



Ltyentye Apurte Catholic School

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ANNUAL REPORT 2020

LTYENTYE APURTE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

VISION:

Our school celebrates the life giving Gospel of Jesus in dialogue with the Arrernte people. We do this '*In the Way of Mary*'.

MISSION:

We are called to provide excellence in Catholic education and well-being through:

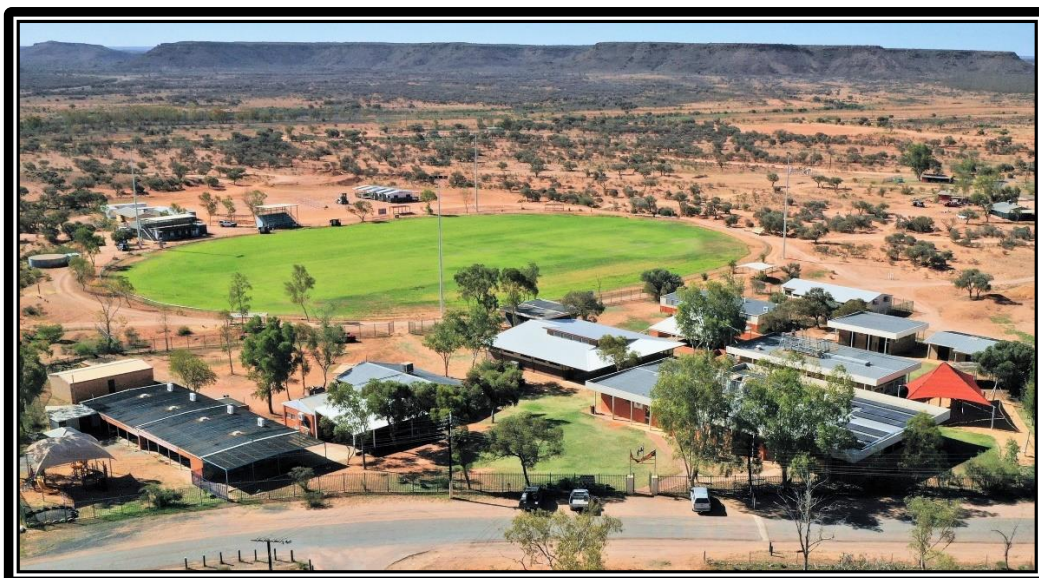
- Shaping hearts with the qualities of caring, strength and respect.
- Arrernte language and culture.
- Providing a place of learning for all.
- Authentic, two-way teaching and learning.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR SCHOOL:

Marist Characteristics (aka Pillars) – Presence, Simplicity, Love of work, Family Spirit and In the Way of Mary; authentic Catholic Identity; formation of young people; prayer, contemplation and liturgy; Sacramental life; social justice; stewardship of creation; student centred learning; celebration of achievement; hospitality and inclusivity; recognising the strengths of each person; effective communication.

LACS Vision, Mission and Characteristics revised in 2019 through joint Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff dialogue in presence of Br Neville from the Marist Association, Australia.

SCHOOL PROFILE



Ltyentye Apurte Catholic School (LACS) is a P - 12 school in Santa Teresa, an Aboriginal settlement of approximately 600 persons belonging to the Eastern Arrernte people. The people speak Arrernte and use English as their second language. The community is located approximately 83 km southeast of Alice Springs, in arid country on the north-western tip of the Simpson Desert. Temperatures are extreme, ranging from -1 to 45 degrees and there is year round access via a largely unsealed road.

Santa Teresa was founded as a Mission in 1953 by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the OLSH Sisters. The school is governed by the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Darwin and supported by the Marist Brothers.

In 2020, there were 45 staff at the school, 28 of whom were Aboriginal and 17 non-Aboriginal (thus, approx. 62% / 38%). There were eight student classes ranging from Pre-School to Seniors (Year 12). Class sizes were / are small. LACS has specialist facilities such as a library, STEM room, manual arts workshop and food technology room. All classes have Internet access and there are PCs, laptops, iPads and Interactive Whiteboards throughout.

Teachers work as members of a team in partnership with local staff and Arrernte Assistant Teachers. English is the second language of most students at the school and the Arrernte language and cultural program is a key part of the curriculum at LACS. In 2020, LACS offered a post-primary Employment Pathways program. A School Nutrition Program (SNP) was also provided which included a cooked breakfast, morning tea and lunch.

School hours are 8:30 am – 3:00 pm Monday to Thursday and 8:30 am – 1:00 pm on Fridays.

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

This Annual Report provides a summary of the main school achievements in the 2020 academic year. Due to a once in a 100 years event, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, it was a year unlike all others. LACS had to contend with multiple significant challenges in order to stay open and provide an education for all. Nonetheless, it rose to the challenges and fared extremely well. We are blessed with a magnificent staff and fortunate to serve a beautiful community. Please read on and see just how much was achieved...

Catholic Identity

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impacted on many of the things we would normally do as a school in the area of Religious Education and Ceremonies. However, we strived for 'business as usual' and managed to continue with teaching and learning as best we could under the circumstances.

As a school and staff body, we continued to make our Vision and Mission Statement relevant and meaningful.

