

# A framework for Lutheran schools

## Rationale

This framework was developed through a consultative process involving schools and regions within Lutheran Education Australia. The framework provides an overview of how Lutheran schooling is formed and shaped by its beliefs, while meeting legislative requirements and also reflecting current understandings about learners, learning and learning communities. It presents a Christian worldview that reflects a framework of meaning and purpose to inform Lutheran schooling. A Framework for Lutheran schools presents a story to tell, a language to speak, a work to undertake, and a face of God to see, and it helps people who encounter Lutheran schooling to identify the group to which they belong (Scroope, 2005).

## Explanation

The ethos of the Lutheran school is informed by beliefs about God, the nature of people and the relationship God seeks with each individual, which in turn informs relationships with one another and the environment. Since this ethos is deeply held, certain things are highly valued and they influence and motivate behaviour. This ethos comprises the left column of the framework and grounds the worldview of the Lutheran school. It should underpin each school's mission statement, hence the solid arrows are used to make links.

In addition, Lutheran schools are bound by legislative requirements which, together with current beliefs about learners, learning and learning communities, also shape experiences in the school. However, these elements of the framework are somewhat fluid. Legislation and government requirements change over time. Knowledge and understanding of learners, learning and learning communities are informed by current research. As research in areas like science and the social sciences grows, so does an understanding of these elements. An example is brain research which, in recent years, has revealed new insights into learning and the nature of learners. Thus, the right hand column of the framework is linked by less solid arrows, indicating its more fluid nature.

The framework is cohesive as each belief in the right hand column is in alignment with the ethos elements. Thus, ethos underpins all that is done and said in the Lutheran school. The mission statement and beliefs about the lifelong qualities of people who have attended Lutheran schools find their genesis in ethos. These lifelong qualities in turn are supported by, and support, beliefs about learners, learning and learning communities (paradigms). While ethos is founded on the rock of faith and the paradigms are more transient, being based on what the sciences reveal at this moment in history, together they make a cohesive framework for education in Lutheran schools.

## Uses

Schools are encouraged to explore the framework in more detail with their whole school community and use it to inform decision-making so that the inter-relatedness of its elements can be made more explicit and connected to everyday practice in schools. The framework is intentionally brief so that each teacher can place it at the front of their work program/s as a reminder of the Lutheran ethos at the core of all that is done and said in the Lutheran school.