



**St Leo's College**

**Within The University of Queensland**

**Strategic Plan 2021-2026**



# Strategic Plan 2021 - 2026

## Context and framing for the Strategic Plan

St Leo's College is an independent Catholic College for men within the University of Queensland (UQ). It was established in 1917 by the then Archbishop of Brisbane, James Duhig DD. Its founding rationale was to support more Catholic men from rural and remote Queensland (Qld) gain tertiary qualifications in order for them to assume positions of influence and authority in Queensland and the broader Australian community. This Mission has been well and truly achieved. Starting with twenty men in 1917 and growing to serve over two hundred men each year, many Alumni have put their name to positions of significant influence and authority both within Queensland and beyond.

As the College turns to its second century the now Archbishop of Brisbane, Mark Coleridge, has asked, "What will be the founding rationale for the next 100 years?" This question has been central to a strategic planning process that has engaged Council, Staff, the Leadership Team of UQ, the Residents, Alumni, the Council of Duchesne College and the St Leo's Parent/Carer Community. The following Strategic Plan has emerged from this collaborative process and provides a blueprint for action, a way to position for success, through the years 2021 - 2026.

Eight touchstones have emerged that will be critical to address as St Leo's turns to meet the next 100 years. These are:

1. That there is still a desire for Catholic University Colleges at UQ but that what it means to be a *College in the Catholic tradition* is increasingly uncertain and needs to be defined and actively and positively promoted or risk becoming *Catholic* in name only.
2. That St Leo's core catchment (and recruitment focus) should predominantly be Catholic men from regional and rural Queensland but not exclusively. St Leo's also welcomes men from diverse faith backgrounds and from further afield – ensuring an environment and attitude that invites them to fully participate in, and benefit from, College life.
3. That St Leo's continue as a College for men and yet at the same time engage more positively and creatively with its sister Catholic College – Duchesne - so that together (yet each unique) they become the College of choice at UQ<sup>1</sup>.
4. That the camaraderie and the ensuing sense of belonging, support and wellbeing that are such positive hallmarks of St Leo's are to be positively nurtured in order to diminish their shadow side which can become manifest as sexism, intolerance, exclusivity and immaturity – and exacerbated by certain cultural practices that promote excessive drinking as proxy rites of passage. The opportunity for the College is to continue to create alternative pathways and programs for expressing belonging and that address the origins of gender/sexual biases and risky behaviours<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Collaboration cannot be assumed and will require ongoing engagement and deliberations with the new Head of College and its Council - key is that this Plan augurs an expectation that joint thinking and planning will be pursued.

<sup>2</sup> This is a challenge not only for St Leo's but for all Colleges across Australian University campuses – there is mounting pressure for a more open and national debate on what it means to be an Australian man and for creating new rituals and practices to support the transition from boy to adulthood in safe and healthy ways. St Leo's can lead the way by example.



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5. That the balance between freedom for self and responsibility to others, and between calculated hedonism and risky behaviours, is a delicate one and that testing these tensions is a key to growth and transitioning to adulthood. The response of the College can only be to create an environment that has an appropriately calibrated safety net nested in compassion.
6. That St Leo's runs the risk of isolation –and with this increasing irrelevance. There are four key relationships that St Leo's will need to actively nurture and sustain to ensure it maintains relevance and meaning in its second century. Key are:
  - a. Reconnecting and engaging with the College's Alumni to ensure that each successive cohort of St Leo's men is connected to a broader network of Leonians for both mutual support and benefit, such as mentoring and work based placements but also as an ongoing call and means to promoting intergenerational Leonian camaraderie and accountability;
  - b. Creatively integrating and engaging with UQ and its future direction as partners who share interwoven goals and can support each other for mutual benefit. St Leo's will need to shift from being simply a residential college affiliated with UQ to becoming a living, learning community of the broader University - connected and working together through multiple entry points;
  - c. Connecting and supporting the broader community (local and beyond) as a neighbour in order: to serve and to support it (particularly those less fortunate); to create pathways to employment; and also to reflect in deed and action that St Leo's (with its sister Duchesne) is the UQ College of choice; and
  - d. Connecting and engaging with the Catholic Church across Queensland and through Church agencies such as St Vincent de Paul and Caritas so that the St Leo's Community stays connected with its roots and finds contemporary ways to express and role model its Catholicity.
7. That in order to authentically live out its Mission St Leo's needs to reorient its boundaries - its sense of who constitutes the College Community - in much more inclusive ways so that *St Leo's* in name and in understanding comes to always encompass the current residents, the Alumni, the Staff, the Foundation, the College Council under the governance of the Conference of Queensland Bishops. In so doing anchoring the College in its faith tradition, creating intergenerational connections and systems of support for the whole community; and ensuring that the Staff and Council always serve and lead from the perspective of *within* and *of* rather than as *separate* or *other*.
8. That to continue to meet the needs of successive generations of Leonians St Leo's will need to actively adopt an innovative approach financially, operationally and in its built form. Critically, the growth orientation of the College must always be calibrated so that it is not an end in itself rather that the finances, operations and form and fabric of St Leo's are all in service of, and reflective of, the Mission of the College.

