



**Ecumenical
Schools**
AUSTRALIA

SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2023

Background and Introduction

Ecumenical Schools Australia (ESA) comprises 20 independent schools located across Victoria and into New South Wales. Many are in regional areas, and as a result face challenges which are not faced by schools in metropolitan areas. ESA aims to assist members in their common goal of providing the best educational outcomes possible to their students, through guidance in educational, governance, financial, compliance and risk practices.

Every ESA member is unique. Each has its own distinct profile in terms of student profile, year levels offered, fee structure, facilities and pedagogical style. All members offer great support to the communities to which they belong, offering educational options that would not exist without them, and often bringing professional services and facilities to their regions that would not otherwise be available to members of the wider community.

This diversity means that uniformity amongst members is not possible nor coveted. ESA members are 'systemically independent' – they enjoy the benefits of collaboration and connectedness that come with being part of a group, while still being able to retain their unique profiles and follow their own individual pathways to success.

As stated in the System Implementation Plan first published in December 2013, the diversity of membership means that a one-size-fits-all implementation plan in relation to the five areas of reform under the Education Act 2013 is inappropriate. Instead of prescribing specific actions and targets for member schools, the plan formed the basis for ESA to support and lead member schools in individually striving to achieve the five aims of the Education Act 2013 according to their individual needs, strengths, resources and philosophies. During the course of 2014 in implementing the System's plan, it became more apparent this was indeed the most appropriate approach, and as a result some of the initially proposed actions have been modified to favour actions which allow individual members to meet the objectives in the most appropriate way for their schools.

The pages following show the System's progress in the areas identified in the implementation plan for action. Where there is no specific comment for an action scheduled to take place this year, the action can be regarded as ongoing as applicable.

This review document serves both as a review and the updated System Implementation Plan for ESA commencing January 2023.

2022 was a busy and successful year for ESA. In addition to the continued success of special interest and professional learning networks for Principals, Business Managers, Faith and Wellbeing Leaders, Heads of Junior School, Support and Enrichment Coordinators, Heads of Year 9 and Middle School, Board Chairs, Registrars, and HR Managers, new networks were added for Deputy Principals and Heads of Teaching and Learning.

The networks are hugely successful in helping the System achieve its educational goals, by providing targeted professional learning and briefings, and also through offering a medium for sharing of best practice, problem solving and collaboration. In truth, our best learning comes from within, and the networks give school leaders the time and space to discuss various aspects of teaching and learning, and of school leadership, to create a shared understanding and influence practice.

The 2022 ESA Conference themed 'Better Together', again saw strong attendance, with the program featuring the highly respected and engaging speakers: Arron Wood regarding environmental sustainability, Glenn Pearsall on improving feedback; Tim Cope on risk taking, and Winston Lewinsmith who gave invaluable advice on how to minimise the risk of cyber fraud.

Another Principal completed the AICD Company Directors' Course, which is of great benefit to governance both at System and school level. The plan to cover the cost of ESA Principals completing this course is ongoing, with allowance for two Principals per year to undertake the studies.

With an expanding membership base, the intention and capacity to provide relevant and worthwhile professional development opportunities, and a group of committed and supportive Directors and school leaders, the future continues to look bright for Ecumenical Schools Australia, its members, and the member school communities.

Strategic Intent	Objective	Strategy	Outcome	Timeline Revision (if applicable)
Quality Teaching	Support professional learning in relation to research based best teaching practice within member schools	Engage expert speakers to speak at ESA events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speakers such as Glenn Pearsall, Lee Crockett and Ben Righetti engaged to work with various networks to support advancement in teaching practice 	Ongoing
	Increase collaboration between member schools for greater exchange of ideas, research and best practice	Provide opportunities leaders from different member schools to meet, engage, and share practical ideas around quality teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Conference is attended by over 65 leaders from ESA member schools. Program combines formal presentations from teaching and industry experts along with opportunities for informal discussion and collaboration between attendees • A range of collaborative special interest networks exists to encourage discussion regarding teaching and learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principals - Heads of Teaching and Learning - Deputy Principals - Heads of Junior School - Support and Enrichment - Heads of Year 9 and Middle School - Faith and Wellbeing - Heads of English (new in 2023) - Heads of Science (new in 2023) 	Annually, Term 3 Ongoing
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful large scale professional learning event conducted in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 	Shift in focus following COVID – regular meetings of smaller networks more beneficial

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Quality Learning	Commitment to implementation of national curriculum initiatives	Restore the focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics within member schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate collaboration between teachers of science, technology, engineering and mathematics • Pooling of resources in specialised areas for joint activities, curriculum development and practical work. This action will be better enabled once collaborative framework between member schools is established. 	<p>Heads of Science network trial 2023, will be rolled out to other faculties if successful</p> <p>Ongoing – resources are shared between network members and available on member portal</p>
		Improve the take up of foreign languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage sharing of highly successful LOTE teachers between member schools to overcome the difficulties of attracting good LOTE teachers to regional areas • Video link classrooms at different member schools for remote LOTE class sharing 	Still under consideration – timetabling and distance challenging
	Use data to guide learning programme reform	Analyse data available at school level to identify areas for improvement or adjustment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review NAPLAN, ICAS, VCE and other student assessment data against past years – addressed at school level as part of annual reporting process • Track individual student learning expectations and outcomes throughout their schooling years to determine programme weaknesses - addressed at school level • Continue to provide professional learning opportunities at school level in relation to data analysis. 	<p>Ongoing at school level</p> <p>Ongoing at school level</p> <p>Ongoing at school level</p>

