



Section 19

2019 Convention of Synod

Australian Lutheran College Report

AUSTRALIAN LUTHERAN COLLEGE

Australian Lutheran College (ALC) exists to serve the Lutheran Church of Australia and its partners. Our vision is to see God's love in Christ coming to life through preparing God's servants – pastors, teachers, church workers and volunteers of all kinds – to serve and lead with confident Christian faith, integrity, competence and compassion in a diverse and changing denomination and world. We do this by providing diverse learning opportunities that range from general interest courses and Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs, through to degrees and higher degrees by research. In the last twelve months we have even begun to offer opportunities for professional development for pastors. This will soon include all church workers.

In his 2019 opening lecture the college's Academic Dean, Dr Stephen Haar, asked and stated:

'How will ALC best educate and prepare pastors, teachers, and other workers for service in this changing context; graduates who will face the antagonism, discontent, and cynicism of the Australian community towards Christian faith and the message of the Gospel? Our College Strategic Direction identifies among our values, 'Decision-making focused on those we serve as higher priority [than] historic continuity of internal structure, courses or teaching methods'. This is to be our College culture and character as we 'provide theological education and research for vocation and life, with an emphasis on vocational formation of people to meet the needs of church and world in a postmodern society no longer literate in the Christian faith.'

While our rich gospel and theological heritage remains with us at ALC we realise that the church's learning needs are changing, and so we are changing with the church. While valuing the LCA's strong and successful tradition of theological education and vocational formation, our college is on a pathway to becoming a learning community for a changing church in a changing world. An essential value embedded within our [Strategic Direction](#) is growing **engagement** with all stakeholders, both internal and external. LCAQD is very much part of this engagement as we seek to shape learning opportunities to serve your District's unique needs. For the college, the ultimate aim of this, is growth in enrolments. For the church, the aim is to grow a body of well-prepared people to diversely serve in and through the contemporary Lutheran Church.

So, what is changing?

Firstly, a new brand and logo have recently been launched.

This branding combines old and new design elements to represent our college's past and future. We value and thank God for our theological and educational heritage, as we seek to learn and apply that heritage in the church's new and constantly changing contexts. Very importantly, this branding also foregrounds our core identity as a learning community which dedicates itself to learning for life. You will see this brand in use as the old logo is phased out.



Secondly, as ALC implements its new Strategic Direction, it is restructuring internally, reviewing and expanding its course offerings and modes of delivery and adapting its teaching methods. Plans are underway to expand our distributed learning model to include all streams of learning offered by the college, so that we can partner with you in your diverse local contexts.

Going forward, a new and flexible model of teaching envisions a college without walls: locally based, nationally coordinated and globally connected.

ALC's Strategic Direction is guided by the principle of 'learning for life' or life-long learning. In essence, what this means, is that in the future, ALC will respond to the training needs of the church **sooner** (through internships/VET studies), **deeper** (through higher education studies and research) and for **longer** (through postgraduate studies, continuing education and professional development and vocational development offerings).

Research has become a new and important growth area for ALC. Under the leadership of a daughter of LCAQD, Professor Wendy Mayer, not only have our student enrolments grown in this area, but the college has undertaken a number of important research projects for the church and Lutheran Education Australia. This research provides valuable evidence, upon which informed decisions can be made.

Research has also opened up renewed partnerships with our sister churches in the Asia-Pacific region and generated partnerships. ALC is helping those churches by training future leaders and trainers of their pastors and church workers.

So who are ALC's students?

Unlike 50 years ago, ALC's student community ranges in age from 18 to 70 plus, and people's reasons for learning vary as much as their ages. Some are undertaking studies for interest sake, others as part of an internship or discipleship program, others to assist them vocationally for roles of service or leadership in the church and the church's schools and aged care facilities.

You might be surprised to learn that nowadays ALC students can be found Australia, New Zealand and Asia Pacific wide, making the most of ALC's online learning modules, local workshops and intensives, and in some cases regular classes, such as undergraduate teacher electives held in Brisbane. Our students are demanding flexible study options and are making the most of being able to study from anywhere, at any time and at their own pace. You might also be surprised to learn that the greater majority of our students are female.

In terms of courses, ALC has much to offer. Our vocational education and training (VET) courses, provide students with practical, skills-based training, while our Higher Educational courses challenge students to think critically about life and faith in the light of biblical and church teaching. Undertaking a research degree through ALC, enables students to contribute to world-wide theological scholarship through their original research.

So, whether someone is interested in:

- Learning for service;
- Learning for leadership; or just
- Learning for life

ALC is here to be a companion in their learning journey.

There are many providers of theological education, but ALC is the only accredited provider of post-secondary and tertiary Lutheran education in Australia and New Zealand. **Studying through ALC, ensures that our Lutheran identity is not lost**, but instead retained and lived out for future generations.

The desire to learn more about God's word, together with **your local encouragement**, is what brings students to ALC. We need you to partner with us to identify and encourage people to take up a life of service as teachers, pastors, lay workers and volunteers in the LCA. That service begins with and remains grounded in learning for life through ALC.

Thank you for this encouragement and your continuing support of ALC.

Rev James Winderlich
Principal