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## *School Improvement Plan 2017-2020*

### *Introduction*

*School improvement requires a targeted and focused approach on key areas within a school community. After careful consideration, Snowy Mountains Christian School (SMCS) has identified a manageable set of priorities to guide the school's improvement efforts over the next few years.*

*These improvement areas have been carefully developed and referenced with the school's:*

- Board Strategic Plan,*
- Marketing Plan,*
- Pedagogy Improvement Plan*
- Property Plan*
- ICT Plan*

*The School Improvement Plan is a valuable tool to assist in driving continued improvement in the quality of teaching and learning at SMCS. The School has made use of the National School Improvement Tool to guide the development of the School Improvement Plan. The National School Improvement Tool brings together findings from international research into the practices of highly effective schools and school leaders.*

*Snowy Mountains Christian School Ltd (SMCS Ltd) was established in 1996, by the Cooma Baptist Church.*

*The focus of the school is to provide an affordable, holistic education for all students in a distinctly Christian community.*

**Core Vision:** *To provide the opportunity for a Christian education to all families on the Snowy Monaro.*

**Core Purpose** *SMCS exists to prepare children for life by training them in partnership with their parents, to grow in character, skills and knowledge; realising their full potential in Christ to serve, as they understand more of God's truth in an atmosphere of God's love and mutual respect.*

**Core Values** *Each Core Value springs out of a Christ-centred worldview where every thought, word and action is consistent with the person of Jesus Christ.*

***LOVE** - Love God and each other.*

***RESPECT** - Respect each other in word and action*

***TRUTH** - Grow in the knowledge of the truth*

***INTEGRITY** - Possess and express integrity*

**School Motto** *'In Christ we strive for excellence'*

**Philosophy** *We see our role as a partnership with parents to educate their children. The Bible clearly states that children should be brought up to base their lives on the commandments of God and to learn to love God with all their heart, soul and mind. We also seek to make Christ known to the Cooma Monaro region.*

*At SMCS, we aim to nurture the whole person- intellectually, spiritually, physically, emotionally, and socially. Students are actively challenged to become active participants in their own educational journey.*

*It is our aim and prayer that every student will have a positive experience at school, through developing healthy relationships, achieving their personal best, maintaining physical and emotional well-being, and developing a greater understanding of Christian faith and character.*

**Taking all of the Bible to all of Life.**

### **School Context**

*SMCS, established in 1996, lies at the heart of the Cooma Monaro region and it is with the heart of God that the whole school community engages in teaching students through a biblical worldview about this world and how to impact it for the glory of God.*

*The School has been developed as a ministry of the Cooma Baptist Church and shares the campus with the church. The relationship is mutually beneficial in terms of simultaneously attracting new membership to CBC and enrolments to SMCS, reinforcing church and school ministry programs and missional efforts, and sharing costly facilities.*

*The Principal, teachers and staff are engaged in nurturing the character, academic, spiritual, emotional and physical health of approximately 75 to 90 students from Kindergarten to Year 10. Through smaller class sizes, rigorous pedagogy and nurturing relationships between teachers and students, students have progressed in their studies in accordance with the NSW Education Standards Authority curriculum. Other activities and events include serving on the Student Service Council, taking part in excursions, Book Week activities, international competition papers, performing at the Music, Drama and Dessert Night, enjoying school snowsports, camp adventures and many more; students are given opportunities to learn, develop and apply skills beyond the classroom and into the world, making their mark on the world.*

*The School relies heavily on the warm community by which it is supported, including the many people who volunteer their time, whether it is on the school board, tending the school grounds, or listening to students read, it is with gratitude that we acknowledge and thank these people.*

**Biblically Faithful  
Academically Rigorous  
Culturally Engaging Education**

## *Developing the School Strategic Improvement Plan:*

### *Background*

*Like all schools, SMCS is multifaceted. While all components of the School Strategic Plan are centred on the need to improve and enhance student performance across all curriculum areas, the plan also takes into account:*

- Recent changes in curriculum across the state and the nation*
- Findings from recent research into the best practice in neurological and physical developments of children, student learning, quality pedagogical processes and school improvement processes.*
- The interests and beliefs of the school community.*
- The skills and knowledge of the school staff and interested community members.*
- Efficiency and effective management of all resources and the personnel within the school.*

### *Self-Assessment Process*

*A key resource used to develop this school improvement plan has been the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) developed by the Australian Council for Educational research (2012) which has developed nine inter-related 'domains' designed to assist in making evaluation and actions more effective.*

*SMCS's Strategic Plan has been developed as a result of consultation with a range of stakeholders including:*

- Parents*
- Teachers and the School Executive Leadership team*
- SMCS Board members*
- Members of the Cooma community*

*The Strategic Plan details current education trends and expectations with a focus on meeting the individual needs of each student and takes into account the need to:*