Our Vision is to celebrate the life giving Gospel of Jesus in dialogue with the Arrernte people and in the 'Way of Mary'. We bring this vision to life through our Mission:

- *Provide excellence in Catholic education and well-being through:*
- *Shaping hearts with qualities of caring, strength and respect*
- *Arrernte language and culture*
- *Providing a place of learning for all*
- *Authentic, two-way teaching and learning.*

All staff and students are reminded that LACS is a Catholic school in the Marist tradition. We therefore adhere to the Marist Characteristics of: *presence, simplicity, love of work, family spirit* and doing things *in the way of Mary*. Our students are the main priority. We try to model authentic Catholic Identity to them through prayer (in class and at morning prayer for staff), contemplation on liturgy, the Sacramental program (Baptism, First Eucharist and Confirmation), social justice and stewardship of creation. We regularly acknowledge students learning and achievements. At LACS we are inclusive and we recognise the strengths of each person.

During Induction Week 2020, Mark Elliot and Catherine Foley from the Marist Schools Australia visited LACS to present to the many new teaching staff on the Marist Way (or charism). This was reinforced by the Acting-REC who presented a PowerPoint on the Five Characteristics.

The connection between the parish and the school is very strong. We still encourage all students and families to attend Mass as regularly as possible. At school we continue to have class liturgies for the year, whereby Fr Elmer is able to come in and share the liturgy with the students. At the beginning of the year we have a whole school welcome back Mass. At the end of every term we have a thanks-giving Mass. During the year we celebrate special feast days with Mass or a prayer service.



January 2020: Returning and new staff gather outside school with Fr Elmer for the Beginning of Year Mass.

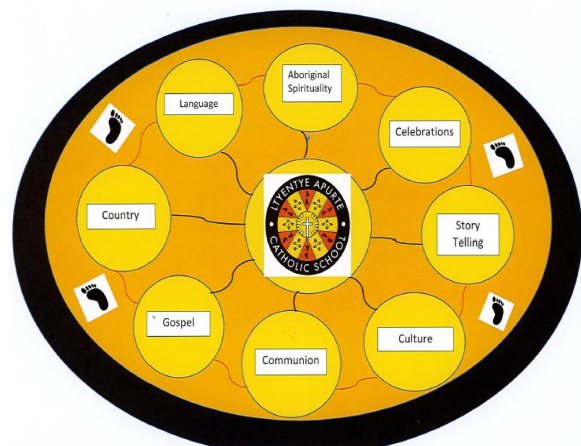
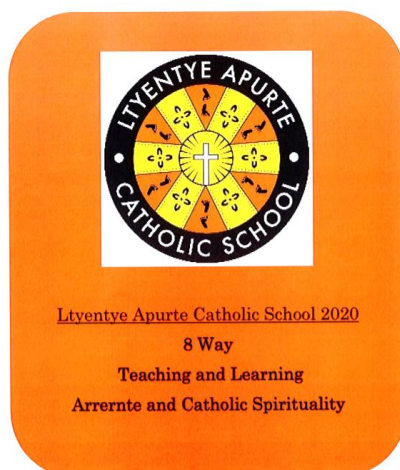


July 2020: Bishop Charles and Father Elmer celebrate a COVID-Safe Mass for Children outside front of school.

Due to the pandemic, the Sacramental Program could not go ahead in 2020 and it was a deeply frustrating time in the religious life of the school.

LACS is always looking for ways to raise the profile of Arrernte spirituality underlying Catholic faith. The two are linked and indeed, we are building resources that connect the Christian tradition to Arrernte spirituality embodied in our RE curriculum. Robyn Craig from Catholic Education Northern Territory (CENT) visited in 2020 and worked with the Catholic Aboriginal Leadership Team (CALT) comprising Rosemary (RP) Palmer and Marcus Williams, the Acting REC, Roseline Landsberg and Cecily Palmer. Their focus was the establishment of an 8 Ways Aboriginal Pedagogical Framework for application to RE. This was achieved to a high level of success. It is pleasing to see non-Aboriginal teachers and local assistant teachers working alongside each other in unpacking and presenting the new program.

The 8 Ways Aboriginal Pedagogical Framework has already been implanted into the RE curriculum. We started with Community and Belonging units. Through this inter-link, we are able to do story telling bringing Aboriginal Spirituality to life through the Gospel. The use of language gives identity to students and connects to the land and their ancestors. We encourage students and families to attend Mass to receive Communion, which links in with the Gospel teaching of the Last Supper. Celebrations teach us the importance of culture and spirituality in both worlds, with a connection to homeland (Aboriginal Spirituality). By doing so, students are more engaged with and understand the links between Catholic faith and Arrernte spirituality.



During 2020, Acting Principal, Justin Colley, continued to work with a body of research from the 'Arrernte Voices' Project led by Dr Nicole Johnson of the Catholic Education Council NT. Dozens of Arrernte people living in Central Australia (Alice Springs and surrounding communities) were interviewed about their Catholic faith, Arrernte spirituality and how these

relate to education. The project coincided with the publishing of a major work by Dr Michael Bowden which focuses on *Altyerra Catholicism* (loosely, *Dreaming Catholicism*). This explores authentic, non-contrived links between the Catholic faith and Arrernte spirituality. Justin engaged in numerous discussions with senior CALT, Rosemary Palmer, and other Elders such as Mia Mulladad and Carmel Ryan. Conversations also included Fr Prakash (OLSH Alice Springs), David Woods (Campfire in the Heart) and Bishop Charles Gauci, who supports the work. The intention was (and is) to explore ways of engaging LACS students with the Catholic faith by making meaningful links to Arrernte spirituality that might be appropriately expressed through preparation and celebration of the Sacraments. The Elders are visibly excited by these conversation and work is ongoing.

