



aitken
COLLEGE
In Mind and Spirit



INSPIRING YOUR PERSONAL BEST

STRATEGY, 2023 and beyond

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OUR APPROACH

Aitken College: inspiring young people to do their personal best in service to themselves and others.



Background to process and key discoveries

Defining Aitken College's unique identity was the starting point for rethinking our strategy, clarifying our unique purpose, and gaining focus as a community for the years ahead.

In mid-2022, NoTosh undertook a full community listening exercise with the help of an in-house "Design Team" of students, parents, teachers, staff and leadership:

- **94 in-depth interviews** undertaken by the Design Team;
- nearly **1000 lines** of **survey data**;
- **52 hours of analysis**, with Board and leadership team meetings;
- Analysis of the **local landscape**.
- Inspiration from our work with leading international schools.

We consulted with the Leadership and Board for the future vision of the school and consolidated this vision with the needs and desires expressed by the community.

As a result of our analysis there were 18 choices across five types of choice category, and synthesis sessions with leadership narrowed these choices down by half.

We also undertook an analysis of the school's Mission Statement and Values.

The previous Vision and Mission Statements described what the school does, rather than why we do it. The statements assumed the prospective family or newcomer knew the identity of the school: they didn't show what differentiated us, and why that mattered.

We discovered that there is indeed a distinctive purpose at Aitken College. The source of that unique core was there - we've simply drawn it out and shone a bright light upon it.

The strategy for the school's future builds on those strong foundations, and centres on one core idea: that the school can be the place to inspire every learner to find their personal best in service to themselves and others.

3: Guiding Principles

4-5: Strategy Overview

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vision

Aitken College sees a future where young people are inspired to do their personal best in service to themselves and others, in association with the Uniting Church in Australia.

Mission

Aitken College will develop students' self-esteem and confidence; expand their skills and intellect; and encourage them to become vital and compassionate members of the community.

Values

Our values guide behaviour that builds strong character and promotes the highest standards. Students, in particular, are empowered to embrace the values to achieve their personal best in all aspects of their lives, including learning, service, citizenship and wellbeing.

Compassion

We display genuine concern and support those in need.

Excellence

We strive to achieve our personal best.

Honesty

We behave and act truthfully and in good faith when engaging with others.

Kindness

We are considerate of others and treat them with empathy and generosity.

Respect

We accept and appreciate ourselves, others and our environment.

Aims

Through all our work, we aim to:

Make the Christian faith relevant through an understanding of its major teachings and by encouraging a personal faith journey;

Inspire and challenge students to realise their academic, social and emotional potential;

Promote and develop creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, perseverance and self-improvement;

Encourage individuals and the community to be respectful, to take responsibility and to act accordingly;

Empower students to act with service, sustainably and in reconciliation;

Cultivate an adaptive, innovative and continuously improving school.

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

We are determined to become a school that inspires everyone do to their personal best, in service to themselves and other people.

There are two big ideas in there that are our focus:

‘Excellence’ is a personal goal. Aitken College will be known as *the* school for helping young people find their calling and develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to pursue their own ambitious goals. We will do it by pushing every learner out of their comfort zone.

Developing character matters as much as developing talent. When we challenge young people and take them out of their comfort zone, what they develop alongside new skills and knowledge might not be assessable, but it matters greatly. We want every young person to succeed for their own future, but it is equally important that they put their talents to work in the service of others. Our commitment to Christian values will help us become a beacon for character development.

So what work needs to be done next?

Develop learning pathways

The curriculum is not one-size-fits-all. We will build up some world class curriculum pathways that will give a range of outstanding options for all students. The best schools in the world offer a rich tapestry of pathways and qualifications that empower students to personalise their journey.

Create a hub for social development, justice and influence

We want to create a collaborative hub as a focus for the Aitken community and beyond in order to engage actively and visibly in the service of others. As a focal point for the school and broader community, it will be seen as the place that can make things happen in support of the most needy and vulnerable. Social Development, Justice and Influence will be a vital incubator for fostering students’ talents and skills as well as building their character to create lasting and meaningful social change.

How will we make this happen?

Live by a culture of innovation

A culture of experimentation is key to deep and exciting learning for students, and for the organisation as a whole.

New ways of learning will be encouraged and facilitated through creativity, critical thinking and collaboration. This is increasingly part of the resilience we all want to see in our young people.

Strive to make the world better

Our 'commitment to social justice' is a defining attribute of the Aitken College graduate, and is crucial in developing the types of characteristics that we value in others, for example: empathy, consideration of others, and being action-oriented. It's an attribute that doesn't work well as a solo effort, either: it requires a whole community to role model what it means to live with this commitment.

Use everyone's strengths to have the biggest impact

We need to build a strengths-based program for students to be able to identify and foster their own unique talents. That self-awareness will ensure that they have the biggest impact on those things that matter most. This approach provides students and staff with the tools to locate, harness and build strengths. Students will act with more confidence knowing that they can achieve (or at the very least strive towards) the goal in front of them.



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