

# VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS INC.

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ASSOCIATION  
OVERVIEW



Unity  
Empathy  
Courage  
Optimism  
Daring  
Reflective  
Discerning

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Victorian Association of Catholic Primary School Principals (VACPSP) acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, sea country and waterways across Victoria on which we proudly gather and commit ourselves to the pursuit of educational excellence and opportunity for young people. We honour and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

## PRAYER

Loving and generous God,

Awaken us to your presence as we continue to discern what is life-giving, empowering and sustainable for the good of all in the communities we serve.

May our inspiration and commitment deepen as we reflect on and respond to the vision of the Gospel and the voice of the Spirit.

Transform us in and through our sacred work so that we radiate for others the compassion of God leaning down into the frailty of life and the daily realities of our service for others.

Amen.

- Mission Discernment, 'A resource for decision making the Catholic Tradition, August 2012.

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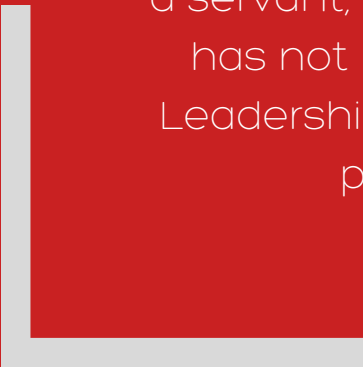
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## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

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“For leadership there is only one road: service. There is no other way. If you have many qualities, the ability to communicate, etc., but you are not a servant, your leadership will fail, it is useless, it has not power to gather [people] together... Leadership must enter into service, but with a personal love for the people.”

Pope Francis, 12 May 2014

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# FOREWORD

“The Spirit nurtures us with  
living hope”.

Pope Francis

In the late 1990s Catholic primary school Principals informally gathered from across diocesan, state, national and church jurisdictions to engage in dialogue about principalship in Catholic primary schools; the future professional needs of leaders in Catholic primary schools, the changing landscape of leadership in Catholic primary schools and how leaders could contribute their “un - encumbered” voice to the broader Catholic education community.

These gatherings eventually led to formalised State and National based principal associations focusing on collegiality, the professional needs of Principals, a State and National perspective within education, and an informed principal voice contributing broadly to both the secular education discussion. The focus was around Catholic primary school leadership, the mission of Catholic primary schools, faith formation and curriculum. The spirit of Catholic principalship as a collegial activity and vocational in calling, enacted through professional qualifications and training, emerged strongly in Victoria.

In early times this work was undertaken by the fledging Catholic schools’ industrial union via a principal sub-committee. Today this Union is the Independent Education Union, Vic Tas. In 2007, however, the VACPSP was formally adopted as the Victorian association for primary principals’ professional representation.

At a national level, Victorian Principals are engaged with the Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association (ACPPA), whose structure automatically gave the Victorian VACPSP President broad membership. Through this relationship, Victorian Principals also contribute to the work and functions of the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) via the National Advisory Council (NAC).

Following an extensive planning, consultation and implementation process, the President of the VACPSP commenced in a full-time and funded capacity in April 2021. This organisational shift marked the significant development and professionalism of the VACPSP and commenced the new era of stronger representation and advocacy, greater enhancement of the capacity of principals and heightened engagement with Principals across Victoria to drive excellence throughout the Catholic education sector.

The VACPSP continues to lead with strength and vision and is a beacon of prosperity for Catholic primary school Principals across the state. Catholic Primary school Principals embrace the mission of the Church in education, demonstrate a commitment to contribute collegiality to their profession and work in partnership with school governance to bring life-long learning and encounters with God to all who want to experience this hospitality.

The work of the VACPSP is guided by the Pope’s call to “look others in the eye and listen to what they have to say, to build rapport, to be sensitive to the questions of our sisters and brothers, to let ourselves be enriched by the variety of charisms, vocations, and ministries.”

**Michael Gray**

President, VACPSP Inc

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# INTRODUCTION

The Victorian Association of Catholic Primary School Principals (VACPSP) is the peak professional body for Catholic primary school Principals throughout Victoria, supporting those principals with the requirements and expectations their role, with an energised focus on building their capacity, skills and wellbeing to ensure that Catholic education in Victoria continues to grow and thrive.

The VACPSP emerged from the work of the Primary Principals' Professional Forum (PPPF). The PPPF and its visionary members resolved that a dedicated and formal professional body was required to provide exclusive and dedicated support to Victorian Catholic primary Principals to ensure that they could meet the requirements of their role whilst delivering quality educational outcomes for students in Victoria. The association would be a vehicle for principals to share and collaborate and support each other in what was becoming an increasingly complex role, whilst extending the reach to all Principals in Victoria, not just those based in Melbourne.

From those discussions, the VACPSP was formed and incorporated in August 2007. The VACPSP has received recognition and support from the various Directors of Education and the Archbishop of Melbourne to undertake its purported function and identify as a Catholic body.

Since incorporation, the VACPSP has grown from the initial iterations of the PFFF to promote direct communication between Principals and the Director of Catholic education in Melbourne, to a representative body that supports and enhances the personal and professional capacity and wellbeing of Principals through a wide range of initiatives and offerings.

The VACPSP now also represents its Victorian members at the National level, as a member and director of the Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association (ACPPA).

The VACPSP remains steadfast in its pursuit of leading and representing Catholic Principals with a strong and active voice, enhancing the value of Catholic education in Victoria.

The VACPSP has worked assiduously, with strong leadership, to entrench itself as the peak professional body for Victorian Catholic primary school Principals, delivering a consistent and active representative voice for its members, raising awareness of and addressing matters to improve the professional and personal skills and wellbeing of its members. Its current strategic objectives are to continue to raise its profile, visibility and influence for its Principal members, to deliver tenacity and strength in its representative and advocacy capacity, supporting the professional learning and wellbeing needs of principals and develop strong, trusted and valued relationships with diocesan offices and other key stakeholders and groups within Catholic education.







# MISSION, VISION AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The role of a Principal is fundamental to the maintenance and development of the mission and identity of the Catholic Church through the embodiment of the life of the local church. As spiritual and educational leaders, Principals are uniquely skilled and positioned to generate a culture of community learning by embracing the families and persons within their community.

To ensure that Principals are empowered to remain as leaders to their community, a strong and active professional association is paramount to building the personal and professional capacity of Principals. Through the active pursuit of its vision and mission in all functions and decision making, the VACPSP has advanced the support available to and lived experience of Catholic primary school Principals in Victoria. The VACPSP leads the way for Principals' professional associations across the country with its innovative and preeminent member representation.

## Vision

Catholic Principals leading with a strong, courageous and active voice, promoting educational excellence for Catholic schools.\*

## Mission

To achieve our vision by:

- Promoting the mission of the Church in Catholic Primary Schools
- Providing opportunities for collaboration and professional discussion amongst Catholic Primary School Principals
- Liaising with relevant authorities
- Acting as a catalyst and leading initiatives to enrich the work of Catholic Primary School Principals

## Leadership of the Association

The VACPSP is led with experience, commitment and energy by its Management Team and Principal Council.

The VACPSP President, Michael Gray, has led the association since 2016, overseeing a number of key strategic projects and achievements that have resulted in consistent membership growth, strong financial performance and industry-leading support and advocacy for VACPSP members.

The President is supported in guiding the association by the Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. These leaders support the functions of the association and ensure accountability, transparency and compliance with all relevant regulatory requirements.

VACPSP operations and key decision making are effected by Business Operations Manager, Carmel Cameron, Projects Officer, Jennie Douglas and the collective input and support of the 18 person Principal Council.

## ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW



Consistent and uncompromising representation, voice and advocacy



Commitment to building principal wellbeing support



Increased awareness for the dedicated legal support and advice for members



Improved and frequent communication with VACPSP members



Zealous delivery of the VACPSP strategic plan built by principals for principals



Commitment to sponsorship opportunities to drive the financial support for the VACPSP and principal Networks



Increased Presidential attendance at network meetings



Steadfast national voice for Victorian principals



Very low cost for schools



Unleash the creativity, collegiality, expertise and commitment within Catholic primary school principals

### Strategic Direction

The VACPSP has maintained a number of strategic plans since its establishment. As the VACPSP evolves and grows, so too do the strategic objectives and aims of the association, to ensure that the VACPSP is continually focused on meeting the demands and requirements of Principals in their role. The strategic plans are developed by the VACPSP Principal Council with oversight and guidance by the VACPSP Management Team. The strategic plan of the VACPSP is developed with input from state-wide membership, small focus groups, stakeholder groups and senior leadership within Catholic education (facilitated by MACS Executive Officer on behalf of CECV), and implemented in 5-year periods. The strategic plan identifies the strengths of the association to guide the ongoing enhancement of its achievements and membership offerings, whilst also recognising opportunities for growth and greater impact within the Catholic education sector in Victoria and across Australia.

The strategic plan is put to and endorsed by all VACPSP Principal members, to ensure accountability and engagement with Principals across the state. This collective approach ensures that the functions and activities of the VACPSP not only reach but positively impact the lived professional experience of Principals and the educational outcomes delivered in their communities.

The VACPSP has worked assiduously, with strong leadership, to entrench itself as the peak professional body for Victorian Catholic primary school Principals, delivering a consistent and active representative voice for its members, raising awareness of and addressing matters to improve the professional and personal skills and wellbeing of its members. Its current strategic objectives are to continue to raise its profile, visibility and influence for its Principal members, to deliver tenacity and strength in its representative and advocacy capacity, supporting the professional learning and wellbeing needs of principals and develop strong, trusted and valued relationships with diocesan offices and other key stakeholders and groups within Catholic education.

### Relationships with Key Catholic Education Bodies

In the pursuit of its key strategic objectives and functions, the VACPSP endeavours to maintain positive professional relationships with the various bodies and diocesan offices. The VACPSP, through its President, has worked tirelessly to engage with and influence each of the four Diocesan Offices (Melbourne, Ballarat, Sandhurst and Sale) on matters relating to and effecting the role of primary Principals in Victoria through regular per school term CECV Director meetings facilitated by the MACS Senior Executives. The VACPSP is also engaged with Catholic Education Commission Victoria on strategic matters via significant leadership and focused working parties.

## ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

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These working parties have included

### **Enhancing Catholic School Identity**

Catholic schools' leaders across Victoria are challenged, and importantly, supported by the VACPSP to: articulate their identity and vision and express their distinctiveness as Catholic schools in a society where the Christian faith is increasingly marginalised.

### **Child Safety**

The care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people is a central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education and the leaders leading schools (Principals). The VACPSP is committed to strengthened practice for the protection of children in line with the Victorian Government child safety reforms.

### **Integrated Catholic Online Network (ICON)**

The Integrated Catholic Online Network (ICON) project is a collaborative project between Victorian Catholic schools and the four diocesan Catholic education offices.

### **Emergency Management. (Flood, Fire, Disasters and COVID)**

The VACPSP has been committed to ensuring that all Catholic school principals develop the knowledge, skills and abilities and are as prepared as possible for dealing with emergencies including natural disasters and pandemics. The safety of children and staff is paramount. Every school has an emergency management plan that outlines responsibilities, procedures and actions in the event of an emergency.

### **Occupational Health & Safety and Workcover**

The VACPSP have supported this working party of the CECV as active and engaged members. The VACPSP president and a primary school principal attend to work to support policy development, education training, feedback on safety operations, process, procedures and program.

### **NCEC Conference**

The VACPSP have supported the NCEC with its conference, assisting with program development, advertising and engagement with Principals throughout the country.

The VACPSP also engage with:

- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority - provides high quality curriculum, assessment and reporting for all Victorian students by developing and implementing the VCE, VCAL, AusVELS, NAPLAN and VELDF.
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority - the statutory authority responsible for ensuring that providers of education and training (including course and qualification owners) meet quality standards. The site also contains the State Register, a database of registered education and school providers.
- Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner - online safety education for Australian children and young people.
- Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP Vic) Recognizing, respecting and defending the rights of children and young people
- The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) is an independent statutory authority for the teaching profession, whose primary function is to regulate members of the teaching profession

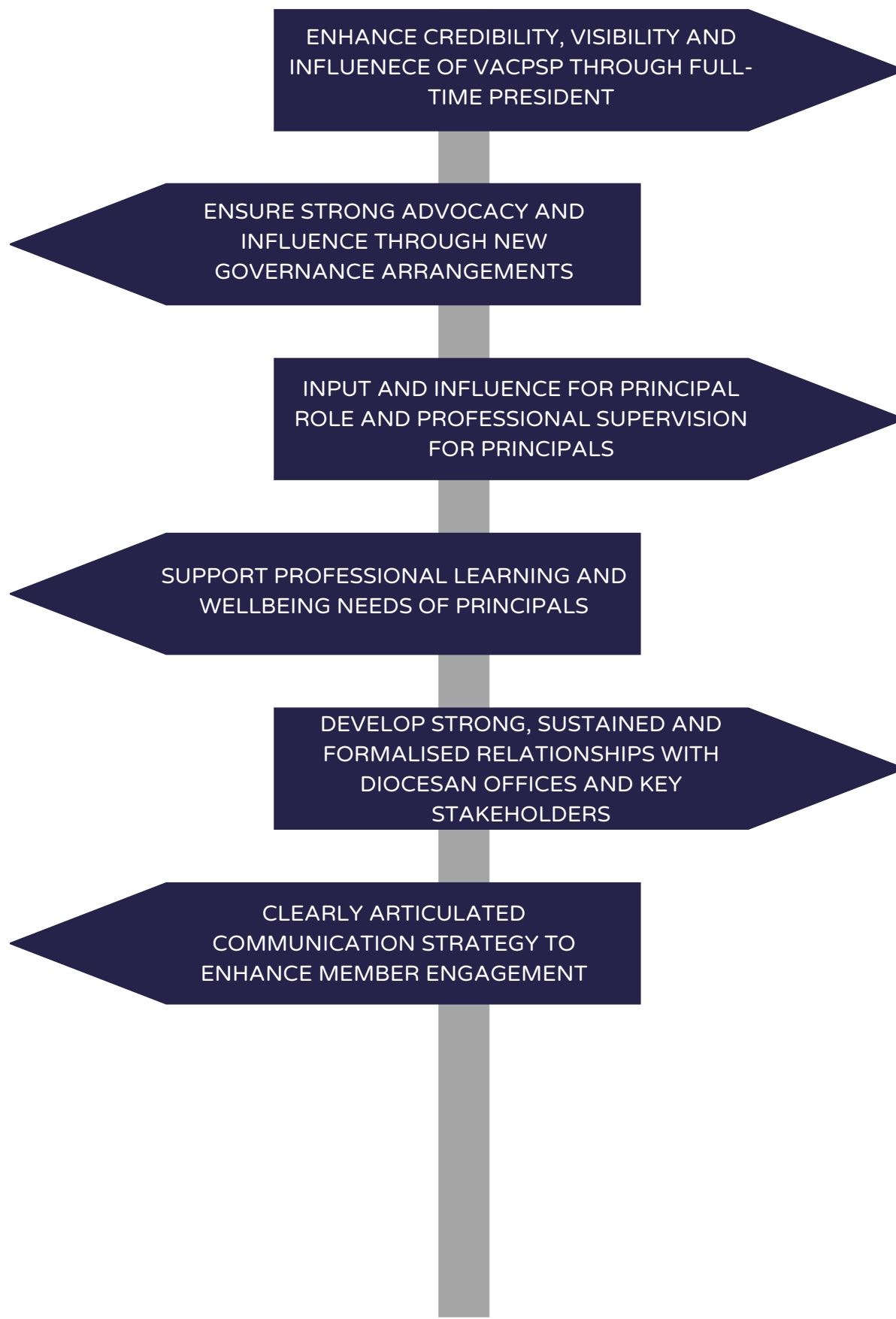
And connect with Victorian professional associations supporting schools:

- Catholic School Parents Victoria (CPV)
- Victorian Principals Association (VPA)
- Principals Association of Victorian Catholic Secondary Schools (PAVCSS).

## ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

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### VACPSP Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025



# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The VACPSP is committed to maintaining the highest standards of operation and governance. .

## Constitution

At inception, the VACPSP prioritised the development of an overarching Constitution to ensure transparency and consistency in its leadership, decision-making and performance. The VACPSP Constitution establishes the foundations for the association and guides all decision making, member engagement and strategic planning. The comprehensive document addresses and structures all aspects of the VACPSP's operations, providing a framework within which the Association operates.

In recent years, the VACPSP have undertaken a review and update of the Constitution to ensure that it is reflective of the needs of the Association and its members. Changes have been made to the Constitution to increase the rights of members, identify and enhance the leadership structures, processes and accountability of the Association and to accommodate for changing work practices, particularly in light of the recent global pandemic.

The VACPSP has also focused on improving and maintaining internal policies and procedures to ensure that at all levels, all persons involved with the VACPSP are protected and are accountable for the best interests of VACPSP members. These policies support the VACPSP's vision and the enactment of its Constitution and provide for the professional and reliable governance of the Association.

Through the maintenance and prioritisation of key governance documents and practices, the VACPSP can confidently and proudly state that it is protecting the interests of its staff and members with utmost vigour. That is why it is trusted and relied upon by so many Principals within the Catholic education sector in Victoria.

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**ABN**

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**ARN**

1 January 2007

**ACNC Established**

# ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

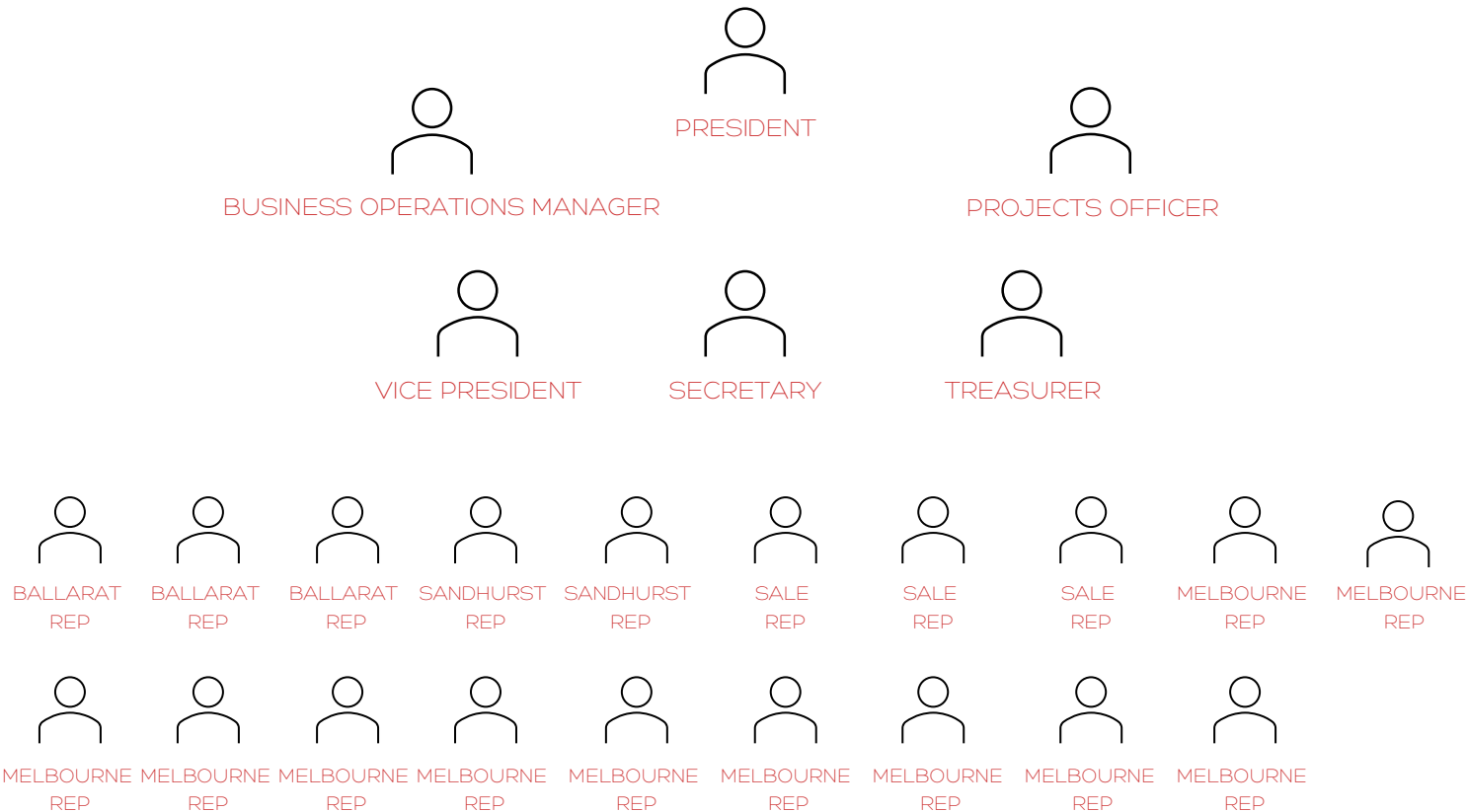
## Staff

The workings of the VACPSP are undertaken through a combination of staff, contractors, volunteers and professional advisers. This flexible and dynamic team structure allows for the effective deployment of resources, the development and utilisation of varying perspectives and the robust representation.

The President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer are appointed by the members of the Association at the annual general meeting, conducted in October of each year. These appointments, including the manner in which they are ratified, are governed by the Constitution of the Association.

The Business Operations Manager is a full-time employment role with the VACPSP. This role is crucial to the functioning of the Association, as it facilitates all operations and ensures that the activities of the Association are carried out in accordance with the Constitution, Policies and procedures and all other relevant requirements. In the performance of this role, the Business Operations Manager maintains a particular focus on managing and facilitating the financial operations of the VACPSP, including the management of the budget, the relationships with business partners and sponsors and communications with members. The Business Operations Manager manages the operational implementation of the Association’s financial plan and ensures the suitability and accountability of all financial decisions of the Association through regular communication and reporting to the VACPSP Management Team and Principal Council.

The Projects Officer role is a contractor role that the Association utilises for the major strategic projects and initiatives undertaken by the Association. The Projects Officer is responsible for managing the planning and execution of the relevant projects, at all times maintaining regular communication with the VACPSP management team and ensuring the vision and mission of the VACPSP is lived in the undertaking of those projects.



## ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

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### PRESIDENT

#### Full-Time, Salaried

- Planning, articulating and enacting the visions, values and purposes of the Association
- Overseeing and facilitating the effectiveness of the Principal Council, including decision making processes
- Ensuring effective communication between the Principal Council and all members of the Association of information and communications about Association functions and decisions
- Engage with members on a regular basis, both in person and via designated communication channels
- Representing the Association in all external forums, including media
- Working with the Principal Council and any relevant sub-committee and working party to ensure the purposes of the Association are being met and the financial viability of the Association is continually enhanced
- Convening meetings with, delegating tasks and responsibilities to and managing the performance of the Management team

### VICE PRESIDENT

#### Volunteer

- Support the President in the performance of their role and duties
- Act in the role of President for meetings where the President is unavailable
- Fulfil the role of President of the Association in the event that the role of President becomes vacant

### SECRETARY

#### Volunteer

- Maintain the register of members;
- Safely and securely maintain the records and documents of the Association, including the common seal
- Prepare annual reports for member and relevant bodies

### TREASURER

#### Volunteer

- Receive and manage all moneys paid to or received by the Association; and
- Make any payments authorised by the Principal Council or by a general meeting of the Association from the Association's funds;
- Maintain financial records
- Coordinate the preparation of the financial statements of the Association and their certification

### BUSINESS OPERATIONS MANAGER

#### Full-Time, Salaried

- Work alongside and support Treasurer to receive and manage all moneys paid to or received by the Association
- Develop and implement, in concert with VACPSP Management, the annual budget of the Association
- Prepare and organise auditing of the VACPSP finances with the appointed auditor
- Manage and implement the day-to-day finance and administrative operations of the Association
- Prepare, develop and coordinate operational documents and information, including member communications, meeting documents and records and official publications of the Association
- Support the President in the performance of their role and duties

### PROJECTS OFFICER

#### Contractor

- Working with the President and Principal Council and any relevant sub-committee and working party to deliver projects that enhance the offerings of the Association
- Liaising with and convening meetings with, relevant stakeholders and Association members to develop and implement projects and initiatives for the Association
- Support and engage in the strategic planning of the Association
- Advise VACPSP Management and the Principal Council on opportunities and strategies for growth and increased member engagement

## ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

### VACPSP Executive Through the years

	<b>President</b>	<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>
<b>2012</b>	Garry Trainor	Gavin Brennan	Chris Ash	Paul Sheedy
<b>2013</b>	Garry Trainor	Mick O'Brien	Chris Ash	Paul Sheedy
<b>2014</b>	Michael Gavaghan	Mick O'Brien	Chris Ash	Gavin Brennan
<b>2015</b>	Michael Gavaghan	Michael Gray	Chris Ash	Gavin Brennan
<b>2016</b>	Michael Gray	Helen Healy	Gavin Brennan	Margaret Carlei
<b>2017</b>	Michael Gray	Helen Healy	Gavin Brennan	Margaret Carlei
<b>2018</b>	Michael Gray	Helen Healy	Gavin Brennan	Jose Blackley
<b>2019</b>	Michael Gray	Helen Healy	Jo Brewer / Francine Walsh	Jose Blackley
<b>2020</b>	Michael Gray	Leon Colla	Francine Walsh	Roslyn Joyner
<b>2021</b>	Michael Gray	Leon Colla	Francine Walsh	Roslyn Joyner
<b>2022</b>	Michael Gray	Leon Colla	Francine Walsh	Roslyn Joyner



# ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

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## ACPPA and APPA

The VACPSP, on behalf of its members, also maintains and funds membership with the Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association (ACPPA) and the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA). Each of ACPPA and APPA operate as the national peak body for their respective professions and ensure that advocacy is undertaken at a national level for primary school Principals and broader educational outcomes.

The maintenance of this membership and representation of Victoria on the national stage has grown the professional reach of the VACPSP exponentially. Victorian primary school Principals are now represented with vigour at the national level and are kept abreast of relevant updates, projects, policies, events and other matters relevant to their professional performance through communications from the VACPSP.

## Relationships with CECV and Diocesan Offices

The VACPSP also maintains strong professional relationships with each of the four Catholic education dioceses in Victoria. The VACPSP and its Principal members have consulted with, advised on and participated in projects and matters run by the respective dioceses, to ensure that the views and needs of primary Principals are appropriately represented and advocated for.

The VACPSP President regularly meets with the Directors of each of the four dioceses to maintain communications on matters relevant to the operations of the Association and to Catholic education more broadly. These meetings have facilitated open lines of communication between the VACPSP and the diocesan offices to ensure that the VACPSP maintains a strong and respected presence in the state.



# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

## VACPSP Principal Council

Made up of nominated Diocesan principal networks and structures

Advice to Executive Leadership

Strategic Plan

VACPSP Constitution

## VACPSP Executive Leadership

Elected Full-Time President

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

## Sector Engagement

Government Authorities

Diocesan Education Authorities

Parent Association

Principals Associations

Governing Authorities

State Government Legislature

## Associations

ACPPA

APPA

PAVCCS

## VACPSP Management

President

Business Operations Manager

Senior Projects Officer

Accounts Officer

## Legal and Finance Counsel

Brennan Law Partners

Bonnor Accounting

Crowe Horwath Auditors

## Stakeholders

Business Partners

Alumni

Chairperson

Council Members

VACPSP Members

Catholic Primary Schools

## Funding

Sponsorship

Donations

Membership Fees

## Reporting

Annual General Meeting

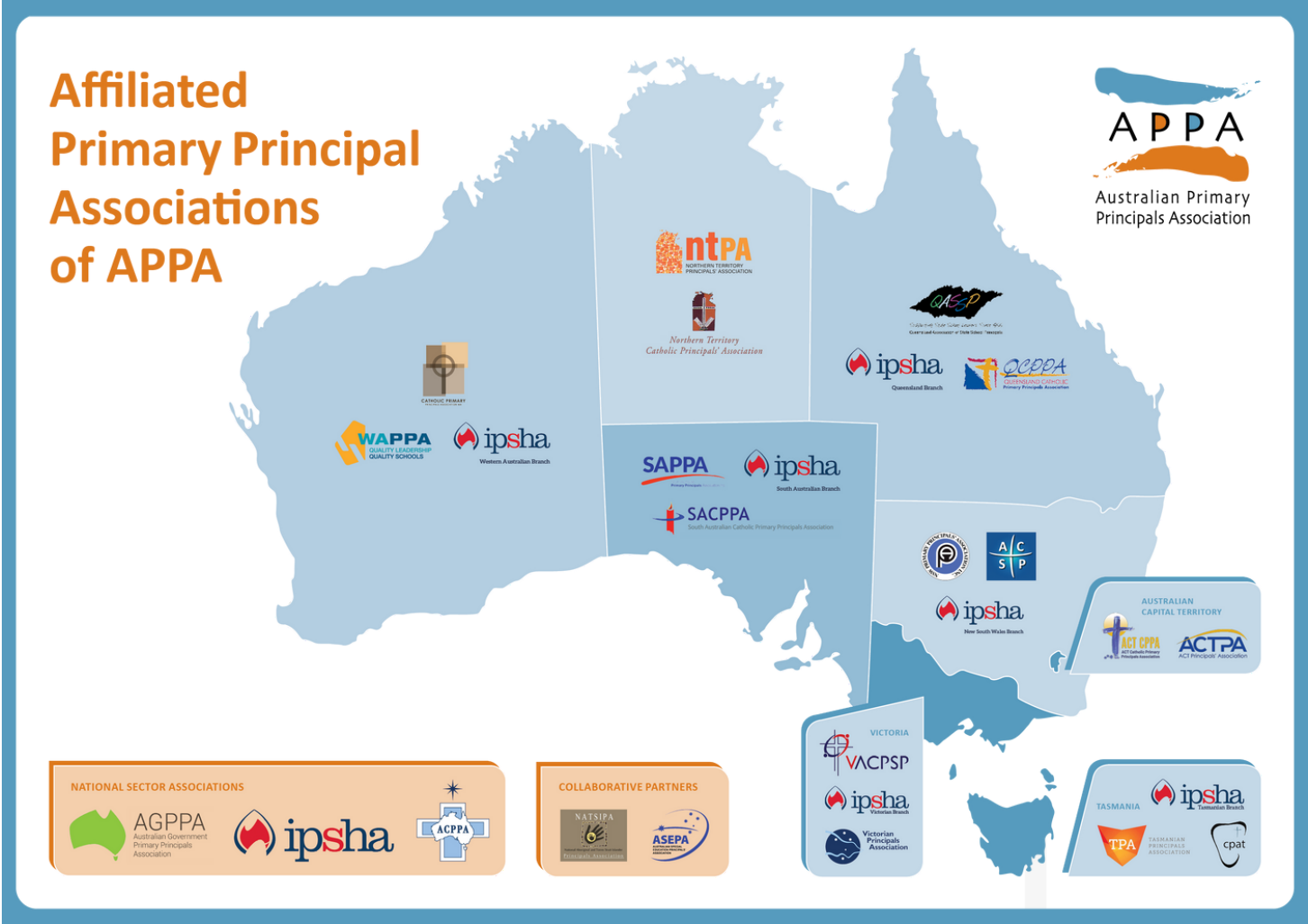
Annual Report

Legislative Requirements

## Constitution

Policy and Procedures

# VACPSP IN THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE



ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

# MEMBERSHIP

The VACPSP is proud to support its ever-growing principal membership throughout Victoria. The VACPSP represents members for each of the four dioceses throughout Victoria. Each diocese is represented on the VACPSP Principal Council to ensure consistency and balance in its advocacy and consideration of issues impacting Principals.

### Membership Numbers

Membership of the VACPSP has grown consistently since 2015 through the focused efforts of the association to drive benefit and support to its Principal members. Throughout Victoria, the VACPSP hosts members from 79% of primary schools. This number has grown from 62% in 2015. Importantly, regional membership has grown from 43% to 67% during this time, with significant membership increases in the Ballarat (100% increase since 2015) and Sandhurst dioceses (127% increase since 2015).

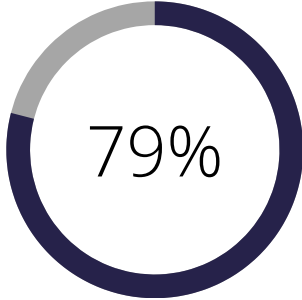
Importantly, the VACPSP boasts an incredible 98% member retention rate, giving testament to the value of the association and the support services it provides to its Principal members. Principals across Victoria appreciate the value that the VACPSP provides, not only to their professional experience, but to the collective experience and enhancement of Catholic primary education in Victoria.

### Membership Fees

Membership fees are set by the VACPSP on an annual basis and ratified by members at the association's Annual General Meeting. Membership fees are calculated by reference to the number of student enrolments at a member's school, to ensure balance and consistency throughout the state and to ensure that no school is disproportionately impacted by the VACPSP membership fees.

The membership fees are charged to VACPSP members as an annual lump sum and cover all member benefits received. No additional fees are charged to VACPSP members throughout the year, save for ticketed events.

The VACPSP is strongly committed to the moral, ethical and legal responsibilities that flow from the application of government funding, given that schools are using their discretionary budgets on their membership with the VACPSP. To that end, the VACPSP is conscious of maintaining the reasonableness of its fees for schools and is focused on ensuring the transparency and accountability of its finances and public reporting. This attention to detail increases the accountability of the Association to drive value for its members; value which is considered to be greatly beneficial to Catholic education in Victoria.



Total membership (% of Victorian primary schools)



(% of Melbourne primary schools)



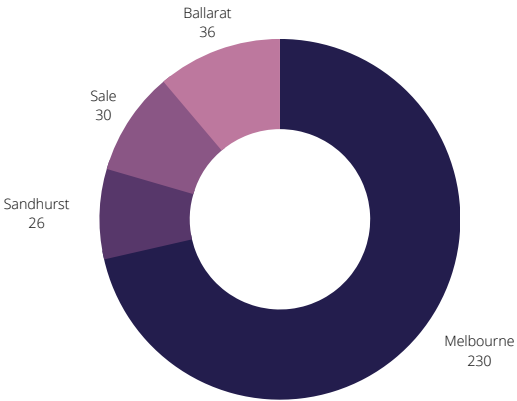
(% of Ballarat primary schools)



(% of Sale primary schools)



(% of Sandhurst primary schools)



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No. of Students	VACPSP Fee 2022	ACPPA Fee 2022	APPA Fee 2022	Total Fee 2022
< 50	\$553	\$250	\$40	\$843
50 - 99	\$782	\$250	\$40	\$1072
100 - 299	\$1051	\$250	\$40	\$1341
300 - 499	\$1289	\$250	\$40	\$1579
500 +	\$1532	\$250	\$40	\$1822

**Communication with Members and Member Benefits**

The VACPSP prides itself on the consistency, frequency and quality of its communication with members. In order to live out its vision and mission, the VACPSP recognises that it must maintain regular, effective communication with members. The more the VACPSP members know about the efforts of the association and the advocacy they provide, the stronger that advocacy and support is.

Accordingly, the VACPSP leadership develop an annual and overarching communications strategy to ensure that member engagement is maintained. This communications strategy includes a range of communication methods to ensure that members are able to receive information from the VACPSP frequently and in a manner that works within their busy schedules. Principally, the VACPSP issues a member newsletter on a weekly basis. This newsletter contains updates on the events and happenings relevant to the VACPSP, as well as providing members with opportunities for engagement, making them aware of offerings from the VACPSP’s business partners and keeping them updated with matters relevant to Catholic education across Australia.



- Annual welcome pack**
- Weekly newsletters**
- Fortnightly president video updates**
- Special bulletin emails**
- Annual reports**
- Meeting notices**
- Social media**
- Attendance at zone meetings**
- Conference**

## ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

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### Legal Support

One of the key initiatives undertaken by the VACPSP is the development and offering of dedicated legal support for its Principal members. This legal support is provided by Brennan Law Partners through its ongoing and trusted relationship with the association. The VACPSP provides funding to its members to access this service and ensure their professional and wellbeing needs are met.

In recognising that uncertainty around legal obligations and operational requirements is a strong contributor to Principal stress and poor wellbeing, the VACPSP set out to ensure that its members were adequately supported to manage these requirements with diligence. The relationship between the association and Brennan Law Partners has grown to provide Principals with both legal support and legal education, to improve their management capacity and skills and reduce the burdens that impact on their wellbeing. The relationship between the VACPSP and Brennan Law Partners has been incredibly well received by members who have accessed assistance on a wide range of issues. The benefit of dedicated and accessible legal support to VACPSP members is widely regarded as an invaluable offering of the association and one that Principals have utilised with great positive. The support provided through this relationship has greatly benefited a significant number of Principals and has grown the trust and value of the VACPSP.

The legal support offered by the VACPSP in partnership with Brennan Law Partners will continue to grow to include professional development opportunities for VACPSP members. These offerings will enhance the offerings of the association as well as furthering the strategic objectives set by the VACPSP in 2020.

### Network and Wellbeing Support

The VACPSP also recognises, and has prioritised as a strategic objective, the need for collegiality, support and networking amongst Catholic primary Principals in Victoria. Accordingly, the VACPSP also offers members a range of initiatives that drive engagement with the association and deliver much needed support to Principals.

In 2023, the VACPSP will host its inaugural President's Ball whereby Principals from across the state are invited to celebrate their professional achievement and networks in a grand ballroom setting. The night will be highlighted by awards to deserving Principals who have demonstrated excellence in leadership, to ensure that the positive contributions of Principals across the state are being recognised. The evening will be filled with live music, food and celebration, offering an incredible opportunity for industry recognition and celebration on one of Melbourne's grandest stages.

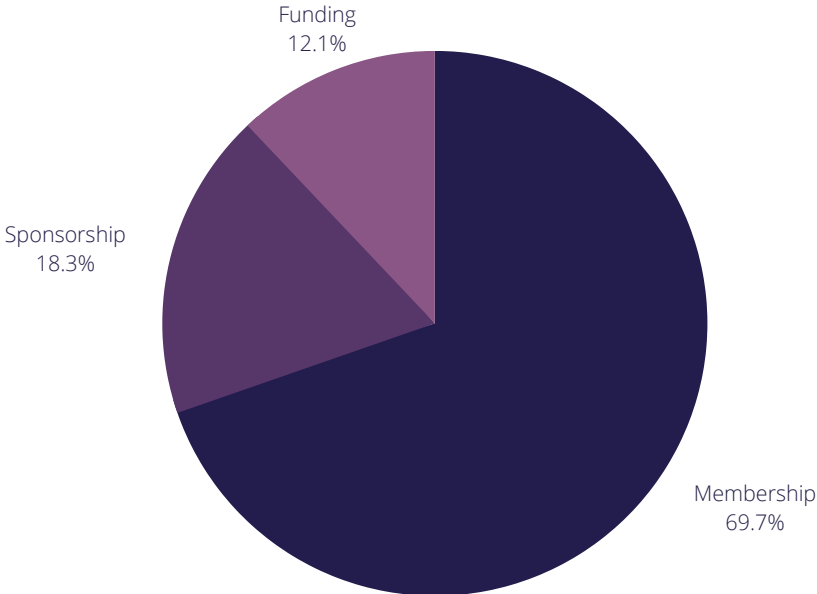
The biennial VACPSP conference is also highlighted by networking and member engagement opportunities, particularly the conference dinner. This function celebrates the wonderful learnings of the conference and provides Principals with an opportunity to mingle and socialise with other colleagues, building personal and professional connections amongst members.

The VACPSP also maintains an Alumni membership group, supporting former Principals as they transition out of the role to ensure that they maintain positive connections with each other and with current serving Principals.



# FINANCIAL

The VACPSP operates in pursuit of its strategic plan. The Association’s strategic plan addresses and sets the benchmarks for a number of operational matters including the financial planning, management and viability of the Association. The 2020 to 2025 new strategic plan was developed with input from state-wide membership, small focus groups, stakeholder groups and senior leadership within Catholic education. The plan was adopted at the 2020 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and is supported by an annual budget and two-year financial plan including budget forecasting. The strategic plan identified the many strengths and incredible achievements of the Association in building its profile, support to principals, reach and positive impact within the Catholic education sector and the opportunities for the Association to continue to drive value for members.



Sources of Income 2021

The financial functions of the VACPSP are conducted by the Business Operations Manager in consult with the appointed standing committee, Treasurer and President. The strategic plans, supported by financial planning including budgets are used by the Association to guide and support its decision making to ensure the continued focus on professional support to all principals and success of the Association.

Fundamentally, the VACPSP finance strategy has involved consolidation of income via a stepped association fee increase, continued membership growth, maintenance of the historically strong association member retention rate, support from Catholic education and delivery of improved sponsorship and business partner outcomes. The biennial VACPSP conference also contributes to the financial wellbeing of the Association as the event is funded by event sponsorship, delegate registrations, Catholic education sponsorship and in-kind volunteer support and typically returns a modest financial surplus to supplement the VACPSP’s operating budget.

The VACPSP is strongly committed to the moral, ethical and legal responsibilities that flow from the application of government funding and parent contributions in managing its financial obligations and resources, particularly noting that schools are typically using their discretionary budgets to meet membership fees of the VACPSP. To that end, the VACPSP is conscious of maintaining the reasonableness of its fees for schools and is focused on ensuring the transparency and accountability of its finances and public reporting. This attention to detail increases the accountability of the Association to drive value for its members; value which it considers is greatly beneficial to Catholic education in Victoria and something the Association is immensely proud of.



## ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

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### Reporting of Financial Performance

The Association's Business Operations Manager manages the operational implementation of the Association's financial plan and ensures the suitability and accountability of all financial decisions of the Association through regular communication and reporting to the VACPSP Executive Team and Association Principal Council.

An overview of the Association's finances is reported to the Principal Council at each meeting, with any substantial financial undertaking presented to and debated by the Principal Council before being implemented by the Association. This process ensures that the VACPSP's financial resources are managed appropriately and transparently, with oversight and input from a range of members.

A comprehensive financial report is also provided to all members on an annual basis at the VACPSP AGM. This report details the income, expenditure, major financial initiatives and undertakings so that a clear and unequivocal picture of the Association's financial operations is painted for members. This ensures that members trust the undertakings of the VACPSP are done with their best interests at the forefront of the decisions.

Once adopted by VACPSP members at the annual general meeting, the finances of the association are reported to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission and tabled in the Association Annual Report. The annual reporting obligations to the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission provides an added layer of protection for the VACPSP's financial management as all operations must satisfy the independent body and be done in accordance with the strict requirements for maintaining the Association's ACNC registration.

### Auditing of VACPSP Finances

The Association's finances are audited annually by independent auditors, Crowe Horwath Australia. The VACPSP also employs the professional services of Bonnor Accounting, Traralgon to ensure the appropriate and effective management of the Association's daily accounts.

### Significant Financial Events

#### ACPPA Membership

With the VACPSP taking up the position of the formal body representing the profession of Catholic primary principals at a National level, new registration charges have been incurred. To limit the financial impact passed on to members' schools, the Association resolved to 'phase in' the ACPPA fee to members over two years. In the first year, the Association resolved to meet the full costs of its membership with ACPPA rather than passing that cost onto VACPSP members. In the second year, the VACPSP charged members only 50% of the ACPPA membership fee and absorbed the balance from the Association's funds.

### Sponsorship of the VACPSP

The VACPSP offers a range of opportunities for business whose purposes and values align with the Association and who wish to support the functions of the VACPSP to form sponsorship agreements with the Association.

Annual business partnerships of differing values and event-based sponsorship opportunities are made available to businesses supporting Catholic education, providing financial benefit for the Association as well as market benefits for the relevant sponsors. The Association benefits from the financial support to enhance its member offerings and the partners benefit from regular exposure to key decision makers in the Catholic education landscape.

# ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

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## COVID-19

The VACPSP was not immune from the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2020. The VACPSP biennial conference, which contributes significantly to the Association’s income, was postponed from 2021 to 2022. As planning had already commenced in earnest, approximately \$74,000 had been paid out for the conference during 2020/2021 which were unable to be recovered until the conference ran in March 2022.

Furthermore, many VACPSP Business Partners were also significantly impacted by the pandemic. In keeping with the fundamental ethos of the Association and of Catholic education more broadly, the VACPSP Executive resolved to support those business partners through this time by deferring their core partnership payments. In 2021 this group has fully supported the Association with excellent financial commitments to 2021. Indeed, due in part to the ongoing quality partnerships and a compassionate approach taken by the Association, the VACPSP saw growth in sponsorship and business partners in 2021, both in number and sponsorship level.

The financial capacity and operations of the Association are appropriately managed and supported by robust financial decision making and accountability. The VACPSP Management Team continues to implement the strategic objectives of the VACPSP and the strength and value of the Association has grown immensely in recent times. With continued prudent financial oversight, strong budgeting process and the delivery of outcomes for members and Catholic principalship, the Association is impeccably positioned to continue to prosper into the future.



# COMMUNICATION WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

One of the key functions of the VACPSP is to communicate with key stakeholders to support and further the vision and mission of the Association. Professional, regular and valuable communication is integral to the operations of the VACPSP so that the Association remains relevant and effective as the peak professional body for Victorian Catholic primary school Principals. Quality communication allows the VACPSP to raise awareness for its functions and value, but also promotes better understanding of and engagement with its key stakeholder groups to ensure all VACPSP services are delivered effectively.

The effectiveness and value of VACPSP communications is managed by adherence to these core features.



### Professionalism

Professionalism at the heart of all communications from the VACPSP. By maintaining high standards for all communications, VACPSP members and key stakeholders trust and can rely upon the veracity and integrity of those communications. This builds member confidence and the ability of the VACPSP to meaningfully impact issues and discussions on matters relevant to its core function



### Transparency

This core feature provides two-fold benefits. For effectiveness, VACPSP communications must be transparent in content. The specifics of each communication must be honest, clear and concise, to ensure members are able to understand them and trust their value. Furthermore, the transparency of VACPSP operations (and, in turn, member engagement) is enhanced by regular communications about executive level decision making and action. By keeping members updated with the goings on of the Association, the VACPSP enhances the trust and reliance members place upon it



### Suitable Medium

Effective communication can only be had if it delivered on appropriate mediums. Accordingly, VACPSP communicates with stakeholders over a range of forums, to ensure that all parties are able to access and digest relevant information in a manner that works for them



### Consistency

Consistency of communication breeds trust and reliability for the Association. By prioritising and delivering consistently professional communications, those characteristics become synonymous with the brand, leading to greater effectiveness in operations. Consistent professionalism promotes value and influence, key factors necessary for the long term success of the Association.



### Regularity

Through regular contact, members and stakeholders remain engaged with the VACPSP, building the effectiveness and reach of association endeavours. The VACPSP and its operations remain front of mind for stakeholders, driving engagement and connection with the Association.



ASSOCIATION  
OVERVIEW

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Key Stakeholders

There are a range of key stakeholders that the VACPSP must maintain communication with on a regular basis. The reach of the Association is broad, and it needs to be so as to continue its success. The VACPSP must effectively manage the interests of all stakeholders as they are interwoven and are all important for the proper functioning of the VACPSP. Failure to accommodate a key stakeholder group will inevitably diminish the success of the VACPSP.

Principal members

Business partners

Diocesan offices

National education  
bodies

Government and Policy  
Makers

Professional advisers

Media outlets





"Where there is no  
vision, the people  
perish."

Proverbs 29:18

# MAJOR PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

To drive continued enhancement of member engagement and the pursuit of the VACPSP’s mission and vision, the Association undertakes and presents a number of major projects and initiatives. These projects and initiatives are highly professional, balance and prioritise the needs of principals and, importantly, respond directly to the needs of Catholic primary Principals within Victoria.

The VACPSP continues to grow its offerings and the increased services and support provided to members renders its place within the Catholic education landscape absolutely invaluable.

### Conference

The VACPSP biennial conference is the hallmark of the VACPSP calendar. The conference program is built around inspiring and educating Catholic primary Principals through a world-class program. Each conference run by the VACPSP boasts world-renowned speakers, highly engaging themes and incredible attendance rates to deliver a best in business professional development and collegiality event for members. The conference is also underpinned by daily opportunities for delegates to connect with, explore and develop their faith through masses, reflections, prayers.

2017

Courage is the Key

2019

Impact the Future

2021

Hope



## ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

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In 2017, the VACPSP conference was centred around 'Courage'. Guest speakers including Hugh Van Cuylenburg, Fr Kevin Dillon, Lucas Patchett and Nicholas Marchesi, Anthony Semann, Peter Baines, Holly Ransom and Brendan Spillane delivered inspiring and educational presentations that set the tone for outstanding leadership ideas and outcomes for attendees to take away.

The conference was a raging success and set the bar incredibly high for future conferences of the Association.

The 2019 conference, themed 'Impact the Future' delivered an inspiring program that shone a light on the future of education and educational opportunities. The VACPSP addressed the need for Principals to be aware of the changing landscape of education and to up-skill on matters that will impact their educational leadership into the future.

More than 250 delegates eagerly participated in the event and were privileged to hear from and learn from guest speakers including Ben Crowe, Gill Hicks, Jordan Nguyen, Mark McCrindle, Debbie Poole, Janelle Wills and Cosentino.

The 2021 conference, postponed to 2022 due to COVID, focused on 'Hope' for the education community. The conference, as well as delivering an incredible professional development opportunity, provided VACPSP members with the ability to network and support each other as educational leaders journey out of the most turbulent and isolating time in the sector's history.

Again, more than 250 delegates feasted on the incredible keynote speakers put on by the VACPSP as the energy, enthusiasm and motivation palpably developed within the venue. Principals were able to hear from speakers including Dr Jason Fox, Simon Griffiths, Kath Koschel, Tim and Judy Sharp, Catriona Wallace, Steve Sammartino and Craig Reucassel.

The broad goals for the conferences are:

- Building collegiality and making available professional networking opportunities
- Creating a language of creative leadership that encourages learning for all
- Equipping leaders to harness collective wisdom and develop burgeoning leaders and leadership teams
- Exposure to goods and services available to support the schooling enterprise
- Opportunities for innovation, ideas and practice discussion
- Connecting with school learning outcomes; with a focus on access for all, justice, inclusion, environment, sustainability, diversity and ability
- Connection with the secular world to inform interpretation, action
- Inspiration to boldly step forward and implement learnings in their school context
- Wellbeing, safety professionalism
- Celebration as a faith community and connect with clergy
- Formal member communication, engagement and strategy reporting
- Engaging with and connecting over faith, prayer and reflection

The adult learning principles built into the conference are:

- Storytelling
- Experiential
- All presenters providing a keynote with all delegates together for shared experience and discussion.
- Reflection; encouraging principals to bring senior leaders for support for back at school engagement, learning dialogue and school improvement outcomes back at the workplace
- Connection with clergy



## Legal Support

Since 2017, the VACPSP has partnered with Brennan Law Partners to deliver dedicated legal support for VACPSP members. Since the inception of this relationship, Brennan Law Partners and the VACPSP have provided industry-leading support and benefits to members through improving accessibility to trusted, tailored legal support for Catholic school Principals. By developing a trusted partnership with a firm that understands the lived experience of Catholic primary school Principals and by providing funding support to further ameliorate the traditional hurdles to legal support, the VACPSP has set the benchmark for professional support for its members.

Brennan Law Partners has provided benefit to a significant number of VACPSP members through its tailored legal support, education and support articles and raising awareness of legal concerns within school operations. The offering has been hugely welcomed by Catholic school leaders and, through the focus on ongoing and trusted professional relationships, has grown their skills and alleviated their concerns regarding the management of legal issues within their schools. VACPSP members are able to undertake their roles with greater certainty and comfort in the awareness that their professional association is facilitating independent, accessible and trusted legal support for Principals.

Brennan Law Partners has been able to deliver meaningful benefit to Principals and their schools on a personal and professional level, ultimately enhancing the capacity and outcomes for the Catholic education system more broadly.





# ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

## Awards Ceremony and President's Ball

The VACPSP have also recently launched the inaugural President's Ball, celebrating the achievements and contributions of Catholic primary school Principals across the state. The President's Ball, to be held in March 2023 will feature awards, initiations and wellbeing support for VACPSP Principals at one of Melbourne's grandest venues; the Melbourne Town Hall.

As the peak body for Catholic primary school Principals in Victoria, the VACPSP proudly supports the role of its Principal members, with a dedicated focus on advocating for and improving the professional and personal wellbeing of its members. The President's Ball will provide that unique opportunity and will further enhance the support and offerings for its members.

