



Australian Government

# Quality Schools

## **Non-Government Reform Support Strategic Plan**

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**2019-2022**

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**Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA)**

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# Executive Summary

## KEY PRINCIPLES

CEWA adopts the following principles for the distribution of the Non-Government Reform Support Funding (RSF);

1. Funding needs to support schools to operate efficiently, with appropriate accountability and therefore ultimately to lead to improved outcomes for students – learning wise and socio-emotionally.
2. Projects/strategic initiatives supported by RSF funding need to align with Australian Government priorities as articulated in existing documentation and as which may arise in the determinations of the Education Council and other peak bodies.
3. Projects/strategic initiatives need to support agreed priorities in the Bilateral Reform Agreement signed by the three systems/sectors in Western Australia.
4. Projects/strategic initiatives need to be consistent with and supportive of, CEWA's strategic Plan "Strategic Directions 2019 – 2021". This outlines the key pillars for all 162 Catholic schools in Western Australia to enhance outcomes for students and their families.
5. CEWA's Strategic Plan for RSF funding builds on initiatives from the former Students First Support Funding and develops the capacities and value added through those initiatives.
6. CEWA appreciates the support through the RSF funding, and while a small proportion of total funding to CEWA schools, a key aim is to leverage ongoing school improvement as far as possible; this requires value adding projects and support and sustainable practice.

## KEY APPROACHES

1. CEWA provides service to all 162 Catholic schools in Western Australia. This is achieved through the unique operation structure outlined later in this submission involving CEWA head office in Leederville and regional offices in Bunbury, Geraldton and Broome. Through Regional Officers (ROs), School Improvement Advisors (SIAs) and School Support Consultants (SSCs), CEWA supports schools in achieving national, state and system priorities. The personnel mentioned above support all schools to build capacity, effect school improvement and create better outcomes for students.
2. Accordingly, CEWA is adopting an approach to largely support this central infrastructure to schools in achieving national, state and system initiatives. This means that funds are largely directed to supporting key elements of system infrastructure (largely FTE support). Funds are directed substantively to central processes as opposed to direct expenditure to schools. In some cases, school are supported to participate in centrally organised activities through purposes such as teacher relief, travel and accommodation. This focus helps to assure alignment with key strategic priorities, value for money and ongoing sustainable practice. Accountability is also easier to establish, maintain and report on.
3. In accordance with the approaches outlined above, CEWA and the 162 schools build capacity individually and collectively.

## KEY PROJECTS

Guided by the above principles and practices, CEWA will be using RSF funding to support a range of projects which can be described under three main categories;

1. *Support for schools to improve accountability and implement effective practices*

In the 2019 work plan this involved six projects and accounted for a significant proportion of funding allocation. This is based on the premise that more efficient and accountable schools are better placed to effect improvement in student outcomes as well as better meeting current regulatory frameworks. It is anticipated that this broad area of focus will continue during 2020 to 2022.

2. *Support for projects directly related to learning and teaching*

In 2019 the work plan included four projects addressing a range of areas such as NAPLAN online, NCCD for students with disability, STEM and data interpretation. Support for these projects will continue and it is likely that funding for projects in this broad area may expand, including support for child protection practices – in line with national and state initiatives – as well as early childhood education.

3. *Support for projects related to increasing educators' proficiency, including leadership*

In the 2019 work plan, four projects focused on this broad area. Support for projects in this broad area is premised on an accepted research base that educators make the biggest single difference on student learning. It is anticipated that projects in the 2019 work plan will continue, particularly in the area of early career teacher support and in areas associated with Aboriginal education.

## SPECIAL FOCUS

As outlined in this strategic plan, CEWA has a special privilege for the poor and most vulnerable. This includes, but is not limited to, students in lower SES communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and students located in non-metropolitan and remote schools. In terms of RSF funding allocations, these groups will be preference where possible.

## CURRENT CONTEXT

### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

CEWA has 162 schools and approximately 77,000 students under its system.

These include;

26 Secondary schools Year 7 to 12

24 Composite schools Year PP to Year 12

112 primary schools Year PP to Year 6

Of these 162 schools;

107 are metropolitan

55 are regional/country

Additionally, 13 are Kimberly schools with 8 of these classified as sole provider schools.

