

14 July 2015

To: Parents and guardians

**RE: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY INTO THE PROVISION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION**

I am writing to inform you of a significant announcement regarding secondary education in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. Catholic education is in demand and we are growing to accommodate this demand.

For more than 180 years, Catholic schools have been providing education to families in this region. Currently, more than 2200 staff help educate over 18,400 students enrolled in 56 Catholic schools, including 11 secondary schools. We seek to embrace contemporary approaches to teaching and learning so that our students are well placed to make an active, life-giving contribution to a changing world.

As you would be aware, in 2013, the Catholic Schools Office began a Study, commissioned by Bishop Bill Wright, into the Provision of Secondary Education to ensure the diocese would be able to meet the future needs of students in Catholic secondary schools. The study also aimed to ensure that our Catholic secondary schools remain vibrant, relevant and academically competitive in an increasingly demanding and rapidly changing educational climate.

The study involved consultation with parents, staff and students of all diocesan secondary schools including the opportunity for submissions, interviews, surveys and meetings. The study gathered vast amounts of data through an analysis of historical information, listening assemblies across the diocese, quantitative surveys of all key stakeholders, qualitative interviews with stakeholder groups, the work and input of an expert panel of educators, a steering group and a literature review.

**As a result of this study, I am pleased to inform you that 12 recommendations made by the study (attached) have been accepted by Bishop Bill Wright for implementation.**

All 12 recommendations are significant and present new, positive opportunities for Catholic education in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

The Diocese is embracing the opportunity to respond to change and significant enrolment pressure with innovation and creativity. We are committed to providing a secondary education for students that is marked by academic rigour and success, providing students with every opportunity to improve their learning such that they can maximise their post-school choices.

Among the recommendations included, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle will build two new Years 7-12 high schools in Medowie and Chisholm. These will become the first high schools to be built in the diocese in over 30 years, since the inception of St Paul's High School, Booragul in 1984, which was extended in 1999 with the addition of Years 11-12.

A decision has also been made to grow two of our existing schools. In 2018, St Joseph's, Lochinvar and St Mary's, Gateshead, both currently 7-10 schools, will offer Years 11-12. These decisions will



allow for more enrolments to be taken at surrounding Catholic high schools currently experiencing enrolment pressure.

Whilst the 12 recommendations will affect some schools more than others, the Catholic Schools Office is committed to providing as much information to you as possible regarding the recommendations and what they will mean for your child/ren and school community.

I will also be hosting an information session for parents, carers and parishioners at six locations across the diocese. Parents from all Catholic primary and secondary schools in the diocese can attend any of these sessions. The locations for each session have been chosen because the recommendations affect some secondary schools more than others. However additional information sessions may be scheduled at a later date, at alternative locations, to meet demand if necessary.

**I would like to invite you to attend one of the Parent and Parishioner Information Sessions.**

For your information, I have attached the following documents:

- *The twelve recommendations from the Study into the Provision of Secondary Education*
- *A timeline summary and location of recommendations*
- *A list of all information sessions and locations that have been scheduled for Parents, Carers and Parishioners.*

In the meantime, I encourage you to visit our website [www.mn.catholic.edu.au/study](http://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/study) (information will go live on Tuesday evening) for more information. If you have any immediate concerns, please discuss these with your principal or phone the Catholic Schools Office on 49791200.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your patience and active participation during the process of completing this study. Catholic schools are an inclusive, affordable option, open to all and we are looking forward to growing the future of Catholic education in our region. I look forward to the opportunity to tell you more about the recommendations and discuss the future of Catholic education with you in person at the Parent and Parishioner Information Sessions in the next few weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Endorsed,



**Ray Collins**  
DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS



**Most Reverend William Wright**  
BISHOP OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE







# Recommendations from the Study into the Provision of Secondary Education

## 1. Commitment to Catholic practice and formation through:

- a. Ensuring the ongoing implementation of specialist RE Faculties in secondary schools, with a strong core of specialist, well qualified and committed teachers.
- b. Strengthening and improving the formal RE program in schools from Years 7-12 evidenced by enhanced results in Religious Literacy (8 & 10) and at the HSC (SOR I and II).
- c. Provision of increased opportunities for Eucharistic celebrations in schools.
- d. Review, evaluate and redevelop faith formation experiences for students 7-12 such that they are sequential and developmental experiences where students deepen their encounter with the person of Jesus and the tenets of the Gospel.

## 2. Provision of a new co-educational, Years 7-12 secondary school at Chisholm

To build a co-educational Years 7-12 secondary school at Chisholm, to open in 2018. A primary school, St Aloysius, was just opened in 2015.

The provision of a secondary school in this area responds to significant enrolment demand currently unable to be met in the All Saints Region at other Catholic secondary schools. St Aloysius Catholic Primary School, which opened in 2015, will be co-located with this new secondary school, thereby providing a continuum of education in the area from Kindergarten to Year 12.