At APRE /REC / ACCS network meetings at CENT in Darwin, there is strong agreement that Aboriginal Spirituality teaching and learning, through the 8 ways Pedagogical Framework, is taught by Aboriginal Assistant Teachers with the assistance of the non-Aboriginal classroom teacher. In a nutshell, giving autonomy to our Arrernte staff whereby they can teach RE in classes. It was agreed in 2020 to pursue this outcome in 2021 and relevant LACS staff now working towards this.

In 2020, there was a greater system and school focus on teaching staff getting accredited to work and / or teach RE in Catholic schools. While most staff can easily get Accreditation A and B (to be aware of the purpose and ethos of Catholic schools), in order to teach RE or lead in a Catholic school, they must have Accreditation C and D, which provide a much more in-depth and sophisticated understanding of theology and leadership.

Teaching and Learning

2020 brought many challenges to Teaching and Learning at LACS. Despite these challenges we maintained progress in many areas.

In 2020 we had eight classes, from Pre-School to Seniors, and the teachers of six of these classes were new to the school. Many of them were new to the remote Aboriginal context. All new teachers had some EAL/D training at the CENT orientation program and this was followed up at LACS throughout the year with professional development focusing on the NT EAL/D Learning Progressions. Teachers were supported to use the progressions to accurately assign EAL/D levels for reporting. We had a particular focus on the area of 'Speaking', where teachers collected speaking samples from students and worked together to moderate and assign levels in that area. Moving forward we need to work at embedding the collection of samples from each EAL/D area into our termly practice and build on using these samples for regular moderation sessions.

All new teachers to LACS were introduced to the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program and most were successful at making this a daily practice in their classrooms. The consistent collection of data on the progress of our students' phonemic and phonological awareness is the next step.

The implementation of Stepping Stones as a whole school maths approach continued. New staff accessed professional development via webinar and most teachers used the program in some capacity to help guide their teaching of Numeracy.

The Employment Pathways program for Senior students faced a number of challenges, but also produced some great successes. Senior student attendance was very low in 2020, making it difficult for our Senior teachers to provide ongoing programs. Despite this, the Senior Ladies class, led by Christine (Indi) Parr, created the '*Marle Mape Café*' which provided school staff and staff of other service providers within the community with quality goods for morning tea and lunch. Students engaged in this program learnt valuable life, work and business skills. At the suggestion of AFL-NT, LACS created its first ever all female football team to participate in Central Australian AFLW. They played good, hard football every week. The team made it into the Grand Final and took second place. It was a well-deserved success and we hope that Senior Ladies go even further in 2021. The Senior Fellas low attendance made the consistent running of the Horse Program difficult. However, a number of Senior Fellas, as well as some Senior Ladies and students in the Middle 1 class, were able to attend some sessions of the program and enjoyed this experience. The VET Carpentry cohort began construction of a fence around the school canteen. Students from both Senior Ladies and Senior Fellas were involved in this project.



June 2020: Senior Ladies, led by Christine (Indi) Parr, were highly engaged by the Marle Mape Café. Here producing items for school and wider community.



September 2020: The LACS AFLW team on their way to the Grand Final in Alice Springs.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic the school was required to provide 'at home learning' to all students whose family requested it. This is not an easy task in our context. However, the initiative and dedication of our teachers and leaders saw 'Take Home Study Packs' created for all students and distributed throughout the community.

NTRAI National Partnership

Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment – Non government Schools Agreement

The NTRAI fund provides for two staff with a variety of roles designed to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people – students and staff. These staff work in the fields of well-being, Aboriginal workforce development and Arrernte literacy production. In 2020, LACS was fortunate to be funded for an additional teacher who did not have class but nonetheless contributed to improving outcomes for Aboriginal students and staff.

Joan Sanders provided support to teaching and learning in a number of ways. Her experience in targeted literacy assessment and evaluation led her to completing many PM Benchmark Reading assessments in instances where class teachers were unable. She provided comprehensive and valuable feedback to teachers, the curriculum coordinator and school executive regarding students' reading progress, including patterns and trends across cohorts and the whole school. Joan also supported the Senior classes and their teachers with the administering and delivering the Employment Pathways Program, organising work experience (though this was largely inhibited by a variety of factors), and interviewing students in relation to their career action plans. Joan was an invaluable human resource in 2020 and we thank her for her contribution to the school at such a difficult time.

Funded under Inclusion Support, Ray Ireland (Students With Disabilities teacher) worked collaboratively with teachers and the Inclusion Support Coordinator (ISC) to provide ongoing, one-to-one and small group interventions and support for students with additional learning needs from Transition to Year 12. Students' Educational Adjustment plans were used to guide the scope of Ray's work, along with information gathered from meetings with class teachers and the ISC and support was predominantly given in the curriculum areas of English and Maths. Ray also worked with our Arrernte Teacher and staff from The Literacy Centre to produce some simple Arrernte literacy resources for display in classrooms.