In terms of disadvantage, CEWA consists of over 30 schools with an ICSEA less than 933 (one standard deviation below the mean).

Thirteen schools are located in the Kimberley region with Aboriginal student cohorts being above 50% in most schools and close to 100% in 7 schools.

Additionally, CEWA oversees 4 Curriculum and Reengagement Education (CARE) schools with 3 in the metropolitan area and one located in Geraldton. One is planned to open in Broome in the Kimberley, a region of great need. CARE schools typically cater for students who, for a number of reasons, are unable to attend a larger mainstream school. CEWA proposes to support these schools through central infrastructure and RSF funding. It is likely that these schools, especially Broome will be included in RSF funding from 2020 and beyond.

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Compared with other states and territories, CEWA has a unique governance structure.

- There are four dioceses each with a presiding Bishop and regional office with support staff and infrastructure including consultants and ROs/SIAs.
- The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) is the sole governing body for the 162 Catholic schools in CEWA. The central office of CEWA, through delegated authority of CECWA, is able to make collaborative decisions on behalf of all 162 schools. This is a differentiating factor from other Catholic systems across Australia. In terms of the allocation of RSF funding, it means that;
  - Key strategic initiatives from the national and state governments as well as CEWA'S Strategic Plan can be implemented effectively across the system.
  - Equity can be established across the system, including schools and special needs groups and communities. This is reflected in a number of RSF projects which are described below.
- The stated approach by CEWA, as outlined in the 2019 work plan and the executive summary of this strategic plan is to leverage CEWA's "systemness" to maximise outcomes for schools and students.

## CATERING FOR SCHOOL DIFFERENCES

The Strategic Plan for RSF expenditure reflects a priority to support less resourced schools and students and families who are disadvantaged and more vulnerable. In regard to the RSF plan over the next four years, the following focus projects will continue;

1. **Support for country schools** – over the next four years, country schools will be supported as far as possible. These schools tend to have lower SES communities, smaller student cohorts, higher costs to attend professional learning opportunities and few relief teachers available to backfill for short term staff absences. Accordingly, CEWA will be directing RSF funding running professional learning for the Early Career Teacher program in three main regional hubs with part support for teacher relief; support for school board chairs to attend the 2019 and 2021 conferences (part subsidy of travel and accommodation); support for primary schools as a priority to implement the 14 projects; special central ICT support for country schools to implement NAPLAN online in 2019 and beyond; and support for projects in the 13 Kimberley schools such as the ATA Upskilling program and continued rollout of the Aboriginal Education Transforming Lives 2025 initiative over the next four years and beyond.
2. **Support for low SES Schools** – CEWA will continue to provide as much funding as possible over the next four years to the more needy schools which by and large are mainly country schools (see above), primary schools and schools located in the Kimberley region. While not in the list of projects for 2019, support from 2020 will feature CARE schools, especially the planned opening of the Broome CARE school in late 2019/early 2020.
3. **Support for schools in remote/regional areas and with high Aboriginal cohorts** – CEWA will continue to support these schools as part of its commitment to national priorities (including Closing the Gap and related priorities); the Bilateral Reform Agreement and as part of CEWA's strategic plan. Accordingly, projects such as support for ATA Upskilling, the Transforming Lives 2025 initiative and the Cultural Competency program will continue over the next four years. In 2019 these three initiatives accounted for approximately 20% of RSF funding and a similar allocation is expected with the addition of RSF funding to CARE schools.

## AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND FINDING OUT

CEWA recognises that all schools aspire to improved outcomes. CEWA adopts the principles and practices that encourages system led and system wide improvement for as many schools as possible. In respect of knowing how schools are performing, CEWA has a centralised approach which may be similar to government schools but not common to the independent school sector. This united 'systemness' enables;

1. Systematic oversight of school resources and finances and the ability to direct central resources, including those provided by RSF funding to effect school improvement.
2. Systematic oversight into school governance and regulatory compliance issues and the ability to assist schools to enhance areas of compliance and accountability over the next four years and beyond.

