



*‘I have come that you may have life, life to the full’ (John 10:10)*

The wellbeing landscape of the Catholic school incorporates all aspects of school community life from students’ physical, intellectual, moral, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing and development to the safe and supportive environment in which they learn.

To fulfil its mission, the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) seeks to support schools in strengthening their educational endeavour for the development of the ‘whole person’ and to contribute to ‘...the centrality of the human person in the educational project of the Catholic school’ (n. 9). Therefore the CEOM aims to strengthen educational communities through emphasising the connections between student wellbeing, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and curriculum based learning, so that students can be supported and optimal learning outcomes achieved.

## Setting Directions for a Strategic Approach to Wellbeing

The Catholic Education Office Melbourne sees wellbeing as fundamental to successful learning. Children and young people who are happy, confident and able to establish meaningful relationships are better placed to achieve positive learning outcomes. The Catholic school environment must provide a safe and supportive environment that contributes to positive learning outcomes and the wellbeing of students, staff and the broader community.

The *Student Wellbeing Strategy 2006-2010* has been designed to articulate the ways in which the CEOM Student Wellbeing Unit will lead and support Catholic school communities in the Archdiocese of Melbourne in the promotion of wellbeing. The aim of the strategy is to promote an optimal learning environment to support student engagement and learning outcomes.

A foundation principle informing the overall strategy is to promote a safe and supportive school environment which celebrates inclusion and models values which are consistent with the Gospel teachings of Jesus. In other words, ‘the Catholic school, far more than any other, must be a community whose aim is the transmission of values for living.’ (The Catholic School, 1977, no. 53)

The *Student Wellbeing Strategy* provides the opportunity to develop congruence between the evidence base related to wellbeing and the emerging evidence promoting schools as key sites for the promotion of social emotional learning and emphasising the promotion of mental health. This can be achieved through a whole of school approach that provides an opportunity to develop an optimal learning environment for all students through the promotion of three key components of school life:

- Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
- School Ethos and Environment
- Community Partnerships (World Health Organisation 1996).

The connection between the promotion of wellbeing and positive learning outcomes is clear. Research on health and wellbeing shows that schools are important environments for the promotion of wellbeing in children and young people. Further, positive learning outcomes occur when delivered through a framework of social and emotional learning (SEL) approaches. Together they provide a sound basis for developing future healthy relationships and ultimately, achieving success in life.



The *Student Wellbeing Strategy* supports schools in implementing actions to:

- improve classroom and school climate in Catholic schools;
- improve pro-social outcomes;
- maximise teaching and learning approaches for positive learning;
- create safe and supportive environments in Catholic schools;
- improve connections across the whole school community.

Support to schools is delivered through three key wellbeing initiatives:

### Student Wellbeing Coordinators

A key platform of the *Student Wellbeing Strategy*, is to support the appointment of a Student Wellbeing Coordinator (SWC) in every primary school across the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Funding provides for a time allocation for SWCs within the school.

A primary goal of the *Student Wellbeing Strategy* is to work towards ensuring all SWCs will have completed or be in the process of completing credentialed learning under the provisions of the Master of Education (Student Wellbeing) offered through a partnership with The University of Melbourne.

The CEOM also provides two days of central Professional Learning for SWCs. This enables SWCs to network with each other, to share good practice and to develop skills and understandings relevant to their work. In addition, SWCs are supported through the establishment of 38 clusters across the Archdiocese which are designed to support SWCs in their work through the provision of ongoing professional learning and strategic planning and implementation at the local level. Each cluster has a Cluster Convenor who liaises with the CEOM Facilitator to progress the work of the cluster.