### Relationship with UQ

UQ is in a process of growth and transition. UQ has a vision for revitalising the campus by attracting new businesses with the promise of increased campus occupancy; and building bridges to more directly link UQ to its precinct and the city (as per the River City Plan). In this context the opportunities for the University Colleges to collaborate and promote the diverse residential/academic offerings of UQ to prospective students - whose numbers are forecast to continue growing – makes both strategic and sound business sense.

The Colleges of UQ, however, could benefit from a stronger more unified voice in their interactions with the University or face the risk of being sidelined in University deliberations because of the UQ overhead of engagement. If the Colleges could view their involvement with the future of UQ in terms of mutual benefit (noting their fortunes are inextricably linked) this could provide the motivation for a new way of engaging between themselves and with the University. St Leo's has excellent relations with the University and it could provide the necessary agency to facilitate a multi-College partnership model.



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Immediate opportunities are: recruitment as the Colleges have much to offer in terms of promoting the benefits of UQ; and twinning the Alumni efforts of the Colleges and UQ as both seek to gain/to give through much greater Alumni involvement. Further opportunities include: creating Academic Fellowships to assist the University attract quality Academics for short-term tenure. In turn this serves the Colleges by providing academic leadership, role modelling and an active bridge to campus. Joint ventures wherever possible should also be pursued, as the success of one is directly linked to the success of the other.

### College Motto

*Dominus Illuminatio Mea*: The Lord is my light. These words connect Leonians to centuries of tradition – to both the Old Testament and Oxford University. They form the opening line to Psalm 27 and are also the motto for Oxford University – thereby anchoring St Leo's as both a place of faith and learning. The Lord as a light is a well-known metaphor but in these words the Lord is not only a light, the Lord is my light ie God is revealed/illuminated in my conscience. As St Leo's enters its second century this motto could be re-imagined as a call for the Leonian community (Alumni, Residents, Staff, Foundation and Council) to **stand for the light** inviting each person to seek to know and act in good conscience at every juncture. It is envisaged that this would augment the College toast: following the words *Dominus Illuminatio Mea* the men of St Leos could add, we **stand for the light**. The Mission and the cornerstones of the Leonian ethos then flow from this:

### St Leo's Mission

*Enlightened by the example of Christ, the men of St Leo's are supported and challenged to grow the whole man - where conscience, compassion, respect, excellence, emotional literacy and connectedness are valued, practised and lived.*

### Priorities

To achieve its Mission, the St Leo's community has identified four key priorities:

**Priority 1:** leading and living the six cornerstones at the heart of the Leonian ethos

**Priority 2:** creating programs and pathways that support and challenge the growth of residents

**Priority 3:** forging positive relations with stakeholders - within the College community, the University of Queensland, the alumni, Catholic Church and the broader community

**Priority 4:** strengthening the governance framework to support the Mission statement, as well as improving the College's built environment.



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## Cornerstones of the Leonian ethos

<b>Conscience</b>	<b>Compassion</b>	<b>Respect</b>	<b>Excellence</b>	<b>Emotional literacy</b>	<b>Connectedness</b>
<p>Characterised by choice and discernment, conscience requires:</p>	<p>Characterised by an acknowledgement that we need to look outside ourselves to see others, compassion is practised through:</p>	<p>Characterised by a regard for self, others and the environment, respect is shown through:</p>	<p>Characterised by striving to do the best in thought and action, excellence is modelled by:</p>	<p>Characterised by an understanding of how emotions work, emotional literacy fosters an ability to:</p>	<p>Characterised by a sense of belonging, connectedness requires practising:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A commitment to use sound judgement in determining how we act</li> <li>Balancing one's own freedoms with one's responsibilities to each other and the community</li> <li>○ Balancing individual freedoms and community responsibilities</li> <li>○ Being judicious by recognising laws, but also rules and community expectations</li> <li>○ Striving to be a positive agent for change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Engaging and participating in others' lives and the life of the College, university and broader community;</li> <li>○ refraining from unethical bystander behaviour;</li> <li>○ acting through generosity, and standing with each other</li> <li>○ acknowledging and learning from those different from us</li> <li>○ Considering how we might lead in our own worlds, to make life better for others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ listening and learning from other viewpoints</li> <li>○ acting with authenticity so we are true to our own values, while not judging others</li> <li>○ Treating others in the way we would like to be treated</li> <li>Consideration - treating others as one likes to be treated</li> <li>○ Appreciating what belongs to us, as well as what belongs to others, including property. This includes an appreciation of the College's built environment</li> <li>○ considering the environment and the impacts we might have on it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ aspiring to achieve academically, physically, and spiritually</li> <li>○ Optimising academic and non-academic learning opportunities</li> <li>○ Encouraging and supporting others to pursue their personal vision of excellence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ listen to the voice of others to understand the value of different perspectives</li> <li>○ empathise with others' emotions and respond accordingly</li> <li>○ support and encourage others to feel safe in expressing their own feelings and views</li> <li>○ express emotions in a productive and articulate way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a togetherness, where the power of the united is seen as strong as any individual power</li> <li>○ feeling 'at home' in our College community and acting in a way that adds to the social and moral fabric of St Leo's, faculty and university communities</li> <li>○ understanding our role in those groups where we will become stakeholders, including our alumni and broader industry communities</li> <li>○ recognising we all play a role in building a united power for good, and seeking opportunities to facilitate and encourage that</li> </ul>