3. CEWA maintains detailed data about attendance and engagement in schools and from a system perspective will be in a position to direct RSF funding to schools who exhibit certain needs.
4. CEWA maintains detailed achievement data including NAPLAN Years 3,5,7 and 9 as well as a range of early learning data and senior secondary data including literacy and numeracy data in Year 10. This enables CEWA to address any issues and support schools during the four years of this strategic plan. Accordingly, projects can be modified, or new projects created to address needs. This is particularly relevant to ongoing support to schools to address any needs relating to the results of NAPLAN online and curriculum support to enhance curriculum development.
5. CEWA provides a range of professional learning opportunities and has regular contact with school educators, other staff and principals. This enables projects supported by the RSF to be targeted and scaffolded over the four years of the program. Over the next four years RSF projects will leverage this information.

In terms of targeted improvement in schools, RSF funding will be specifically applied to schools which require assistance to;

1. Address lower performance in NAPLAN, particularly in early years learning.
2. Schools with higher cohorts of Aboriginal students, particularly in areas of literacy and numeracy and development of staff in these schools; the aim is to effect overall improvement of student outcomes.

## **CURRENT PRACTICE, CURRENT PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT**

CEWA's three year strategic plan, as previously stated, aims to build on current good practice in schools and addresses areas where improvement can be effected.

Previous comments have reinforced the existing data collection capacity of CEWA and the targeted approaches which will be adopted in the application of RSF funding.

Over the next four years, through the detailed knowledge and data base about all aspects of a school's performance, and recognising the centralised support system, CEWA is able to provide, RSF funding and will attempt to;

1. Build on the existing strengths of schools across a range of aspects of school operation, including providing funding for networking opportunities to share good practice; this will be including best practice schools including opportunities for mentoring other schools. Examples include projects related to STEM, particularly in primary schools; projects related to progressive activities in relation to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program in the 'Transforming Lives 2025' strategy; NAPLAN improvement, particularly in remote and Indigenous schools often involving Reading Recovery strategies; and models of best practice in areas of school governance, compliance, risk analysis and accountability.
2. Work with schools who need assistance in some areas. CEWA has directed significant RSF funding to support schools in financial and regulatory compliance by providing a revised

audit process and new ICT systems and connectivity which will result in enhanced communication and accountability.

3. CEWA is confident that all Catholic schools are addressing National, Bilateral Reform Agreement priorities as well as those in the CEWA Strategic Directions plan. This has been enabled by a system wide approach, including support structures provided to schools. Unlike other school systems, CEWA has a supportive process for schools in place. This consists of one central and three regional offices; 3 ROs; 6 SIAs; approximately 50 consultants to support schools in areas of student need and curriculum as well as a significant infrastructure in the area of finance, ICT support and accountability systems; human resources and legal/industrial matters. RSF Funding will continue to add value to these services, A more specific summary is provided following;
4. In terms of what schools are already doing, the governance and school support structure is able to provide advice to CEWA to enable strategic planning to occur.

## NATIONAL POLICY INITIATIVES AND STATE-BASED REFORMS

CEWA's strategic plan has been informed by five main sources and these are reflected in the 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan;

1. **National initiatives** – the stated initiatives as at December 2018 are; support for NAPLAN online implementation; continued roll out of the NCCD for students with disability and increasing school capacity, governance structures and accountability. Additional to these priorities, CEWA is aware of additional priorities relating to support for Aboriginal students and communities through initiatives such as 'Closing the Gap'; Early Childhood programs; STEM; and Australian Government programs supporting child safety. Some of these are not reflected in the 2019 Work Plan but will form part of CEWA's ongoing strategic plan from 2020 to 2022. The emphasis on school governance, regulatory compliance and accountability will continue in the future. This is a researched based decision which indicates that good leadership; good support processes and good teaching practice and support make the greatest difference in student achievement. In terms of how these priorities have been determined, CEWA has maintained a collective commitment to these priority areas for some time. CEWA is aware of the deliberations of Education Council and COAG and has used these to shape the strategic plan. Additionally, CEWA's commitment to social justice and supporting the disadvantaged and vulnerable students and families are important considerations in this four year plan. These are outlined in the table following.
2. **Bilateral Reform Agreement** – after close collaboration with the Department of Education and the Association of Independent Schools, the Bilateral Reform Agreement defines CEWA priorities which form a key part of this strategic plan. The specific elements of this plan are listed below;

Collaboration between the Association of Independent Schools of WA (AISWA) and the Department of Education of WA are assured both through the close collaboration which occurred in the development of the Bilateral Reform Agreement as well as ongoing dialogue with the systems to seek ways in which collaboration can occur, particularly in rural and remote areas where costs of delivery are high. For example the Upskilling program for ATAs delivered by the

University of Notre Dame Australia, Broome campus also provides services to government and independent schools on a fee for service arrangement.

