

An introduction to Lutheran Education Australia

An overview

The Lutheran Church of Australia has a rich history in education. Since the first Lutheran school opened in 1839 Lutheran schools have grown considerably. There has been particular growth in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The growth in Lutheran schools has been very much part of the growth of the non-government sector and reflects the church's commitment to serving both its people and the Australian community. Around one quarter of the enrolments are Lutheran.

Today over 40,000 students receive their education in Lutheran schools throughout Australia. They are located in every state and territory apart from the ACT. In addition, it is estimated that over 4,000 children are educated and cared for in 56 Lutheran early childhood services around the nation.

Lutheran Education Australia supports the choice of parents in the education of their children.

Lutheran schools are distinctive Ethos

Lutheran schools are strongly linked by a common ethos, aiming to *provide quality education in which the gospel of Jesus Christ informs all learning and teaching, all human relationships and all activities.*

Independent but interdependent

As Lutheran schools are independently operated, the education program they offer can be tailored to serve the needs of their local communities. Lutheran schools focus their resources to ensure they remain faithful to their mission and are accessible to the community. Fee levels are modest.

Although independently operated, Lutheran schools belong to regional systems, and, together with early childhood centres are linked and supported through regional and national offices.

Educational values

Central to their mission and ministry, Lutheran schools seek to nurture integrated individuals, who

- are guided by core values and reflecting the characteristics of God especially love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, service, humility, courage, hope, quality and appreciation
- serve their communities by being:
- self-directed, insightful investigators and learners
 - discerning, resourceful problem solvers and implementers
 - adept, creative producers and contributors
 - open, responsive communicators and facilitators
 - principled, resilient leaders and collaborators
 - caring, steadfast supporters and advocates

Educational emphases

• Students

Lutheran schools see each student as unique and offer an education program that will allow each student to develop their God-given abilities as fully as possible, providing programs for students with disabilities as well as those assessed as gifted and talented.

• Indigenous education

Yirara College of the Finke River Mission is a boarding school in Alice Springs for Indigenous students twelve years and older from remote communities. Peace Lutheran College (Cairns Qld), Eastside Lutheran College (Hobart Tas) and Crossways Lutheran School (Ceduna SA), have significant Indigenous enrolments (10%, 8% and 64% respectively).

• Rural and remote

While predominantly located in cities and larger regional centres, Lutheran schools are also found in rural and remote areas. As a result Lutheran Education Australia appreciates and understands the unique challenges faced by rural schools in overcoming additional obstacles of distance and access to resources.

• Tertiary education

The tertiary institution of the Lutheran Church of Australia, Australian Lutheran College, in Adelaide, is involved in teacher education partnership programs with universities in Adelaide, Brisbane and Ballarat. In addition it offers post graduate theological and educational study options. In this way it supports the pre-service and in-service needs of Lutheran schools in Australia.

Lutheran schools: a global community

Lutheran Education Australia is part of a major network of schooling worldwide. Lutheran schools are found in North and South America, Northern Europe, Africa and Asia.

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| 1967 | 3,592 | students |
| 1983 | 9,956 | students |
| 1993 | 18,285 | students |
| 2003 | 28,706 | students |
| 2013 | 39,147 | students |
| 2023 | 44,349 | students |

Lutheran schools – statistics as at Census (Aug 2023)

- 78 Lutheran schools
 - 35 primary schools
 - 8 secondary schools
 - 35 combined primary/secondary schools
 - 58 Lutheran kindergartens and early childhood services
- Schools by state
 - South Australia 28
 - Queensland 26
 - Victoria/Tasmania 16
 - New South Wales 4
 - Northern Territory 3
 - Western Australia 1
- Enrolments
 - Schools 44,349 [at Aug 2023]
 - Early childhood services 4,000 [approx]
- Enrolments by state
 - South Australia 12,884
 - Queensland 20,667
 - Victoria/Tasmania 7,868
 - New South Wales 857
 - Northern Territory 1,373
 - Western Australia 700
- Teaching staff: 3,576