

AGENDA 11.1

Lutheran Education Australia Ltd

MEMBERS

Rev Thomas Böhmert, Mrs Shiron Dixon, Brett Hausler, Dr Neville Highett (Chairman) Mrs Tania Nelson (resigned April 2016), Mr Lester Saegenschnitter, Dr Lisa Schmidt
Consultants Mr Stephen Rudolph (LEA), Mr Paul Weinert (LEVNT), Mr John Proeve (LESNW), Mr David Bliss (2016, LEQ), Mr Dennis Mulherin (2017/18, LEQ)

LEA STAFF

Mr Stephen Rudolph, LEA Executive Director; Mrs Anne Dohnt, LEA Director of Formation; Mrs Dianne Eckermann, LEA Director of Leadership; Mr Stephen Kroker, LEA Business Manager; Mrs Joan Scriven, LEA Executive Assistant

It should be noted that Stephen Rudolph, after 43 years of service to the LCA and Lutheran education, will retire at the end of 2018. The board, together with GCC, undertook a process of appointing a new LEA Executive Director. Dr Lisa Schmidt will commence in this role from January 2019 and will be introduced to the Lutheran education community and the LCA appropriately.

BACKGROUND





The principal objects and activity of LEA is to advance the work of the Lord Jesus Christ through education and the promotion of Lutheran schools. LEA serves to steer and support a collaborative national Lutheran education system providing contemporary world-class Christian education guided by the theology of the LCA. It provides strategic direction and establishes the overall policy environment for Lutheran schools in all jurisdictions in Australia on behalf of the LCA.

- promote Lutheran schools as agencies of the LCA;
- uphold and safeguard the confessional teachings of the church, especially as these relate to the nature, purpose and program of schools;
- provide strategic leadership and support for the schools of the church in those matters designated as national areas of responsibility;
- formulate national policy that gives direction to Lutheran schools;
- promote, support and ensure the implementation of approved policy and associated procedures in the schools, working through regional structures;
- work in close co-operation with the church, in particular with the regions of Lutheran education and other appropriate agencies of the Church;
- represent Lutheran schools and regions nationally to the Church, its agencies and to Australian Lutheran College;
- research, make approaches, represent and act on behalf of regions and schools in relation to the Commonwealth government, its departments and government authorities and political parties, respond to Commonwealth government directives and initiatives relating to education and associated matters, and provide representation to national educational bodies where strategic and appropriate;
- develop co-operative working relationships with other sectors of education at national level;
- approve the establishment of new schools and change in function of existing Lutheran schools in consultation with the regions;
- develop, coordinate and evaluate the national curriculum in Christian Studies for Lutheran schools, develop resources for, and promote and support the implementation of the Christian Studies curriculum in schools through the regions;
- ensure that recruitment and staffing strategies, and leadership development programs are in place to meet the needs of Lutheran schools, that accreditation requirements in accordance with policies of the Church are implemented, and that a staff database is

- maintained and national conferences convened to promote the welfare of those who work in Lutheran schools;
- ensure income for the operation of LEA by means of annual levies from Lutheran schools;
- undertake, develop and maintain key relationships with international Lutheran schools and education systems, considering compatibility with the Church's international relationships and programs, and the global focus of Lutheran schools; and
- undertake other activities related to those matters designated as national areas of responsibility or as agreed with the regions.

ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PLAN

LEA Strategic Plan Section	Progress report
1. Structural clarity	
a) Clarify and establish a consistent national approach to structures and lines of authority regarding roles and responsibilities of LEA, Regions, GCC, LCA and Districts	GCC and BLEA Joint Group has continued Stage 2 of the LCA GCC/LEA governance and administration review. The final report and recommendations will be presented to General Synod by GCC and BLEA.
b) Articulate and strengthen Lutheran identity	LEA, in collaboration with ALC and the Lutheran education regions, has developed a tertiary pathways plan which includes a redesign of current formation and leadership programs as tertiary credit courses. This will commence in 2019.
c) Promote and advocate Lutheran education identity	LEA has worked closely with the following LCA and external agencies: LCA: Australian Lutheran College, Mission International, ALWS, Lutheran Media, Lutheran communications, Professional Standards Department, Church workers, Lutheran Super, Grow Ministries External: National Catholic Education Commission, Independent Schools Council of Australia, Asia Lutheran Education Association, federal government Department of Education, Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, Lutheran Education Association (USA)
d) Explore and implement ways in which school pastors and chaplains can be more effectively supported as they minister in the ECS and school context	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Three LEA national school ministry conferences were held in the last synodical term. Just over 220 school chaplains, pastors, counsellors and principals attended. 2. The fifth Australian Conference on Lutheran Education (ALCE5) was held in 2017. Over 1100 people attended and were inspired by LCA Bishops, other Lutheran theologians, external educators on the theme 'People Planet Purpose' with the 500th Jubilee of the Reformation being the central focus.

e) Clarity around branding	Consistent branding for LEA and the three regions has been achieved as follows:
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Lutheran Education AUSTRALIA</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Lutheran Education QUEENSLAND</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Lutheran Education SA, NT & WA</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Lutheran Education VIC, NSW & TAS</p> </div> </div>
2. Cultural enhancement	
a) Seek relevant research and learning opportunities for knowledge creation and use to impact cultural enhancement and focus for Australian Lutheran education	<p>In the past three years, LEA with relevant external parties, conducted research in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Schools surveys (2016 and 2018) • Principals Health and Wellbeing surveys (2016 and 2018) • NAPLAN results (2009-2016) • The principal as spiritual leader (2017-2018) • Leadership succession in Lutheran schools (2017) <p>In particular LEA acknowledges the professional support of Professor Wendy Mayer, ALC Associate Dean of Research, in a number of these projects.</p>
b) Assist schools in the development of international partnerships	<p>LEA and Mission International conducted a joint school partnership visit to Indonesian Lutheran schools resulting in six Australian/Indonesian school partnerships. Together with LCA leaders, LEA met with the ELCPNG Bishop and leaders to discuss future cooperation. LEA sponsored eleven education leaders from PNG, Malaysia and Indonesia to attend ACLE5 and visit various Australian Lutheran schools.</p>
3. System sustainability	
a) Ensure funding sustainability and financial resilience for all Lutheran schools	<p>LEA represents the three regions and all Lutheran schools at the federal government level. In the past three years, LEA leaders have met with federal Minister for Education, Senator Simon Birmingham, his deputy officials and ISCA on at least 15 occasions.</p> <p>LEA also produces regular national and regional Lutheran education debt profiles which are presented to BLEA, regional councils and the respective District Church Councils.</p>
b) Build educational governance and financial capacity	<p>LEA and the regions have developed a suite of governance resources for all Lutheran school councils on key governance training and education areas.</p>

SUCSESSES

- Governance
 - BLEA has undergone a governance assessment and developed and maintained a governance skills matrix
 - In the last synodical period, in cooperation with GCC, the board has assembled a GCC/BLEA Joint Group to undertake the next stage of the GCC/LEA governance and administration review which commenced post the 2015 LCA General Synod. The GCC/BLEA Joint Group has consulted through 2017 and 2018 with key stakeholders including DCCs (x5), regional education councils (x3), ALC, LLL, nominated principals as well as nominated school council chairs and congregational chairs. The final report and recommendations of the Joint Group

will be presented to 2018 LCA General Synod but will not be included in this report due to timing issues.