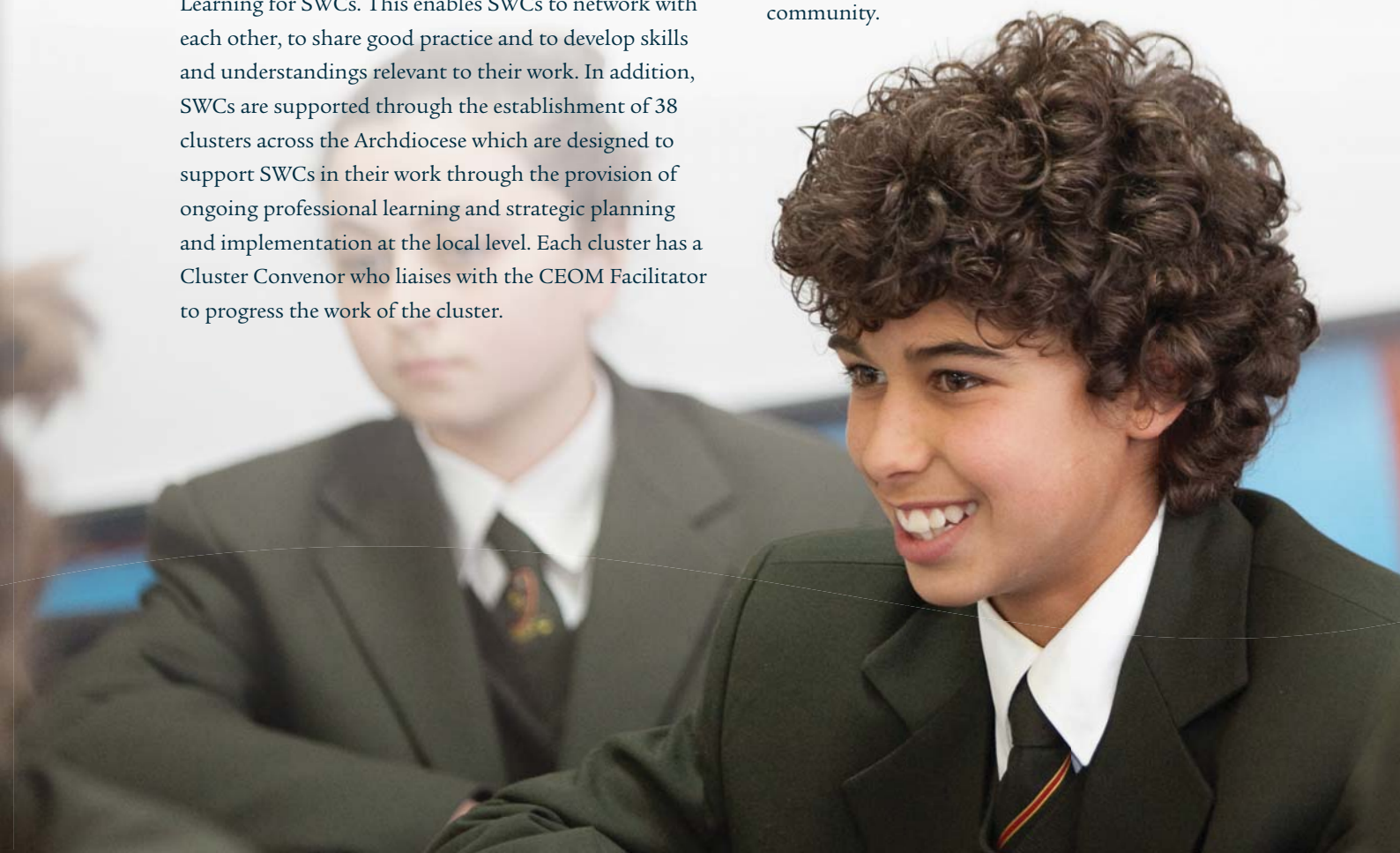
### Social and Emotional Learning in Catholic School Communities

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process for integrating thinking, feeling and behaviour to achieve important social/life tasks, meet personal and social needs and develop the skills necessary to become a productive, contributing member of society.

To assist schools in planning, implementing and sustaining SEL, the CEOM has published a set of guidelines titled '*SEL in Catholic School Communities: Guidelines for a Sustainable Whole-School Approach to Social and Emotional Learning.*' (2009). These guidelines have been developed to guide and support schools in the implementation of a school based strategy for SEL.

### School Community Partnerships

Fostering community development and partnerships is integral to an effective wellbeing strategy. Partnerships engender support for the development and wellbeing of young people and their families and serve to maximise student engagement and achievement. A number of strategies support this purpose including the Schools as Core Social Centres (SACSC) initiative. The initiative supports development of a whole school approach to wellbeing and provides a framework for the engagement of the school and broader community. SACSC supports the development and maintenance of links between staff, students and parents at the school level and encourages schools to build partnerships with the broader community.



# EXPLORING PATHWAYS FOR PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION

The establishment of 'portfolio areas' as a key part of the Student Wellbeing Strategy enables the Student Wellbeing Unit to provide service to schools and support to local level initiatives in a strategic and planned way as part of continuous school improvement.

Some of these portfolio areas include:

- Student Wellbeing Coordinators Strategy
- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Strategy
- Schools as Core Social Centres (SACSC)
- School Community
- Restorative Practices
- Community Arts
- Drug Education
- School Attendance Strategy
- SWAP website (in partnership with the University of Melbourne)
- Transition and Engagement
- Values Education

Strategic partnerships have been established with universities, government and non government organisations and agencies to further enhance these portfolio areas.

Some of these partnership organisations include:

- Ardoch Youth Foundation
- Australian Catholic University
- Australian Research Council (Linkage Grants)
- Australian Youth Research Centre
- Centacare Catholic Family Services
- Centre for Relational Learning (New Mexico)
- Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
- Doxa Youth Foundation
- Edith Cowan University (WA)
- Marist Youth Care (Sydney)
- Meeting Point
- National Centre Against Bullying (Alannah & Madeleine Foundation)
- The University of Melbourne
- Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)
- Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth)