approach to education. This commitment involves both philosophy and resources.***

***The school makes an on-going commitment to bilingual education including funding of the Literature Production Centre.***

### **Australian Curriculum**

The partner to Cultural and Language education in *two-way learning* is ensuring that the Australian Curriculum is taught in an appropriate and effective manner.

In discussing academic achievement at Wadeye it is important to see the interrelationship between a number of factors: attendance, behaviour/self-regulation, relationships with teachers, hearing and other health issues, learning in an additional language. While these are challenges, they are not deficits in our students. There are many examples of OLSH students making significant progress in their academic progress.

- There is an English literacy program at OLSH, however, it is important that our students are offered a wide and balanced curriculum.
- During 2020-2021 the school is undertaking a two-year project in developing numeracy education. It is hoped that the outcome will be a pedagogy that is successful in the context of Wadeye: a clear, explicit and supported approach that is accessible to both local and non-local educators and includes an Aboriginal perspective.

The commitment to Two-Way Education requires the teaching of students the knowledge and skills that most empower them as individuals and members of this community.

Approaches that work most effectively in promoting student achievement in Wadeye:

- High amounts of pre-school education
- High levels of attendance; especially including increasing the number of students attending 80% +
- The recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers
- A well developed and supported behaviour management system
- Structured and predictable routines
- Positive relationships between students and teachers
- Partnership between local and non-local educators
- A balanced and comprehensive curriculum

- Training and professional development in what works best at Wadeye
- The use of explicit models of teaching
- Particular emphasis on the teaching of oral language
- Explicit teaching of vocabulary
- The use of evidence informed practice
- High expectations of students
- Appropriate use of data
- The teaching of the most empowering knowledge and skills
- Working in partnership with Kardu Darrikardu Numida Hostel

*Note: these principles apply to student achievement in both languages and the maintenance of cultures*

### **Year 12 Graduation**

In 2020 the school expects to have six students graduate. This will be the first multiple graduates since 2007. We are also confident that we have can have multiple graduates in the future. However, this will require continued focus from the school.

#### ***Recommendations***

***Increasing the number of Year 12 Graduates remains a high priority for the school.***

### **Preschool and Families as First Teachers (FaFT)**

OLSH runs a Pre-school Program and Families as First Teachers (FAFT) program. FAFT is run with the NT Government. Pre-school education programs are effective in improving children's education outcomes. However, the effect is to a large extent dependent on *dosage*; how regularly the child attends the program.

Quality pre-school programs will be enhanced in Wadeye with increased attendance, improved facilities and co-ordination between different agencies.

#### ***Recommendations***

***The school will continue to work on increasing attendance at FAFT and Pre-school. This will include co-ordination with other agencies.***

***In 2021 the FAFT and Pre-school building will either be remodelled or rebuilt.***

## **Community**

The school engages with community in a number of ways including culture, discos and trips to country and many informal contacts. However, there is capacity to increase planned engagement with the community.

### **Working with other agencies**

The education, health and welfare of children and young people in Wadeye works best when all agencies work together in a respectful and co-operative manner. Unfortunately, this does not always happen. The school needs to continue to strive to build strong and respectful relationships with other agencies. This includes attending and initiating appropriate meetings, supporting other agencies in their work and continuing to include respect for other agencies in orientation processes.

## **Leadership**

### **Governorship and Leadership**

The major approach to Aboriginal Leadership in the School is the Catholic Aboriginal Leadership Team (CALT). The CALT team consists of a group of local staff who have been nominated by their peers. The CALT meets each week with the Senior Leadership to discuss school operation and strategic direction. The aim is that all major decisions are made jointly between the CALT and non-local leadership.

The CALT joins leadership teams from the four other remote Catholic community schools each term.

For over ten years at various times there has been discussion of the formation of a school board or a wider education council in Wadeye. However, these discussions have not led to fruition. From 2020 it is proposed that once a term the CALT Team meets with a wider group of local leaders including Kardu Dimin leadership to get a representative view on the school's operation, meeting of community needs and strategic direction.

The school will engage in discussion with the community if an education council is developed.

### **Student Leadership**

The area of student leadership warrants further development and discussion, especially in the current context of more students participating in Year 12 Education.



The Wadeye Cadet program is an important element for the development of leadership in the young people of Wadeye.

### **Recommendation**

***The OLSH non-local leadership and Catholic Education NT continue to support the CALT and work in partnership in them in leading the school.***

***Further work is undertaken in developing student leadership at OLSH***

***The school continues to support the Wadeye Cadet program.***

## **Pastoral Care and Well Being**

### **Introduction and Issues**

At OLSH Wadeye the SIRF element of Pastoral Care and Well Being is best considered by discussing this element for three groups of people: students and their families, local staff and non-local staff.

### **Pastoral Care and Welfare of Students and their Families**

Over recent years OLSH has adopted an approach to pastoral care and the welfare of students and their families that is comprehensive. As a large stable and arguably well-funded organisation with strong connections to local community OLSH is well placed to provide health and welfare services.

### **Current Programs and services**

- Well run and resourced Inclusion Support Team: Nurse, social worker, Occupational Therapist, Special Needs Teachers
- Nutrition Program – a long term commitment even in an area of unpredictable funding
- Men's and Women's Health programs Secondary School: *Core of Life, Menzies Skills for Life*
- Endeavouring to work in partnership with other health and welfare agencies: Wadeye Clinic, Save the Children, Territory Families, Catholic Care, Thamarrurr Youth, NT Police.
- Lead local agency in the Menzies Rheumatic Heart Screening (February 2020)

## **Recommendation**

***OLSH maintains its commitment to providing comprehensive pastoral care and welfare for students and families in Wadeye. This commitment will continue to include the employment of a multi-disciplinary Inclusion Support Team, provision of strong Health and Well-Being programs in the curriculum and seeking to work in partnership with other agencies.***

## **Pastoral Care and Welfare of Local Staff**

At present the pastoral care and welfare of local staff includes the school nurse checking on health issues, including medication and advocacy at the clinic.

There is increasing use being made by local staff of the school's fly in staff support counsellor.

While there is a lot of support given to local staff in the areas of care and welfare most of this is informal, unseen and undocumented and based on long term relationships of key staff.

The School leadership needs to reflect regularly on how much support is given to the welfare of local staff in comparison to the comprehensive support to non-local staff.

## **Recommendation**

***The School maintains and further develops a comprehensive level of support to local staff.***

## **Pastoral Care and Welfare of Non-Local Staff**

Working and living in Wadeye is challenging and staff need the provision of a comprehensive pastoral care and welfare program. This is an area of both welfare and recruitment and retention of staff. The Management of the School makes a 24-7 commitment to the safety and welfare of staff.

Current provisions for the care, welfare and safety of non-local staff

## **Non-Local Staff**

Comprehensive Induction and Orientation procedures. This includes the Wadeye only Orientation Day which is an essential part of the preparation of staff for working and living in Wadeye

Twice a term visits by the staff counsellor/psychologist and provision for further support if needed

Firefly Resilience training

MAPPA training in de-escalation of critical incidents

Support of mentors and regular checking-in from senior and middle management

Comprehensive security for school houses, buildings and grounds

The provision of a staff gym

A commitment to meeting CEONT policies and practices in Workplace Health and Safety

### **Recommendation**

***OLSH retains its commitment to the provision of high levels of care and support to non-local staff***

## **Finance, Facilities and Resources**

### **Staffing**

Strategic decisions around staffing involve a number of major questions:

1. How many staff does the school need to fulfil its mission?
2. How should these staff be deployed; teaching, inclusion support, administration etc.?
3. How many non-local staff should we employ? How many houses does this need?
4. How many local staff should the school employ?
5. What would an excellent program for local staff development look like?

### **Current Staff March 2020**

Teachers Primary	
Non-Local	13.5
Local	7
AT's	
Primary	41
Secondary	14
Specialist Teachers	
Teachers	8
Non Teachers	2
Inclusion Support	
Non-local	3
Local	4

Preschool	
Non-local	3
Local	4
Admin	
Non-local	5
Local	3
LPC	
Non-local	3
Local	5
Ground Staff	
Non-local	3
Local	4
Nutrition	
Non-local	2
Local	5
Cleaners	
Non-local	2
Local	4
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>150</b>
Non-local	92
Local	58
Staff on Leave	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>

The school employs 150 staff; 92 local and 58 non-local staff. There are 12 non-local staff on leave.

### **Teaching:**

There are 24 classrooms in the school and a FaFT and Pre-school program employing 24 classroom teachers and three teachers employed in FaFT or Preschool. Of the 24 classroom teachers 22 of these are non-local educators requiring housing.