- *Understand how learning best occurs*
- *Understand the increasing use of information Communication technology (ICT), both in the classroom and outside of the classroom*
- *Understand the multicultural characteristics of the local community and the history of the community.*
- *Understand the need to have an international focus on curriculum*
- *Understand the need for effective and relevant pastoral care in the context of global social change.*

### ***Self-Assessment Tool***

*Comprised of nine domains, the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT)<sup>1</sup> assists schools to review and reflect on their efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning.*

*1. There is a strong and explicit improvement agenda for the school which sets measurable improvements in outcomes for students. The Board, school principal and other school leaders are united, committed to and explicit about their core objective - to improve learning outcomes for all students in the school.*

*This is achieved through the use of formal and informal assessments, data from NAPLAN, the Professional Development program, class visits and regular reflection on teaching and learning practices.*

*2. The School has developed and is implementing a plan for the systematic collection of a range of student outcome data including:*

- *both test data and quality classroom assessments*
- *professional development in analysing and interpreting data*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1019&context=tll>

- *The 3-year Literacy and Numeracy program which depends upon continuous assessment, reflection and strategies for improving classroom practices.*
- *The Deep Critical Thinking Program assists to target areas where weakness can occur. When we say we want learners to develop the skills to find “deep”, “critical” or “innovative” ways of achieving learning goals, we do not mean that their solutions have never been tried or done before. The goal is not the solution itself or how to measure its innovativeness or uniqueness, but the process the student has undertaken to arrive at the solution. These are the skills that will translate beyond their learning in the present moment into future endeavors.*

*Results from external sources (eg. NAPLAN) are evaluated carefully and are used to inform teaching programs to assist students where the needs occur.*

*3. The School recognises that all students are made in the image of God and are uniquely gifted. The School is driven by a deep belief mindset that every student is capable of successful learning. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents. There is a strong collegial culture of mutual trust and support among teachers and school leaders and parents are treated as partners in the process of student learning and wellbeing. The School works to maintain a learning environment that is safe, respectful, inclusive and that promotes intellectual rigour. The multicultural demographic of Cooma, with its history intertwined with the construction of the Snowy Mountains Scheme, has contributed to the appreciation and value shown to the students' varying cultural backgrounds.*

4. The School applies its resources (staff time, expertise, funds, facilities, materials) in a targeted manner to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of all students. Using the Financial Viability Framework,<sup>2</sup> the school assesses the economic reality, market awareness, early warning signs, information for decision making and appropriate skills and strengths in order to analyse its financial vitality.

- Staff contribute to the decision making process in regard to the creation of the annual budget.
- The class groupings allow for flexible learning environments to best address the specific needs of the students.
- The Kids Hope Mentoring Program and counselling, provided when required, assist the well-being of the students.
- The employment of part-time and voluntary Teachers' Aids is appreciated and utilised.

5. The School places a priority on attracting, retaining and developing the best possible teachers. SMCS expects all teachers to be highly committed to the continuous improvement of their own teaching and to be focused on the development of knowledge and skills required to improve student learning. Opportunities are given:

- To attend courses,
- Build professional networks,
- Collaboration and
- Workshops for Professional Development (2 weeks each year)
- A class visits program where each teacher visits a class and is visited by another colleague, with the aim of mentoring, encouraging and sharpening their skills and knowledge.

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<sup>2</sup> NSW Education Standards Authority

- *Annual appraisals are also conducted to highlight areas of strength and areas to grow. A culture of continual improvement and accountability among colleagues assists in identifying creative solutions to challenges and areas of improvement among staff.*

*6. SMCS has an explicit, coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery across the years of school which makes clear what (and when) teachers should teach and students should learn:*

- *The outcomes are mapped across all year groups and checked and evaluated by the Primary or High School coordinators. These outcomes are then communicated via Student Handbooks, Parent Information sessions and notices.*
- *The School curriculum includes a strong focus on the development of cross curricular skills and attributes such as literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology capability, deep, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical behaviour and intercultural understanding.*
- *The development of the Deep, Critical Thinking program seeks to enhance and develop the skills students need to be positive contributors to society and prepare them for being able to problem solve in their chosen career.*
- *Professional development is provided to build staff skills in curriculum planning and development.*
- *The School plans off-site learning opportunities such as excursions, camps and special learning days, such as the Snowy Hydro Water Day, Annual Snowsport Program, and Annual Surfing Program.*

*7. SMCS places a high priority on ensuring that, in their day-to-day teaching, classroom teachers identify and address the learning needs of individual students, including high-achieving students:*

- Teachers are encouraged and supported to monitor closely the progress of individuals, identify learning difficulties and tailor classroom activities to levels of readiness and need. Coordinators follow up on each program and conduct class visits.*
- Differentiated lessons are a part of each program and students receive extra assistance when resources are available.*
- The teachers work to ensure that all students - including high-achieving students - are appropriately engaged, challenged and extended by designing classroom activities to meet students' learning needs, levels of readiness, interests, aspirations and motivations.*
- As part of the Deep Critical Thinking Program teachers encourage and assist students to monitor their own learning and to set goals for future learning.*
- Communication with parents and families provides information regarding student's progress via Parent Teacher Interviews, Class Dojo and informal meetings.*