Strategic Intent	Objective	Strategy	Outcome	Timeline Revision (if applicable)
	Improve learning quality through feedback	Provide strong communication to students and parents with regard to student progress and achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers at member schools to provide informative, accurate and clear student reports • Teachers at member schools to provide focussed, constructive feedback to students in classroom and in relation to class work • Encourage open lines of communication between teachers, students and parents • Glenn Pearsall engaged as Conference and network speaker with practical support and guidance around successful feedback practice 	<p>At least twice a year, ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing at school level</p> <p>Ongoing at school level</p> <p>2022 and 2023</p>
	Focus on school-wide literacy, numeracy and LOTE	Member schools to develop school-wide literacy, numeracy and LOTE goals and strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member schools to develop a list of literacy, numeracy and LOTE goals and strategies - addressed at school level • Member schools to provide a self-assessment against literacy, numeracy and LOTE goals set 	<p>At school level, ongoing</p> <p>At school level, ongoing</p>
Empowered School Leadership	Develop leadership styles and capacities of Principals	Provide professional learning opportunities to assist school leaders in developing their leadership styles and providing alternative styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal professional development sessions to be conducted at each Directors' Meeting focusing on leadership related topics • Mentor programme for new Principals – System-provided support and advice to first-time Principals during their first year in the role 	<p>Ongoing, once per term</p> <p>Ongoing, as applicable</p>
	Improve school governance	Provide professional learning in relation to governance processes and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual professional learning session for Board Members at member schools to obtain updates in relation to governance requirements and expectations 	Annually as part of AGM
	Improve system governance	Provide professional learning in relation to governance processes and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESA covers the cost of two Principals per year to complete AICD Company Directors' Course to raise governance understanding and standards within the System 	From 2014, ongoing

Strategic Intent	Objective	Strategy	Action	Timeline Revision (if applicable)
Empowered School Leadership (cont'd)	Develop leadership capacities of other school leaders	Provide opportunities leaders from different member schools to meet and engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of collaborative special interest networks exists to encourage discussion regarding school leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principals - Business Managers - Heads of HR - Registrars 	Ongoing
Transparency and Accountability	Meet all accountability and reporting requirements in line with Government expectations	Guide members through the various reporting processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System Office to communicate to members, via email and in person, reporting requirements and time frames in relation to Financial Questionnaire, Annual Report, My School, Financial Accountability, Census, Compliance and all other accountability measures as may arise, with at least one month's notice for response time • System Office to check all reports for accuracy and compliance prior to submission 	Ongoing, annually Ongoing, annually
	Determine financial viability of member schools	Monitor schools' financial performance and enrolments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct in depth review of school financial data annually using financial health template developed internally • Determine whether further action or assistance is required on a case by case basis 	Ongoing, annually Ongoing, annually as applicable
	Increase financial and governance standards within member schools	Provide professional learning opportunities to educate Business Managers in governance and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Manager professional learning to be conducted at each Business Managers' Meeting focusing on governance, accountability and finance related topics 	Ongoing, once per term
Meeting Student Need	Achieve best practice for student care and well-being	Collaborate with member schools to determine best practice benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish System wide generic codes of best practice in relation to student well-being and care which are able to be applied in the unique environment of each member school 	Child Safe Standards culture at front of all actions

Strategic Intent	Objective	Strategy	Action	Timeline Revision (if applicable)
Meeting Student Need (cont'd)	Distribute Commonwealth recurrent funds using a needs-based funding distribution model	ESA's needs-based funding distribution arrangement complies with needs-based funding principles by the Commonwealth as required under the Act (subsection 78 (3)(a)) and Regulations (subsection 51(3) and 61(4))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply base funding to each member school discounted by the capacity to contribute (CTC) of each member in accordance with individual members' DMI scores • Additional funding to be provided to students and schools with additional needs in order to support student achievement, including students with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and schools based on location and size 	Ongoing
	Distribute Victorian recurrent funding according to FAM modelling		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate funds to member schools according to Victorian DEECD advice 	Ongoing

Publication and Review of Implementation Plan

This implementation plan is publicly available via the Ecumenical Schools Australia Ltd [website](#).

The implementation plan will be reviewed annually in December by the System Office and Directors to measure achievement against each action and timeline. Results of the review and subsequent changes to the implementation plan will be published on the ESA website and updates each December thereafter.

Needs Based Funding Distribution Principles

- 1 No school will receive less funding as a member of ESA than it would if it was its own approved authority. Funding is distributed to schools in line with the Australian Government's needs based funding model, with the CtC of each member determined by its individual DMI score.
- 2 If there are funds remaining after the first criterion has been met, the remaining funds will be distributed to member schools or expended by the System for the benefit of member schools in order to assist schools in meeting the objectives set out in the Ecumenical Schools Australia System Implementation Plan. The actual method of distribution will be determined annually and agreed upon by ESA members.