NAPLAN

While preparations began for NAPLAN 2020, it became increasingly clear that the coronavirus pandemic was creating challenges that were too difficult to overcome. School staff and administrators were under enormous pressure navigating rapidly changing circumstances and their associated requirements; while students and their families faced great uncertainty and stress; the majority of Australian school campus were closed and teaching and learning went online, where possible. This situation was not conducive to NAPLAN running effectively and it was cancelled throughout Australia.

Leadership

At the start of 2020 the School Executive Committee (aka Leadership Team) consisted of the Acting Principal (Justin Colley) the new Acting Deputy Principal and Curriculum and Inclusion Coordinator (Zoe Smithies), the Acting Religious Education Coordinator (Rosaline Landsberg) and the Catholic Aboriginal Leadership Team (CALT) comprising Rosemary Palmer (RP) and Marcus Williams. So as to keep the size of Executive Committee proportionate for the size of the school, other members of staff were / are invited to attend meetings as and when necessary. The Executive Committee continued to meet every Monday after school.

The Executive Committee (or 'Exec') continues as the main decision making body in the school but it consults with other bodies, i.e. non-local staff in staff meetings and local staff in Yarning Circles (and through CALT within Exec itself). Leadership at LACS is thus 'servant' and consultative.

Significant challenges for LACS leadership in 2020 were i) the induction of an almost entirely new teaching staff, ii) the number of leaders in 'acting' positions, iii) the leadership team being one staff member down and iv) a global health emergency, namely the coronavirus pandemic. At the start of 2020, Justin Colley and Zoe Smithies were still new to their roles. While Justin retained a number of deputy principal responsibilities and was at the forefront of the school's pandemic response, Zoe combined deputy principalship, curriculum leadership and inclusion support. Given the enormous workloads, leadership had to prioritise what *could* be done in terms of the school's improvement journey and what could *not* be done (or be postponed).


In terms of the response to these challenges, Acting Deputy Principal, Zoe Smithies, was highly commended for her contribution to inducting the new teaching staff. Her extensive experience as a classroom teacher in the LACS context proved invaluable here. She also fulfilled her other responsibilities in an extremely capable manner. Two 'acting' positions became substantive. At the end of Term 3, Justin Colley applied for the Principal position and was successful. In Term 4, Rosaline Landsberg applied for the Religious Education Coordinator (REC) position and was also successful. The coronavirus pandemic was an exceptional challenge for the school, the community and the world as a whole. Justin Colley joined other key stakeholders making the Local Emergency Committee. This met regularly to formulate COVID-Safe policies and emergency response at a community level. Justin also devised a Coronavirus Pandemic Plan for the school – detailing its response as an education provider and maintaining health and well-being of all staff and students.



Ultimately, LACS thrived in the face of all these challenges. It stayed open for longer and for a greater range of students than many other schools in Australia. The extraordinary dedication of the teaching and wider staffs must also be acknowledged here.

June 2020: Newspaper article about LACS published in the CENTRALIAN ADVOCATE.

As mentioned, one of the most significant challenges for leadership in 2020 was the induction of an almost entirely new teaching staff. However, this presented a great opportunity – to set the work *culture* for the school. LACS, like a medical practice, a hospital or a law firm, is a *professional* organisation. Thus, there was a strong focus on professional conduct from the very beginning of the year (which continues to this day). LACS staff collegiately devised the following Professional Meetings Charter, which covers any professional encounter between staff, not just weekly meetings.



Ltyentye Apurte Catholic School – Santa Teresa

Professional Meetings Charter

At LACS, we agree that all professional meetings should:

- empower participants with two-ways, cultural understanding and sensitivity
- be safe for everyone to share professional knowledge, experience and opinions
- develop professional understanding through the sharing and discussion of ideas
- involve participants talking in a calm, friendly and respectful manner to each other
- engage participants in appropriate, relevant content, which links to everyday practice, and follows a timely, organised agenda.

Meetings start at 3:15 and finish at 4:30. Tech devices not to be used unless required or in emergency. Developed by whole staff: Semester 1, 2020.

In focussing on other aspects of school leadership, in Term 3, facilitation of the weekly Yarning Circle was handed over to local Arrernte staff. It was felt that capacity had been sufficiently built by two previous non-Aboriginal facilitators, namely Dr Phil Standen and Kellie Mayne. Moreover, leadership is an *ethical* activity and creating opportunities for self-determination for our local staff is very much an ethical thing to do. To this day, Yarning Circle continues – led by Arrernte staff who devise the agenda, chair the meetings and take the minutes. Support (or ongoing capacity building) is provided by non-local staff as required.



August 2020: The locally led Yarning Circle meet each week in the staff room.

There is an ongoing need to identify and induct a new, third member of CALT at LACS. This would have been achieved in 2020 were it not for the coronavirus pandemic and other aforementioned challenges drawing time and resources away. The school will re-focus attention here in 2021.

One of the most unfortunate casualties of the listed challenges was the Student Representative Council (SRC). No meetings were held in 2020. As 'student voice' is powerful in schools, once again, we will re-focus attention here in 2021.

Finally, the school's improvement plan also identifies the need to engage all members of the community in LACS's decision making processes. An Aboriginal School Advisory Board (or group) comprising representative members of families and key stakeholders such as the Parish Priest is envisaged. This would provide the school a greater *community* perspective on its operation and direction. Progress has been slow and there are obstacles to overcome. We follow the lead of other Aboriginal Catholic Community Schools (ACCS) in the NT.

Community and Culture

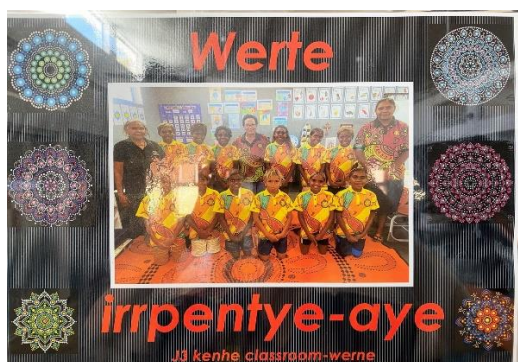
There has been a much increased focus on Community and Culture at LACS since 2020. Indeed, in terms of overall strategic direction, it sits on almost level terms with Catholic Identity and Teaching and Learning. As mentioned earlier, leadership is an ethical activity and what could be more ethical than ensuring that education in a remote Aboriginal community is at least contextually, linguistically and culturally relevant.

A major priority for both Catholic Education Northern Territory (CENT) and LACS was to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The RAP program provides a framework for organisations such as CENT and LACS to advance reconciliation within their spheres of influence. This is achieved through turning good intentions into positive actions, helping to build higher trust, lower prejudice, and increase pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The LACS RAP was devised by CALT members Rosemary Palmer and Marcus Williams in consultation with our Aboriginal Workforce Development Coordinator, Kellie Mayne, and Principal Consultant, Br Daniel Hollamby. Detailing reconciliatory actions under the headings of 'Relationship', 'Respect' and 'Opportunity', it was published in May 2020 and presented to staff at Yarning Circle and wider staff meetings. Moving forward, the intention is to make the RAP a 'live' document – informing school practice on a daily basis. This is the focus in 2021.

There are overlaps between our RAP and Annual School Improvement Plan (ASIP), specifically, the call for Arrernte language and culture to feature in ever more school programs, events and celebrations – beyond traditional 'Arrernte' lessons. Good progress to that end was made in 2020. Before the year even started, we committed to redeveloping our Literacy Production Centre (LPC) and employed an LPC Coordinator (Cecily Palmer) and Digital Arrernte Literacy Resource Production Assistant (Franky Gorey). Our new moral purpose and strategic direction were made clear to staff at the beginning of year orientation. We used our good relationship with the Department of Education to secure the consultancy services of Dr Margaret Carew over bilingual / biliteracy education. We sought (and got) approval from the local Aboriginal Corporation (AAAC) to endorse a higher proportion of linguistically and culturally appropriate education at the school. Justin Colley, Cecily Palmer and Franky Gorey visited Yuendumu School and OLSH College Wadeye to see and bring back best practice in bilingual education and biliteracy resource production. Zoe Smithies developed staff understanding of (Arrernte ATs and non-Aboriginal teachers) team-planning and teaching. Marcus Williams and Franky Gorey presented their innovative work in digital interactive Arrernte literacy production via SMART-boards at SMART's global 'Inspiring Greatness Conference'. Justin Colley called on all teachers to ensure that classroom displays combined English AND Arrernte – thus esteeming Arrernte language and culture. By Term 4 2020, this was very evident indeed.



December 2020: Displays of Arrernte / English much more evident in classrooms and throughout the school.



December 2020: Displays of Arrernte / English much more evident in classrooms and throughout the school.

The pandemic caused great disruption to the normal flow of events. NAIDOC Week was rescheduled to November 2020. LACS observed it on a smaller scale than in recent years but it was successful nonetheless. CALT (namely Rosemary Palmer and Marcus Williams) organised the Arrernte staff to run workshops on painting and culture. They also brought in the Ltyentye Apurte Rangers to showcase their work in caring for country. Marcus Williams led a staff PD on Arrernte language which further contributed to classrooms displays.



November 2020: **NAIDOC Week** activities. Students awarded roo tails for good attendance.

Our Aboriginal Workforce Development Coordinator, Kellie Mayne, continued to oversee the formal education of local staff. For the most part in 2020, this was through Alana Kaye Certificate III in Early Childhood Development. In Term 4, this included a highly successful visit to preschools in Alice Springs. Four Arrernte Assistant Teachers continued to study alongside Kellie. One was forced to withdraw when she moved to another community. Kellie also facilitated local staff professional development in Reading Running Records and aspects of WHS. She also organised for junior class ATs to attend PD about autism.

Again, one of the unfortunate consequences of the pandemic was the cancellation or curtailment of so many school / community events that would otherwise have happened. This included Mothers' and Fathers' Days celebrations, School Open Days, religious liturgies (inc. Easter), Student Report Afternoon Teas, Book Week Parade, and even inviting families into classrooms after an assembly. It was all prohibited and frustrating.

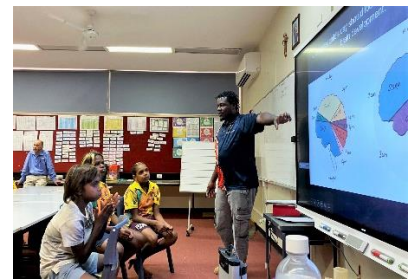
Parent / carer satisfaction with the school is gauged in number of ways. We receive feedback following meetings with parents / carers (and other community stakeholders) about Student Reports; through school community events such as assemblies, liturgies and BBQs, and through service provider meetings in relation to school attendance and well-being (RSAS and IFSS). Feedback is largely positive. Community generally recognises that school does its best to serve everyone's interests. We are currently seen as school that is making good progress following the difficulties of 2020. Sometimes feedback is less positive, i.e. complaints about students teasing one another. We deal with this in a constructive manner.

Well-being

Both students and staff well-being remained a high priority in 2020, extremely more so when the coronavirus pandemic hit.

From Term 1, Well-being Coordinator, Kellie Mayne, focussed students and staff attention on the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence (aka 'Bullying, No Way'). There was a poster competition and the top four anti-bullying messages won prizes. Kellie subsequently devised a survey on teasing around school to gather data to inform practice. The survey was delivered and Kellie gathered and analysed data. It was presented to staff and then used to inform change. CENT advised LACS to adopt the 'Mind-Up to Life Program' to empower students (in matters of teasing, etc) and improve their broad well-being. Embedding of the program should begin in 2021.

In 2020, multiple concerns were expressed in school and the wider community about the impact of computer games on youth wellbeing and student attendance at LACS. Games were / are being played obsessively, which can have a detrimental impact on brain development and disturb sleep patterns. Kellie devised and administered a second survey (on gaming) and organised a meeting for community stakeholders to share understanding and jointly plan a response to the problem. It was very successful and four after-school information sessions were scheduled for parents / families and well attended.



August 2020: School staff and stakeholders present to parents / carers and students on computer game addiction.

Kellie organised a host of staff social and well-being activities intended to make staff feel connected and valued. This included a fried (bacon and eggs) breakfast, staff dinner at school one night, a ladies' movie night and morning teas to celebrate birthdays. Kellie and local CALT member Marcus Williams also organised for staff to go for tea out bush on four occasions. This enabled further staff bonding and the chance to see Arrernte country. Feedback from staff was extremely positive. CENT are aware of these trips and later asked Marcus to present on them at the Term 3 2020 Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Network day.

LACS' resident psychologist and counsellor, Br Francis Hough, provided support to students through counselling sessions and spending time in classrooms. Our context is complex, with high instances of social and emotional difficulties as well as intergenerational and cultural trauma. A counsellor from Catholic Care NT (CCNT) was also employed in the school to assist. Jennifer Cole worked successfully with many students. She received excellent feedback from LACS staff. Unfortunately, Jennifer resigned from CCNT at the end of 2020 and they have not been able to find a replacement (yet).

Holly-ann Martin's Safe4Kids program unfortunately could not return due to interstate travel restrictions and a lack of funds. With an almost entirely new teaching staff and ongoing need to deliver protective education, Kellie organised a zoom session for Holly-ann to upskill new

staff in child safety. Thereafter, they were able to implement lessons from the Safe4Kids program. Holly-ann will return in person in 2021.

In December we held our annual Child Protection Week. Teachers delivered lessons on child protection. We had a day focussing on healthy living (delivered in a series of rotations) which finished with a very exciting Colour Fun Run around community. Local NT Police officers and MacDonnell Regional Council staff participated in this.



December 2020: Colour Fun Run after health rotations.

The Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC) sexual health program had to be abandoned in 2020 for a variety of reasons. However it is a high priority for 2021. Kellie commenced a Training and Assessment (TAE) course in 2020 at the suggestion of CENT. It is hoped that once trained in the field of health, she will be able support our senior students so they depart school with related skills and qualifications.

LACS was visited by a number of sporting organisations in 2020. They worked with students on a weekly or termly basis. Organisations included AFL-NT, NRL-NT and Netball NT. Besides sport, they all conveyed the same messages on good health, exercise, nutrition and school attendance to students. Students attended a football carnival in Alice Springs. The Senior Ladies also had great success playing AFLW, their teacher creating many learning opportunities relating to their involvement in this venture. Royal Life Saving NT provided swimming and water safety lessons during Terms 1 and 4. The University of Melbourne's Indigenous Eye Health (Trachoma) Education Program also visited the community.

Finally, in response to the coronavirus pandemic, community stakeholders worked together to spread messages around Santa Teresa about the dangers of the virus and how to prevent it coming to community. A series of videos were made for YouTube. Principal, Justin Colley, invited CatholicCare NT, Literacy for Life Foundation and Santa Teresa Clinic to work with LACS on a fun, educational video about the science of coronavirus and the need for hygiene. It was a highly successful collaboration between stakeholders. Together with painted bonnets, the video has been supplied to the National Museum of Australia in Canberra to depict outback Australia's response to the pandemic.



May 2020: Junior 4 students interview Dr Fiona at the clinic before continuing video production back at school.

Finance, Facilities and Resources

One of the highlights of the 2020 school year was the official opening and blessing of the new \$1.3 million classroom complex on Monday 21st September (the last week of Term 3). It was long overdue. Responsibility for completion of the new building (in terms of technical readiness for occupants and furniture) rested with the Principal, Justin Colley. However, completion was severely delayed by a range of restrictions resulting from the coronavirus pandemic. Network engineers could not visit the site to make it Internet ready. Thousands of dollars of classroom furniture from New Zealand was stuck in Port Brisbane for months on end. Many other deliveries were held up.