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## Strategies supporting each Priority

For each of the College's four Priorities a number of strategies have been identified to ensure that the Priorities are addressed. In turn each Strategy has a number of Actions that will progress the Strategy and a number of measures have been identified so that progress can be tracked. The *Activities* and corresponding *Measures* are detailed in the College's Management Plan, which will be updated each year.

Progress in executing this Strategic Plan will be reported to Council by Head of College and CEO, through the Planning Committee on a periodic basis.

### **Priority 1: Leading and living by the cornerstones of the Leonian ethos**

In order for St Leo's to reflect a daily practice of good conscience, compassion, respect and excellence – every aspect of the College will need to be informed by these four Cornerstones. This type of thinking will need to be embedded in everything the College does moving forward. The College has in place a wide range of policies, procedures, practices and materials (the documents). There is an opportunity to revisit every one of these and where required simplify and streamline them to improve the College Community's awareness, adoption, and practice of the four cornerstones. The application of the documents, guided by the Cornerstones, will inform all College deliberations and behaviour from Council to Staff to Residents.

#### Strategies

- 1.1. The commitment to the Mission and the four cornerstones inform all key policies, procedures and college documentation.
- 1.2. The inductions for Council, Staff, Residents, and Residential positions are reviewed and incorporate the Mission and the four cornerstones.
- 1.3. A culture of discernment and good choices arising from conscience rather than the rules is developed and maintained.
- 1.4. A commitment to community engagement and service especially with the disadvantaged and vulnerable is cultivated.

### **Priority 2: Creating programs and pathways that support and challenge the 'whole man'**

For St Leo's to succeed in its Mission it is not enough that men leave the College little affected by their experience or simply with friends for life. The world needs tertiary qualified, good and courageous men – communities of fine men - prepared to *take their place in the world and to actively serve its brighter future*. To build a community wherein the 'whole man' is supported and challenged and where men can develop into well rounded adults informed by the Leonian ethos that speaks to wisdom, service, inclusivity and the pursuit of excellence in all things - the College will need to actively design and deliver a number of fit-for-purpose programs.

#### Strategies

- 2.1. St Leo's expects and cultivates the practice of academic excellence and life-long learning amongst its residents.
- 2.2. St Leo's promotes physical wellness and participation in sport as key features of the whole man.
- 2.3. St Leo's cultivates a growing awareness of the spiritual dimension to the whole man and integrates the spiritual and the Catholic into all aspects of College life.



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- 2.4. St Leo's proactively engages with the mental health issues facing men at this stage in their lives - through education and pastoral care initiatives.
- 2.5. St Leo's actively facilitates the men of St Leo's involvement in, and engagement with a range of community outreach programs.

### **Priority 3: Forging positive relations with key stakeholders: UQ, the Alumni, the Catholic Church in Queensland and the broader community**

Increasing positive interaction between the St Leo's community and its stakeholders brings benefits to all parties. A critical building block will be forging an effective partnership with the UQ Colleges and with UQ and keeping engaged with developments at UQ and more broadly the tertiary sector. The continued flow of Residents wishing to be a part of the St Leo's Community depends on both the reputation of UQ and of St Leo's. More broadly, the wider community benefits from the services and work of St Leo's Residents whilst St Leo's Residents also benefit from the experience and skills that engagement outside of College life brings.

#### **Strategies**

- 3.1. Improve St Leo's response to the strategic shifts in UQ directions and operations.
- 3.2. Adopt a strategic marketing approach to St Leo's relations with the wider community.
- 3.3. Increase St Leo's engagement with its stakeholder groups.
- 3.4. Seek ways to engage the Province in College life.

### **Priority 4: Strengthening the governance framework and enabling operations, and improving the College's built environment**

St Leo's can only pursue its Mission and the creation of a *living, learning community* when it is underpinned and supported by the good management (efficient, ethical and effective) of all aspects of College operations and the development and maintenance of the physical infrastructure. College finances are further enhanced through the College's hospitality activities (catering, conferencing and visitor accommodation) and Foundation – these, however, must align with and serve the College Mission.

#### **Strategies**

- 4.1. Enhance and articulate St Leo's governance principles.
- 4.2. Engage with the strategic direction of UQ and develop a Master Capital Works Plan for the next 15 years for St Leo's that optimises this direction.
- 4.3. Develop a suite of management level strategies across all areas including: finance, administration, HR, facilities, hospitality, stakeholder engagement, ICT, governance and the Foundation.
- 4.4. In response to the outcomes flowing from the strategic planning process, review and update all St Leo's policies, procedures, and materials.