Principals will be honoured with a red-carpet arrival, fabulous food and drinks, incredible live music and wellbeing gifts to inspire, motivate and support the collective appreciation of the industry.

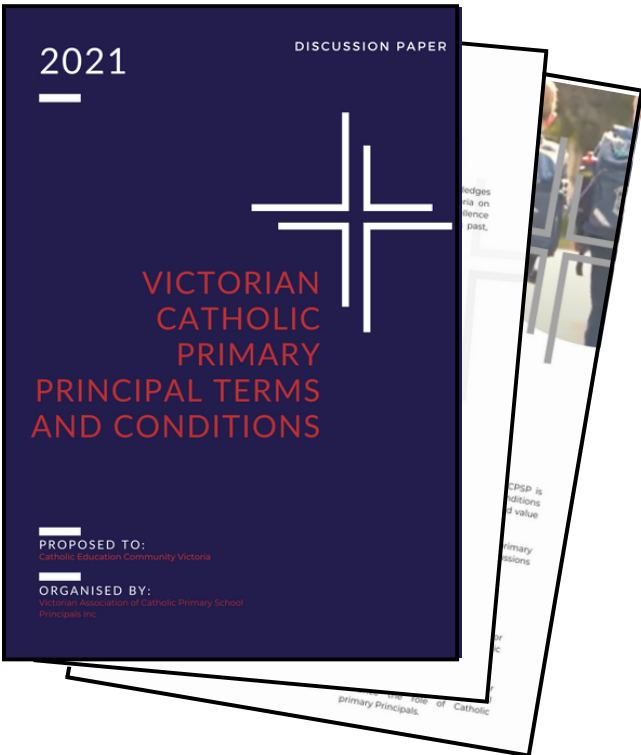


## Terms and Conditions

In 2021, the VACPSP pioneered a project that examined and evaluated the current conditions of Catholic primary school Principals in Victoria, to deliver an informed and professional discussion paper that will positively impact industry discussions over the coming years.

The project involved consultation with a broad cross-section of Principals to identify the current lived experience of these educational leaders and to identify the support needed at a local level to ensure not only the sustained success of Principals, but the scope and capacity for Principals to thrive in their role.

The project culminated in the development and delivery of a detailed and highly professional report and recommendations document that will inform and shape industry level discussions for years to come.



## ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

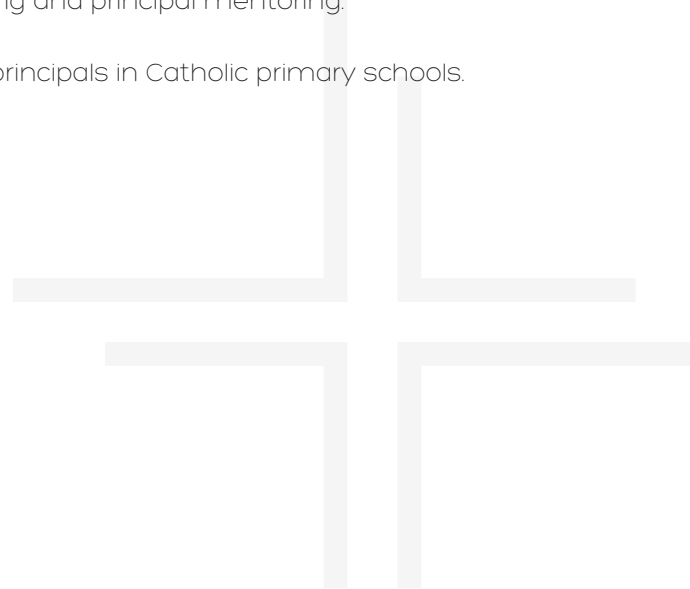
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### Other Projects

The VACPSP has also engaged with, pioneered and supported a range of projects that support the enhancement of Catholic education and the professional capacity and wellbeing of principals. The VACPSP is a beacon for professional, trusted and reasoned advocacy and contribution by a range of leaders and groups within the Catholic education landscape. The efforts and involvement of the VACPSP in various projects, working parties and committees provides immense benefit within the industry and continues to drive their present and influence.

Some other projects the VACPSP has conducted, delivered or been involved with include:

- CECV Working Parties including ESCI project, Occupational Health & Safety and the NOUS workplace project.
- Victorian Government authorities working parties including VCAA, VIT and the VRQA. Organized media coverage responses regarding Catholic education and associated issues.
- Individual Principal and group principal focus group engagement with the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Project and government review being undertaken by the Commonwealth Education Minister.
- Understanding the ATSIL document, the 'National Strategy to address the abuse of teachers, school leaders and other school staff'.
- Connections across Victoria to support pastoral relationships between schools, Parishes and Priests; relationships that enliven and support the students, staff and families and the Church's mission in education.
- Engagement with the Primary Principal Performance & Development Reference Group. This work has commenced and presents an exciting development for principalship in the Melbourne Archdiocese.
- Support for the APPA Trans-Tasman Conference including a Catholic mass and VACPSP welcome function.
- Engagement with the upcoming MACS strategic programs including governance, Principal employment, Board strategy planning and principal mentoring.
- Support to mentoring programs supporting principals in Catholic primary schools.



# DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES

In 2020, the VACPSP renewed its strategic plan, identifying the key priorities for the continued growth and relevance of the association. The plan was developed through an extensive consultation and engagement with members and key stakeholders to ensure that executive decision making could be targeted towards projects and initiatives that would see continued success for the VACPSP.

The Strategic Plan acts as the blueprint for determining action and guiding decision making for the advancement and delivery of the identified priority actions and initiatives. With the guidance of the strategic plan, the VACPSP has effectively invested time and resources into projects that have seen substantial and immediate benefit. As a result of these undertakings, the VACPSP has seen substantial growth in its value and relevance membership, effectiveness and presence in recent years.

Flagship programs and initiatives such as the biennial conference, dedicated legal support for members, terms and conditions of employment review and engagement with MACS strategic programs, together with the quality and regular communications with members, evidence the association's commitment to achieving its key strategic objectives of increased member engagement, enhanced credibility and visibility and strong advocacy and influence for and on behalf of Victorian Catholic primary school principals.

## Eye on the Future

In order to continue to be relevant and effective in the Catholic education landscape, the VACPSP must remain zealous in pursuit of its strategic objectives, prioritising investment in projects and initiatives that provide value and support to its members.

In order to do this, the VACPSP will remain agile and focussed on its goals, regularly reviewing its functions, structures and activities to ensure that the association achieves its purposes efficiently and effectively. The governance structures, communications strategy and strategic plan it currently has in place positions it perfectly to not only remain viable, but to continue to be a leading force in professional representation in the Catholic education industry.



# CONCLUSION

Across Victoria committed, resourceful and creative Catholic school principals have helped create learning communities of achievement and faith; built on respectful relationships, student safety, and engagement with communities. In order to continue to support the incredible work of these professionals, the VACPSP is committed to remaining at the forefront of advocacy, communications and member engagement.

Through its transparent, highly professional and effective leadership and governance structures, the VACPSP is able to make considered strategic decision making that furthers the strategic objectives of the association and ultimately enhances the Catholic education landscape. The range of benefits that the association provides to its members supports every aspect of their role and grows their professional and personal capacity.

The VACPSP is extremely proud of its achievements to date, but recognises that their work is just beginning. The need for a highly effective and visible professional representative body has never been higher, and the reliance on the incredible work of the association will continue to grow. The VACPSP is extremely confident that it has the structures, leadership, skills and assets to enable it to meet the expectations and demands of the Catholic education industry and is dedicated to continuing to serve its members in the light of God.