### **Non classroom staff include:**

Senior Administration and Support (6.5 teachers) Principal, Heads of Schools, Head of Inclusion Support, Pastoral Leader Primary and Secondary.

Specialist Teaching (PE, Home Economics, the Arts, Secondary School teacher linguist) 5.5 teachers.

Religious Education and Murrinhpatha (4 teachers, 1 AT).

Inclusion Support: (3.5 plus Head and four non-teacher health and welfare staff) 2.5 teachers plus Nurse, Aboriginal Health Worker, Social Worker, Occupational Therapist, administration support, Reading support Teacher.

Literacy Production Centre: Linguist, Production Manager, 2 production workers, 2 writers, 2 artists.

Adult Education (Aboriginal and Islander Work Force) (1 teacher, .5 school officer, 1 Lead Assistant Teacher).

The total of people more or less directly involved in education such as class and specialist teachers, Inclusion support and LPC staff is 76 or 52 % of the staff.

## Classroom Organisation and Teaching

The structure of 24 classrooms plus a FaFT and a Pre-School would seem to be relatively stable and is unlikely to change significantly over the next five years. While the birth rate in Wadeye is dropping significantly it is somewhat of a risk to plan too much on less enrolments as an increase in attendance rates would offset any drop in student numbers; attendance rates in Wadeye are very hard to predict.

The classroom structure requires the current numbers of specialists teachers, leaders to operate.

### Recommendation

***The current structure of class organisation and teaching numbers continues. The major barrier in education development in the community is lack of school attendance. Any further increase in staffing should be targeted at improving attendance rather than increasing the number of teachers.***

## Inclusion Support, Health and Welfare

A number of issues need consideration in the area of Inclusion Support, Health and Welfare.

1. There is still a great deal of staff time taken up with making funding applications in comparison with time devoted to direct support for funded students. The time and skills spent on funding applications do not necessarily require teacher registration
2. We struggle to spend our funding in this area

3. Over the last ten years the school has increased staffing in health, welfare and special needs. We have gone from employing two teachers to three teachers, a nurse, occupational therapist and social worker. While some of this work should be carried out by other agencies, as a large, stable and well supported organisation the College has the capacity to make a significant difference in these areas for the community.

### **Recommendation**

***OLSH expand its staffing in the Special Needs, Health and Welfare area with the agreement and support of CEO NT. This could include employing a further social worker/counsellor, a health professional to work in the area of hearing and sufficient clerical support to allow inclusion support teachers to spend more time working directly with teachers.***

### **Local Teachers and Local Staff Development**

There are currently eight local teachers: three in classroom roles, three as Religious Education Teachers and a non-teaching APPRE. In 2013 there were 12 local teachers. All the local teachers are 45 plus. While OLSH Wadeye has run the Growing Our Own (GOO) Aboriginal teacher education no new teachers have come out of this program. The situation of an aging local teacher cohort means that more of the Murrinhpatha and Religious Education teaching will need to be undertaken by local Assistant Teachers. This means that considerable resources will need to be devoted to local educator development over the next five years and beyond.

### **Recommendation**

***OLSH commits a minimum of two staff to Aboriginal and Islander workforce development over the next five years. This project is a high priority for the school and this priority needs to be reflected in how the project is staffed and operated.***

### **Staffing and Housing**

Currently the school has 40 housing units. This cannot be directly counted as capacity to house teachers as this depends on the number of teachers who share, teaching couples and staff housed by other agencies such as the police through partner employment.

While the school is only supposed to house teachers, it is impossible to run the school effectively without housing a number of key positions. These positions need to be housed:

1. Nutrition Manager
2. Business Manager
3. Maintenance carpenter
4. ICT support/data person

### Summary Recommendations

***The school recognises it has a major role in employing, developing and supporting local staff. This reflection will be recognised in employment numbers and a significant commitment to workforce development, especially in the area of developing local educators.***

***Any increase in the employment of non-local staff should be targeted at increasing attendance and increase delivery in special needs, health and welfare.***

### Buildings and Finance

OLSH has a comprehensive plan of building development that will bring the school up to the standard of a modern and functioning Australian school.

2020	Five room classroom block Nine new teacher housing units Demolish Building Eight
2021	New pre-school Disposal of redundant and end of life school houses
2022	Five room classroom block - primary Remodel interior of senior secondary Demolish Building Two
2023	Redevelop Building 15