In keeping with the modern design, equally modern furniture was chosen. Indeed, at least \$62,000 was spent on entirely new furniture for the building. The emphasis was on 21st century learning. Most of the furniture came with casters allowing portability and flexible classroom design. Desks are writeable (students can write on them with dry-wipe pens and teachers photograph for assessment). Seating comprised 70% ergonomically designed chairs and 30% wobble stools (a trauma informed practice). The shared area features a 270° circular sofa for meetings and group reading and a desks for tutoring and / or art. By the end of 2020, all internal glass sliding doors were covered with 1.5 metre high translucent screens to diminish visual distractions for students (a further trauma informed practice).



September 2020: A look inside the new building.

The opening and blessing – of both the new building and basketball court – was a very successful day for the school. It was attended by Bishop Charles Gauci (Bishop of Darwin), Greg O'Mullane (Director, CENT), Fr Prakash and Fr Elmer (past and present Parish Priests), Bill Yan (MLA for Namitjira), key stakeholders and members of the local community. This was a COVID-Safe event. It featured several speeches, a performance of the school song by the choir, a smoking ceremony conducted by Arrernte Elders on school staff, the blessing with Holy Water by Bishop Charles, a guided tour by Justin and a lunch for visitors with specially made cake in the school library.



September 2020: Opening the new building involved smoking and blessing.

To note is that the new basketball court had little to do with school. It was requested by Traditional Owners in consultation with the board of the local Aboriginal Corporation (AAAC) and paid for by the Central Land Council's (CLC) Community Development Fund. Building was organised by Tangentyere Council. While the new basketball court sits on school grounds, it is a dual school / community facility. There is a Memorandum of Understanding between LACS and CLC to that end.

During 2020, a new teacher moved out of their accommodation as it was found to be in need of refurbishment. Until this could / can take place, the teacher moved into the 'Principal's House' (which was otherwise vacant). Other teacher accommodation is also in need of refurbishment. It would be fair to say that these assets have been somewhat neglected over the years and strategic priority is now to systematically refurbish them. Progress was slow in 2020 due to staff changes in CENT's infrastructure department. This also explains why the old three classroom demountable block has not been demolished yet.

In moving to finance, the pandemic had a very negative impact on student enrolment and attendance in remote schools across the Northern Territory. At August Census, which determines school funds for the following year, student attendance at LACS dropped to just 30.9% and enrolments to 107 (excluding pre-school). The school's staff allocation and funding for 2021 was reduced to match. Moreover, during 2020, leadership became aware that LACS was over-staffed, its staff costs accounting for approximately 75% of the overall budget. A process of natural attrition (of staff) was allowed to take place. Meanwhile, school made efforts to increase revenue by charging rent to stakeholders for use of school facilities.

In 2020, the focus on WHS procedures and documentation had a necessary focus on prevention and immediate response to Coronavirus (COVID-19). Justin Colley was required to create a 'Pandemic Plan' as part of the school's existing Emergency Management Plan. This was shared with the entire school community, Ltyentye Apurte stakeholders and CENT. Naturally, there was a major emphasis on personal hygiene (i.e. coughing and hand-washing) social distancing and sanitisation of the school environment. Many school events had to be cancelled or curtailed due the pandemic. Assemblies were changed from one to two a day; these featuring smaller, socially distanced groups of students and shorter duration.

WHS coordination at LACS – while sound, was not very consistent in 2020. The school had three WHS Coordinators during the year: Zoe Smithies, Derrick Fernandes and Mat Parr.

Attendance Strategy

Ultimate responsibility for student attendance rests with parents and households with support from the school and its stakeholders. There is a team approach to maintaining and improving attendance at LACS. The Principal and / or Deputy Principal regularly meet with stakeholders including Catholic Care Northern Territory (CCNT), who are the main service providers for the Remote Schools Attendance Strategy (RSAS) and Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS). The team also includes representatives from MacYouth (an arm of MacDonnell Regional Council) and the local Aboriginal Corporation (AAAC). The team works together to determine strategic needs around school attendance and the well-being of children in community. This creates a cycle of action which is constantly under review.

In 2020 LACS continued to offer a range of programs intended to engage older students with school. They included the Horse Program, Traditional Crafts and Cooking. In the past, data showed that these programs raised attendance on the days they were offered. However, in 2020, the correlation was less strong and teachers and leadership became aware that the programs were becoming tired and in need of review and restructuring.

In 2020 CCNT changed leadership of RSAS and IFSS. Since 2019 they were overseen by Janelle Park. This provided continuity, good communication and overlaps between services. However, once the biosecurity lockdown of Santa Teresa finished in June, CCNT looked to appoint a dedicated RSAS Coordinator. This took time because of the pandemic. Janelle's role contracted to IFSS. Temporary coordination of RSAS was given to Peter Denton (CCNT Men's Shed). At the same time (but quite *unrelated*) a number of local staff left the RSAS team, causing quality of provision to decline. This was unfortunate, given the hugely negative impact of the pandemic on student attendance.

The coronavirus pandemic caused great anxiety among everyone living in Santa Teresa. From the final week of Term 1 and through Term 2, student attendance in NT schools became 'non-mandatory'. Students could work from home while schools provided alternative education through e-Learning. LACS communicated this to the community and attendance sharply dropped. Teachers created Take-Home Study Packs which were taken to students at home by Family Liaison Officer, Renee Gorey, and RSAS staff. From Term 3, LACS requested that *all* students *return* to school but the community was slow to respond.