In terms of priority areas for CEWA as stated in the Bilateral Reform Agreement, the following summary is provided. It is important to note that many of these priorities are shared either/both with AISWA and the Department of Education of WA.

- Supporting student engagement and wellbeing in schools – this includes strategies to improve student behaviour; positive parenting programs; increasing beginning teacher expertise; delivering professional learning to staff; anti-bullying programs; cyber safety programs; addressing student mental health and wellbeing.
- Increasing virtual learning opportunities i.e. VIsN.
- Addressing the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities.
- Programs involving leadership talent identification, recruitment and support; support for early career teachers; implementation of a Climate Survey for schools.
- Addressing Closing the Gap initiatives such as Transforming Lives 2025; support for Aboriginal educators; rollout of a Cultural Competency program.
- NCCD for students with a disability

A separate excel spreadsheet provided makes specific links to Bilateral Reform priorities. This needs to be viewed alongside this Strategic Plan.

## **OBJECTIVES**

CEWA has outlined the guiding principles of the four year strategic plan. The table below summarises forward plans as at early 2019. As required, any significant changes to the plan will be advised prior to 2020 and also in the relevant annual report.

The following indicative table is based on the following information;

1. The 2019 RSF Work plan needs to be read in conjunction; this work plan outlines further detail for most of the proposed projects. Similarly, the spreadsheet submitted which shows linkages to the Bilateral Reform Agreement also needs to be considered.
2. The projects proposed in the following table reflect 14 projects included in the 2019 Work plan submitted; emphases are indicated in nominal dollar allocations.
3. Any indicative indications of declines in dollar allocations should not be interpreted as being ascribed a lower priority by CEWA from a system perspective. All projects included are system priorities and as the indicative budget in the 2019 Work plan indicates, are supported significantly by central CEWA funding. Any changes that are significant will be submitted for approval.
4. There are two new projects included which are proposed to be funded from 2020 onwards. These relate to child safety and leadership development. CEWA already supports these areas which reflect national priorities as well as being included as system



priorities in the Bilateral Reform Agreement. The relative dollar allocations, project descriptions and key performance indicators will be outlined in the 2020 Work plan.

5. As outlined in the RSF Agreement, any significant changes will be submitted for approval.

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	NATIONAL PRIORITY	BILATERAL REFORM PRIORITY	2019 ALLOCATION	2020 ALLOCATION	2021 ALLOCATION	2022 ALLOCATION
<b>IMPROVING SCHOOL GOVERNANCE &amp; ACCOUNTABILITY</b>							
Climate survey	Centrally administered climate survey with results informing schools in matters of school accountability and improvement	Enhance governance and accountability	YES	\$324,000	Fairly Similar	Fairly Similar	Fairly Similar
School audit and governance	Range of initiatives centrally organised school audits for regulatory compliance; policy development and compliance; risk management in schools	Enhance governance and accountability	YES - PARTS	\$520,218	Decline	Decline	Decline
CRM Office rollout	Microsoft Customer Relations Management system rolled out to all schools to streamline contact, networking and compliance	Enhance governance and accountability	YES	\$274,292	Possible decline	Decline	Decline
AoS Deployment	Administration of Schools Portal to streamline data	Enhance governance and accountability	YES	\$300,000	Similar	Decline	Decline