- ACLE5 in 2017 assembled at the Adelaide Convention Centre with in excess of 1100 participants – an ACLE record. ACLE6 is planned for Melbourne in 2021. The LEA publication *SchoolLink* for 2017 focussed on ACLE5 and was distributed with *The Lutheran*.
- The *Lutheran education earthcare charter* was launched at ACLE5 and thanks to an LLL grant of \$105,000 55 Lutheran schools received small grants to implement a relevant section of the earthcare charter that suited their school program and context. The 2018 edition of LEA *SchoolLink* will feature reports of these earthcare projects and again be circulated with *The Lutheran*.
- Both the 2016 and 2018 National Lutheran Principals Conferences were held in this synodical term in Cairns (Peace Lutheran College) and Hobart (Eastside Lutheran College). It was pleasing to see a number of LCA Bishops and ALC leaders at both conferences.
- LEA Service Awards were presented each year to people who had served in Lutheran education for 20 years or more.
- 2015: 32 people with 940 years of collective service were acknowledged
- 2016: 36 people with 991 years of collective service were acknowledged
- 2017: 33 people with 978 years of collective service were acknowledged
- LEA national finance and risk reporting standards framework was established. LEA, in cooperation with the regions, develops an annual Lutheran Education Debt Profile. This is reported to BLEA and each regional council (as relevant). The LEA Business Manager also reports to the Loans Management Committee, LLL Audit and Risk Committee and the LCA Finance Audit and Risk Committee about this debt profile.
- The 2016 LEA / LPA *In the footsteps of Paul* tour was conducted with 32 people visiting key Greek sties. Rev Neville Otto, LCA Secretary, was the tour chaplain.
- The 2018 LEA/LPA *Lutherlands Germany* study tour was conducted with 29 people visiting key Reformation and Luther sites. Rev James Winderlich, ALC Principal, was the tour chaplain.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

1. Both BLEA and LEA are awaiting the 2018 LCA General Synod response to the GCC/BLEA Joint Group report and recommendations on the *Lutheran education governance and administration review*. Until governance and management clarity can be established by the LCA, LEA's work will continue to be hampered and current inefficiencies and risks maintained.
2. LEA through its Ministry Personnel Taskforce, organised three national ministry conferences in 2017. These will be followed in 2019 with a further three conferences. These give opportunity to ministry leaders in ECSs, schools and associated congregations to consider how, in today's Australian society, to most effectively bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to each unique Lutheran education community. This is a particular challenge in the post-Christian society we live in today.
3. From 1982-2013, Lutheran school enrolments grew annually by an average 4.53%. However, from 2014-2018, the annual growth averaged 0.55% (based on February 2018 enrolments). The wider independent and Catholic schools are also experiencing similar challenges with enrolment growth. Additionally, the capacity of the LCA to operate ECSs and schools is being tested by a church that is aging and experiencing a decline in membership. This is and will put increasing pressure on matters such as school governance, school leadership, staff formation and how the LCA oversees and supports Lutheran education into the future.

RISKS

1. From 2011 to 2018 the number of Lutheran schools declined from 85 to 80. While some of this decline can be attributed to Lutheran school amalgamations, eg, Highgate SA, Tanunda SA, LEA also saw the closure of several schools, namely:

- St Stephens Lutheran College, Gladstone Qld (2002-2016)
- Springhead Lutheran School, Springhead SA (1856-1917, 1931-2017)
- Ocean Forest Lutheran College, Dalyellup WA (2004-2017)

While each of these amalgamations and closures present unique circumstances, it is clear that the 'golden years' of significant Lutheran school growth and expansion through the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s has come to an end. However, the recent moderate positive growth of the number of Lutheran ECSs should be noted.

Together with the LCA, LEA acknowledges the commitment of the St Stephens, Springhead and Ocean Forest Lutheran school communities, their councils, congregations, principals, staff, students and parents. We are grateful for their contributions to these places of learning and for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with their people.

In particular LEA recognises the closure of Springhead Lutheran School. Until its closure last year, Springhead was the sixth oldest Lutheran school in Australia having provided Christian education for 149 years. The oldest Lutheran schools, in years of operation, are:

Years of operation	Lutheran school
165	Tarrington Lutheran School, Vic (1853-) Continuous
164	Lobethal Lutheran School, SA : (1842-1917, 1930-) Non-continuous – closed in WWI
154	Tanunda Lutheran School, SA (1845-1917, 1938-) Non-continuous – closed in WWI
151	St Michael's Lutheran School, Hahndorf SA (1839-1917, 1946-) Non-continuous – closed in WWI
151	St John's Lutheran Primary School, Jindera NSW (1868-) Continuous
149 *	Spring Head Lutheran School, Mount Torrens SA (1856-1917, 1931-2017) Non-continuous – closed in WWI