Parental anxiety around coronavirus continued to keep many students away. An increase in computer gaming (mainly *Fortnite*) meant that many children played all night and slept during the day. Most significantly, Federal Government's measures to stimulate the economy throughout pandemic led to *unintended* consequences. Remote communities across the NT were awash with money, particularly from early access to superannuation. While much of this money was well spent, much was miss-spent on, amongst other things, gifts for children. Too many LACS students failed to attend in Term 3 due to riding their new motorbikes around community during school hours.

At its worst, LACS attendance rates dipped to 30.9 % in August 2020. In response, data was accessed and scrutinised with increasing regularity (every two weeks). LACS leadership, classroom teachers and the new RSAS team worked hard to identify and prioritise students not engaging with school. LACS leadership, Renee Gorey and RSAS staff went door-to-door – re-engaging families and students. By December 2020, attendance reached 58%, the highest it had been all year and 2% higher than the same period in 2019 (pre-pandemic).

2020 Student Attendance Data and other School Statistics

Student Enrolment by Gender and Year Level

Year	T	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Male	10	3	8	8	8	3	4	5	4	2	4	3	1	63
Female	3	9	4	7	8	4	7	5	3	6	3	2	1	62
TOTAL	13	12	12	15	16	7	11	10	7	8	7	5	2	125

Pre-school Enrolments: Male: 5 + Female: 3 = **8**

Indigenous Enrolment: 100%

Average Attendance: 42% (Based on CENT figures for Yr. T – 12, for Semester 1 and 2 combined).

Student Attendance = or > 75%: 14

Student Needs

Students with a disability: **36**

Students with an EAP: **33** (0 x support with QDTP; 15 x Supplementary; 17 x Substantial; 1 x Extensive)

Staff

Teachers: **15** Teachers including ten classroom teachers (in eight classes including Pre-School), one Arrernte language / culture teacher, two qualified local Arrernte teachers and four teachers in leadership – all of whom had teaching commitments.

Support staff: **30** including full-time and part-time, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, classroom and non-classroom.

TOTAL: **45** staff, 28 of whom are Aboriginal and 17 non-Aboriginal.

Teacher Credentials:

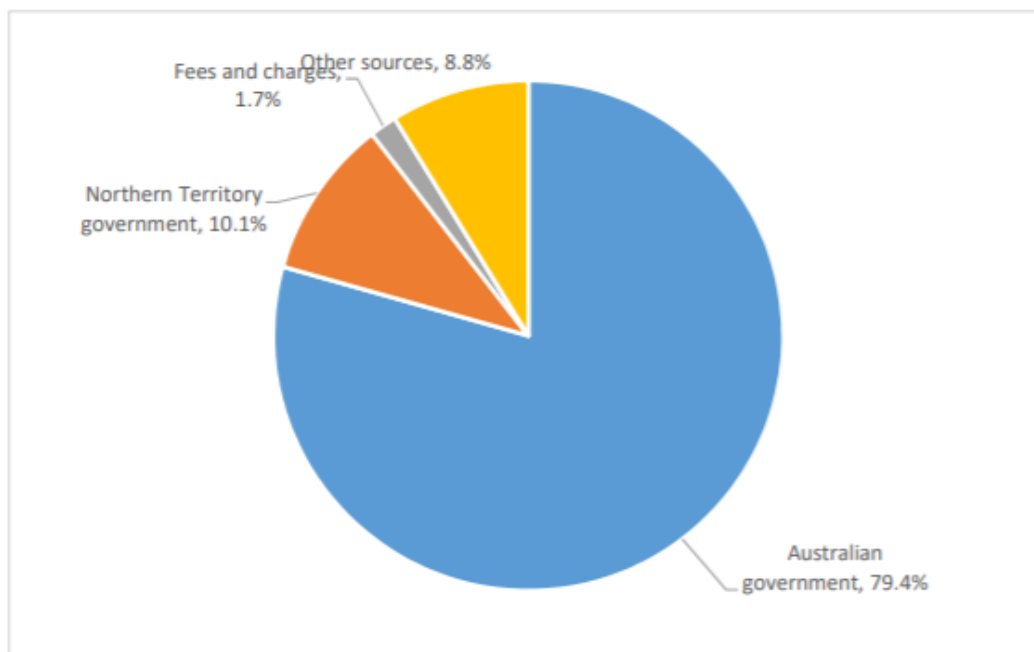
All staff hold a Northern Territory Working with Children or Ochre Card. All teachers have mandatory registration with the NT Teacher Registration Board (TRB).

Masters: 2
Bachelor: 10
Diploma: 3

Ltyentye Apurte Catholic School School annual recurrent income 2020

School recurrent income 2020

Source	Amount	Proportion
Australian government	3,322,849	79.4%
Northern Territory government	424,329	10.1%
Fees and charges	72,467	1.7%
Other sources	367,331	8.8%
Total	4,186,975	100.0%



* Note: All figures based on school income (excludes system allocations)

Endorsements:



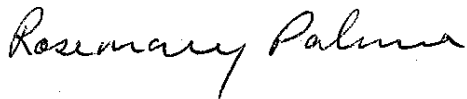
Date: 31 / 03 / 2021

Justin Colley (Principal)



Date: 10 / 05 / 2021

Pamela Brown (Deputy Principal)



Date: 10 / 05 / 2021

Rosemary Palmer (Senior CALT Representative)



Date: 10 / 05 / 2021

Greg O'Mullane (Director CENT)