## 3. Provision of a new co-educational, Years 7-12 secondary school at Medowie

To build a co-educational, Years 7-12 secondary school at Medowie. The provision of a school in this area responds to a number of factors: there is no Catholic secondary school presence on the northern peninsula; in addition, there is enrolment pressure on the inner-city Newcastle Catholic schools which will be alleviated by the provision of this new school; furthermore, there is demographic growth in both the North Raymond Terrace and Medowie areas.

## 4. Development of a longer term strategy for educational provision at Cessnock

The demographic growth predicted will be required to be validated and, should the need be evident, a feasibility study will be conducted to address this area of provision.



## 5. Investigation of alternative school settings

The Catholic Schools Office, in collaboration with secondary school leaders and other educational providers, explores options for the provision of alternative settings for students at risk of non-completion of secondary schooling.

## 6. Extension of St Mary's, Gateshead to Years 7-12 in 2018

St Mary's, Gateshead serves the communities of the Eastern Lake Macquarie corridor. The expansion of St Mary's to incorporate Years 11 and 12 will enhance the local provision of Catholic education Kindergarten to Year 12, with ease of access to the full spectrum of Catholic education guaranteed for this discrete region.

This also develops the capacity to improve the enrolments in Catholic primary schools in the region, given the assurance of accessing senior education in local Catholic schooling.

## 7. Strengthened relationship between the Newcastle cluster of schools

The relationship between St Francis Xavier's, Hamilton, St Pius X, Adamstown and San Clemente, Mayfield be strengthened to provide a quality alignment of educational experience across Years 7-12. While the three schools retain their relative autonomy, their capacity to provide for a continuum of excellence across the stages is required. This renewed relationship of the three schools will be evident in leadership collaboration, curriculum cohesion, professional learning opportunities for staff, linkage of learning across the stages, staff curriculum knowledge, the interrelationship of middle leaders and faculties, student well-being initiatives, renewed avenues for transition, student leadership opportunities and the realisation of faith formation between the schools.

## 8. Extension of St Joseph's, Lochinvar to Years 7-12 in 2018

St Joseph's, Lochinvar be redeveloped to allow for the reintroduction of senior education on the site. This expansion will provide the ability to meet both strong enrolment demand and demographic growth. The expansion of St Joseph's to incorporate Years 11 and 12 will enhance the local provision of Catholic education, Kindergarten to Year 12, with ease of access to the full spectrum of Catholic education guaranteed for this discrete region.

## 9. Strengthened relationship between St Peter's, Maitland and St Mary's, Maitland

The relationship between St Peter's, Maitland and St Mary's, Maitland be strengthened to provide a quality alignment of educational experience across Years 7-12. While the two schools remain autonomous, their capacity to provide for a continuum of excellence across the stages is required.

This renewed relationship of the two schools will be evident in leadership collaboration, curriculum cohesion, professional learning opportunities, linkage of learning across the stages, staff curriculum knowledge, the interrelationship of middle managers and faculties, student well-being initiatives, renewed avenues for transition, student leadership opportunities and the realisation of faith formation across the schools.

## 10. Future review of the provision of secondary education

The recommendations developed into the current study (2013-2014) are seen as considered responses to the demographic and educational needs at this time. It is further recommended that the study be revisited. In particular, the schools in the Newcastle region in Adamstown, Mayfield and Hamilton as well as the two Maitland schools are examined for their efficacy and degree of parent satisfaction with respect to the quality of continuity of education and transition. It is recommended that a formal review is instituted in the Maitland schools FOUR years after the commencement of the first Year 11 cohort at St Joseph's, Lochinvar and in the Newcastle schools FIVE years after the commencement of the first Year 11 cohort at St Mary's, Gateshead.

## 11. Equitable access to curriculum delivery

Develop greater equity of access to curriculum through the utilisation of contemporary technologies and learning options so that all students, regardless of geographical location, have the opportunity to engage in courses that provide breadth and depth.

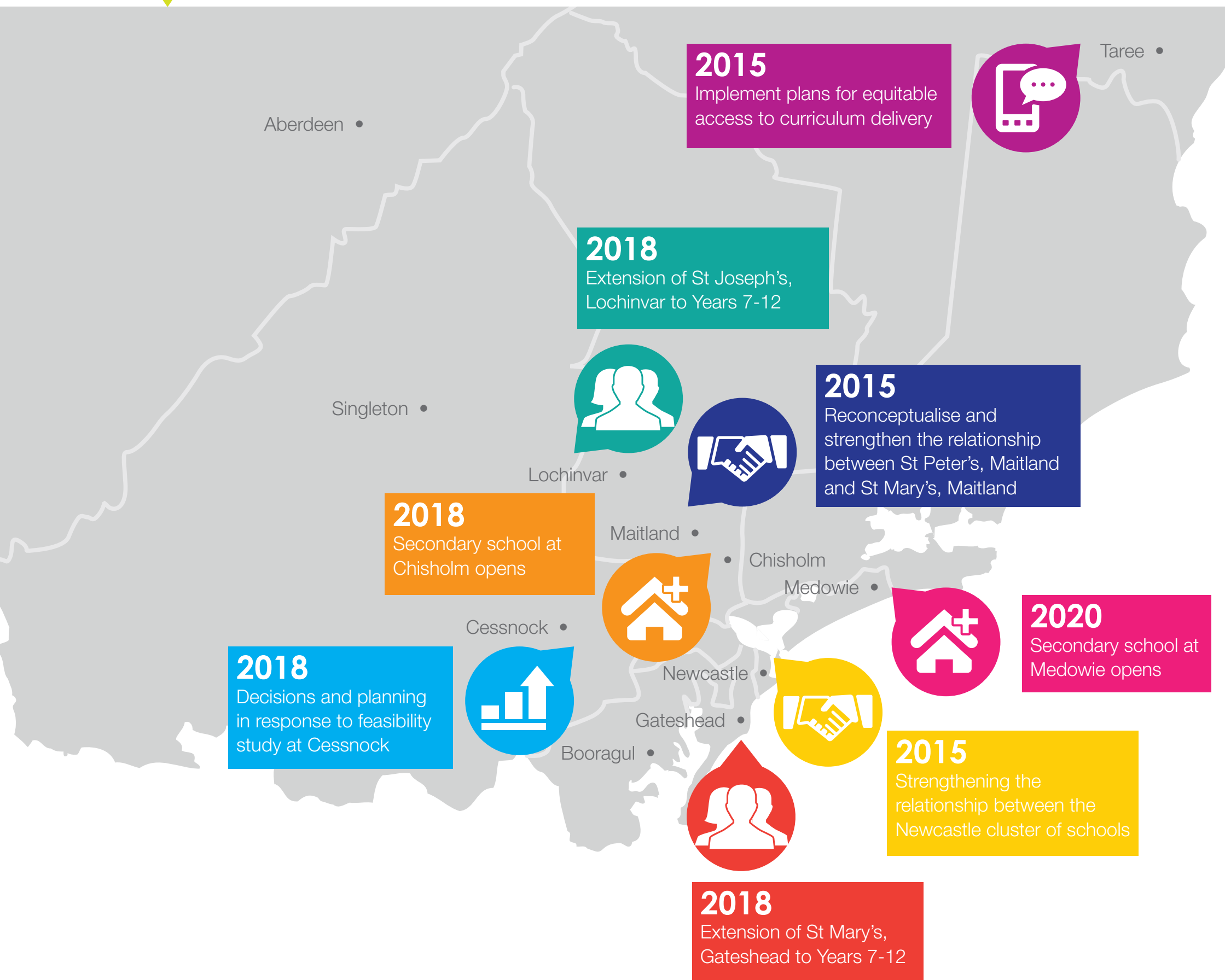
## 12. Exploration of options for specialisation

The exploration of specialisation is undertaken as schools engage in redeveloped structures and/or relationships. Areas identified as having the capacity for specialisation include academic enrichment/extension, the creative and performing arts, sports, language and certain VET frameworks.





# Timeline summary and location of Recommendations from the Study into the Provision of Secondary Education



**2014 ➡**

Teaching of Religion in secondary schools review recommendations implemented



**2015**

Exploration of options for specialisation



**2015**

Investigation plan for alternative school settings



**2022-23**

Review of the provision of secondary education



**Catholic Schools Office**  
DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

Catholic schools are an inclusive, affordable option, open to all and we are looking forward to growing the future of Catholic education in our region.

–Ray Collins, Director of Schools





# Information sessions

## PARENTS AND PARISHIONERS

Learn about the recommendations from the Study into the Provision of Secondary Education

**All parents, carers and parishioners** of primary and secondary Catholic school students are invited to attend one of the following information sessions

**Maitland/Chisholm information session**  
**Thursday 23rd July, 7.00pm**

HOSTED BY ST PETER'S, MAITLAND

**Lochinvar information session**  
**Tuesday 28th July, 7.00pm**

HOSTED BY ST JOSEPH'S, LOCHINVAR

**Gateshead information session**  
**Tuesday 4th August, 7.00pm**

HOSTED BY ST MARY'S, GATESHEAD

**Newcastle/Adamstown information session**  
**Wednesday 5th August, 7.00pm**

HOSTED BY ST PIUS X, ADAMSTOWN

**Newcastle/Mayfield information session**  
**Thursday 6th August, 5.30pm**

HOSTED BY SAN CLEMENTE, MAYFIELD

**Medowie/Nelson Bay information session**  
**Monday 10th August, 7.00pm**

HOSTED BY ST MICHAEL'S, NELSON BAY

Parents from any Catholic school in the diocese can attend any session. These locations have been chosen as the recommendations affect some secondary schools more than others. Additional information sessions may be scheduled at a later date at alternative locations to meet demand if necessary.

If you have any queries about the information sessions, please call the Catholic Schools Office on **4979 1200**.