*8. The School Principal and other school leaders recognise that highly effective teaching is the key to improving student learning throughout the school. The Leadership Team is encouraged to read widely and are provided with appropriate professional reading. The Leadership team, including the Principal, spend time working with teachers, providing regular and timely feedback on teaching and, where appropriate, modelling effective teaching strategies.*

*9. SMCS actively seeks ways to enhance student learning and wellbeing by partnering with parents and families, other education and training institutions, local businesses and community organisations:*

- The small local community of Cooma enables positive connections to occur and this is highly valued by the school.*
- Partnerships with churches, music specialists, sporting associations, retail outlets and tradespeople are important to SMCS.*



	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Strategic Plan</b> <i>Incorporating the Pedagogy Improvement Plan</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Deep Critical Thinking Program</i></li> </ul>	<i>Introduced and evaluated</i>	<i>Continual revision and application</i>	<i>Evident in all classrooms</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Development of Engineering/STEM class</i></li> </ul>	<i>Research and investigate how to best integrate into the school's existing structure and/or create new learning opportunities</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Literacy and numeracy</i></li> </ul>	<i>Introduction and professional development for Primary School staff members</i>	<i>Continued training and development. Master classes</i>	<i>Continued monitoring and self-assessment</i>	<i>Used fully in Primary school section</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Prioritise prayer</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>P&amp;F pray weekly during term time</i></li> <li>• <i>Introduce "Week of Prayer" in conjunction with church</i></li> </ul>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>After Hours Tutoring Program</i></li> </ul>	<i>Research need and availability of staff</i>	<i>Commence and continually evaluate</i>	<i>Ongoing if needed</i>	<i>Ongoing if needed</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Effective communication</i></li> </ul>	<i>Evaluate the effectiveness of current:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Newsletter</i></li> <li>• <i>P/T Interviews</i></li> </ul>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>

	2017	2018	2019	2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email</li> <li>SMCS Facebook</li> <li>Student Handbooks</li> <li>Class Dojo</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student welfare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer support</li> <li>Kid's Hope Mentoring program</li> <li>Mission Trips</li> <li>Counselling</li> <li>Student Service Counsel (SSC)</li> </ul>	Evaluate and continue		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate possibilities for Years 11 and 12, depending upon student numbers and school growth.</li> </ul>	<p>Research the process to apply for accreditation and paperwork required. Assess opportunities and liabilities if moving in this direction.</p>			

	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Property</b> (Working in conjunction with the Strategic Plan)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase the front road reserve</li> </ul>	Discussions with council and surveying	Complete purchase and develop plan for its use.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve facilities especially "first impressions" from Mittagang Rd.</li> </ul>	Research best ways and means to achieve this.	Commence project	Project completed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of multi-purpose digital learning classroom with facilities for video conferencing and a variety of technologies.</li> </ul>	Research possible use of room 1 and computer room 2 being opened up and updated for this purpose.			
<b>ICT</b> (Working in conjunction with the Strategic Plan)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NBN</li> </ul>	Research	Connect		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spiceworks</li> </ul>	Install and trial Help Desk	Train and implement		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0365</li> </ul>	Research, trial with a few staff members	Train all users (staff, students, board)	Used by all throughout the school	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Server upgrade/migration to cloud</li> </ul>	Assess current capabilities and replace areas of urgent need	Implementing a reliable, secure and available computing environment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Computers</li> </ul>	Replacement of staff computers when needed	Research best replacement options for whole school	Action replacement of all student computers	

	2017	2018	2019	2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade Wi-Fi</li> </ul>	<p>Research completed in 2016.</p> <p>Upgrade Wi-Fi</p>			
<p><b>Marketing Plan</b> (Working in conjunction with the Strategic Plan)</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advertising Sign at front - electronic</li> </ul>	<p>Research cost and effectiveness.</p> <p>Commence fundraising</p>	<p>Installation of sign.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular communication with churches</li> </ul>	<p>SMCS written update to churches each semester.</p>	<p>SMCS written update to churches each semester.</p>	<p>SMCS written update to churches each semester.</p>	<p>SMCS written update to churches each semester.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facebook and Website maintenance</li> </ul>	<p>Commenced in 2016.</p> <p>Continued 2017 with evaluation from members of the school and church community.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicity Officer</li> </ul>	<p>Research position and create role statement.</p> <p>Seek person for the role.</p>	<p>Publicity Officer in place.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playtime</li> </ul>	<p>Principal to attend when possible to engage with parents.</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connections with Cooma Community</li> </ul>	<p>Whole school involvement in 'Snowy Hydro Water day.'</p>			