* closed at end of 2017

2. While BLEA receives an annual Lutheran Education Risk and Debt Profile, the board does not have the authority, on behalf of the LCA/GCC, to make governance decisions in relation to school loans and risks as well as school openings and closures. As GCC is the governance authority and guarantor of last resort for all bodies within the LCA, the board looks forward to the 2018 LCA General Synod and its response to the GCC/BLEA Joint Group report and recommendations on the future of the Lutheran education governance and administration.
3. With the LCA's membership and Australian census figures declining, finding future Lutheran ECS directors and Lutheran school principals who are active communicant members of the LCA (Ref *LCA Staffing Policy for Lutheran Schools*) has become a significant and ongoing challenge for LEA, the regions and individual ECS and school councils. The capacity of the LCA and LEA to provide sufficient human resources for Lutheran education leadership into the future presents the board and associated bodies with questions which will require significant thought, planning and action now and into the next synodical term. Our capacity to provide good, continuing governance at the local ECS and school level is also being challenged as many local congregations experience an aging and declining membership.

ALIGNMENT TO LCA STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2013-2018

LCA Strategic Priority 2: Goal 3: Objective 01 Develop and trial new and innovative mission partnership models between congregations/schools/aged care and other agencies	In endeavouring to communicate to the LCA (via The Lutheran) and Lutheran school staff and families, LEA has circulated SchoolLink to these groups since August 2014. Through these publications it is hoped that the real stories and challenges our schools face are being communicated to our people
LCA Strategic Priority 2: Goal 7: Objective 01 Develop practical opportunities, in cooperation with the LCA's partners as appropriate, for individuals and congregations to experience mission both in Australia and overseas	LEA works cooperatively with ALWS and LCA MI in relation to service learning opportunities, eg, Nepal, Cambodia, Indonesia, PNG, Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam
LCA Strategic Priority 3: Goal A2: Improve governance at all levels Objective 3 Improve induction and training of leaders	LEA has prepared training modules for governing bodies of early childhood centres and schools. These form the provision of, and support for, comprehensive governance training and focus on the LCA / LEA expectations of ECC/school governing bodies, theological dimensions of governance, Lutheran school history and ethical governance and decision making.
LCA Strategic Priority 1: Goal 3: Improve governance at all levels Objectives 1,2,3 Develop a strong culture of service in individuals, families and communities, both locally and overseas as a natural outworking of an active faith	The LEA Service Learning Taskforce has developed and now provides many service learning resources to Lutheran ECSs and schools via the LEA website. These resources provide local learning sites with theological understandings, worship and program guidelines and numerous other service learning materials for local, national and global use. References to our LCA partners, ALWS, also are frequently made.

COOPERATING WITH LCA BOARDS AND AGENCIES

LEA has worked closely with the following agencies during the last synodical term: LLL, Lutheran Media, Grow Ministries, FRM, ALC, Lutheran Super, LCA Communications, Mission International.

LEA staff are also represented on the following LCA committees:

- LCA Royal Commission Taskforce
- LCA Campaign against Domestic and Family Violence Committee
- 50.500 planning group
- CSBQ environmental working group
- LCA IT committee

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Financial summary is included at Agenda 11.3.

CONCLUSION

On behalf of BLEA, I would like to thank my co-directors for the time and commitment that they give so freely to support the work of LEA. As Chair of the Board I would like to thank our Executive Director, Stephen Rudolph, and the staff at the national office for their loyalty, enthusiasm and commitment to Lutheran education across Australia. As a board, we acknowledge the quality of support provided in preparation for and organisation of board meetings.

The board is pleased to see the continued growth of LPA (Lutheran Principals Australia) as an organisation and recognises the importance of this professional group in enhancing the quality of leadership with our schools.

As a board, we are conscious that the current landscape of independent education is changing where enrolment pressures are being felt by many Lutheran schools.