		account ability					
PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	NATIONAL PRIORITY	BILATERAL REFORM PRIORITY	2019 ALLOCATION	2020 ALLOCATION	2021 ALLOCATION	2022 ALLOCATION
	collection; more agile planning and improve service to schools and facilitate easier reporting						
Board chair conference	Conference for School Board Chairs in issues of governance and risk management	Enhance governance and account ability	YES	\$29,000	Nil	\$40,000	Nil
CEWA Strategic plan	Continued roll out of CEWA system strategic plan in all schools	Enhance governance and account ability	YES	\$50,000	Similar	Similar	Similar
<b>IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT</b>							
Supporting STEM	Ongoing support to all schools to enhance delivery of STEM and student outcomes	ACARA Aust Curriculum Education Council	YES	\$60,000	Similar/increase	Similar/increase	Similar
NAPLAN online	Continued support to schools in both technical support and data interpretation	NAPLAN Online ACARA	YES	\$64,127	Increase	Similar/increase	Similar/increase
Transforming Lives 2025	Continuing implementation of this key CEWA policy to improve outcomes for Aboriginal students, families and	Closing the Gap Education Council	YES	\$75,000	Similar/decline	Similar	Similar

	employees in CEWA						
<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>NATIONAL PRIORITY</b>	<b>BILATERAL REFORM PRIORITY</b>	<b>2019 ALLOCATION</b>	<b>2020 ALLOCATION</b>	<b>2021 ALLOCATION</b>	<b>2022 ALLOCATION</b>
Vision online program	Virtual learning platform for a range of courses in CEWA schools; particularly advantageous for country and smaller schools	Australian Curriculum ACARA	YES	\$75,000	Increase	Increase	Increase
Student wellbeing and safety	Assisting schools to provide a safe and supportive environment for students	Education Council National antibullying programs	YES	Nil	Nominal \$75,000	Similar/increase	Increase
<b>INCREASING EDUCATORS' PROFICIENCY</b>							
Supporting NCCD	Assisting schools to make consistent judgements regarding students with disability	NCCD for students with disability	YES	\$117,117	Less	Less	Less
Early Career Teacher Program	Directed support for teachers during the first 3 years of service	AITSL TEMAG	YES	\$200,000	Similar	Similar	Similar
Support for Aboriginal Teacher Assistants	Support for ATAs in terms of assisting to achieve Certificate III and higher qualifications, including transition to tertiary studies	Closing the Gap Education Council	YES	\$200,000	Slightly more	Slightly more	Slightly more

Cultural Competency Program	Provision of a formal cultural competency program to key staff in all schools	Closing the Gap Education Council	YES	\$150,000	Similar	Less	Less
<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>NATIONAL PRIORITY</b>	<b>BILATERAL REFORM PRIORITY</b>	<b>2019 ALLOCATION</b>	<b>2020 ALLOCATION</b>	<b>2021 ALLOCATION</b>	<b>2022 ALLOCATION</b>
Leadership support	Supporting talent identification programs and support for leaders at different stages of their transition and career	AITSL Education Council	YES	Nil	Nominal \$100,000	Similar	Similar

## MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

The details in the 2019 RSF Work plan indicate the specific key performance indicators that will be applied to each project. These reflect a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures. Given that all projects are centrally organised and supported, CEWA also provides a wider evaluation capacity with feedback provided by;

1. CEWA consultants who are involved in the projects and through school visits.
2. School Improvement Advisors who are in constant contact with schools.
3. Feedback from Regional Officers who are involved in the three regional Offices supporting country and remote schools.
4. Statistical data where relevant such as NAPLAN achievement and participation information regarding NAPLAN online; numbers of staff participating in programs (e.g. Early Career Teacher program participation; ATA Upskilling program in terms of participation and qualification completions; Cultural Competency program commencement and completions; and school participation in projects such as AoS and CRM. Most projects outlined in the 2019 work plan have a number of quantitative measures.
5. Given that all projects form part of a wider system approach to support schools, quantitative and qualitative data is collected as well as satisfaction surveys and evaluations. All of the projects form part of wider and well established priorities and separating benefits which directly accrue to RSF and CEWA funding is somewhat difficult. Notwithstanding, reports and evaluations of progress will be provided with two key outcomes in mind;
  - The extent to which the operation of schools is more effective; and
  - The extent to which overall outcomes for student – across the range of schools – are better.
6. Given the centrally organised and supported nature of projects, constant evaluation will occur. Amendments and refinements can be implemented and synergies between projects reinforced.