



1. Introduction

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (**MACS**) is a company limited by guarantee established in 2021 by the Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne to assume the governance and operation of MACS schools across the Archdiocese of Melbourne. MACS subsequently established Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd (**MACSS**) to provide educational services to children with diverse needs and Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Early Years Education (**MACSEYE**) to provide early years care and education services.

The [Statement of Mission](#) in the MACS Constitution, and the constitutions of its subsidiaries, MACSS and MACSEYE, sets out the Archbishop's expectations of Catholic schooling in the Archdiocese and provides an important context and grounding for the company and the direction which the MACS Board must always observe in the pursuit of the company's objects.

The Board must ensure that all policies and procedures concerning the operations of MACS, and its subsidiaries are consistent with the Statement of Mission and company objects, as well as any directions issued by the Archbishop from time to time.

2. Background

MACS schools experience the ongoing challenge of maintaining facilities at a level that meets current and future students' expectations as facilities age, enrolments change and pedagogy evolves. Master plans meet this challenge by assessing and rationalising the relevance and suitability of a school's physical environment. The school's master plan serves to:

- formally communicate the requirements, intentions and priorities of a school
- give confidence to communities, staff, students and funding authorities on the school's direction
- identify capital development priorities and develop an implementation plan.

3. Purpose

To detail how master planning allows MACS schools to cater for enrolment demands, refurbishment, and upgrading of grounds, buildings and facilities.

4. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Principals, Infrastructure Design Advisory (IDA) team members, and other MACS staff involved in major capital project planning and delivery
- external contractors appointed by MACS to identify and prepare for major capital project planning and delivery.

5. Principles

A Master Plan responds to the school's educational brief and represents the desired future configuration of school facilities and sets out a plan for delivery. The Master Plan is the product of a consultative method of determining future property development requirements that reflect a shared vision. It is the composition of overarching plans, charts and descriptive information, including:

- an overview of the objectives for producing the Master Plan
- the school's vision and aspirations, teaching and learning philosophies, history, community context and enrolment projections
- analysis of the suitability and condition of the school site, existing facilities (if applicable), site services and infrastructure
- analysis of the site context including services and town planning constraints and opportunities

- development options and the associated cost estimates
- an implementation strategy for the proposed design and site development
- ensuring the school environment meets child-safe requirements that reflect a commitment to providing a nurturing culture for children and young people, in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises.

6. Requirement for a Master Plan

- 6.1. Consistent with best practice, MACS schools with enrolment demand, facility upgrade requirements, open learning environments, and all secondary schools are required to prepare a school master plan for submission to the Chief Planning and Infrastructure Officer every eight years.
- 6.2. Master plans must be:
 - 6.2.1. prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced architect included on the MACS approved architect panel
 - 6.2.2. updated on an eight-year cycle
 - 6.2.3. prepared in consultation and collaboration with the Parish Priest and consider parish planning activities to ensure a coordinated strategic approach.
- 6.3. Master plans are required for all submissions for capital project approval and for applications to the Australian Government Capital Grants Program (CGP) or the Victorian Government Capital Program for Non-Government Schools, as required by the Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA).

7. School site development

- 7.1. School permanent facilities must be built for long-term enrolments at the school, supported by their catchment, as detailed in the Infrastructure Benchmarking Policy
- 7.2. MACS is committed to the optimal provision of permanent facilities and to ensure there are no excess permanent facilities developed in the long term.
- 7.3. Short to medium term demand, more than long-term enrolment targets, must be accommodated in relocatable classrooms.
- 7.4. Master plans are required to follow the site development guidelines detailed in the Master Plan Procedures. These guidelines detail the types of permanent facilities needed to provide the optimal proportion of total facilities provided in permanent school buildings.
- 7.5. In some cases, converting existing facilities to other functions may be required rather than the addition of new facilities.
- 7.6. The selection, appointment and number of quotes for an architect must comply with the Procurement and Contract Management Policy. Architect selection must follow the process outlined in the School Master Plan Procedures. All architects must be selected from the approved architect panel.

8. Master Plan project team

- 8.1. The principal must establish a suitable Master Plan Project Team.
- 8.2. The project team should contain representation from the school leadership team, staff, students, the School Advisory Council, the local community, potential contributors, parish representative(s), and an Infrastructure Design Advisory (IDA) team member.
- 8.3. The IDA team member will be appointed by the Manager, Infrastructure Design Advisory. They will:
 - 8.3.1. coordinate communication between all parties throughout the master plan development and organise project meetings
 - 8.3.2. oversee the project budget, risks and timelines
 - 8.3.3. encourage good design and ensure the brief is being satisfied to the required standard.
- 8.4. Prior to submission to MACS office, the project team must ensure the master plan is endorsed by the School Advisory Council and the:

- 8.4.1. parish priest in the case of primary schools
- 8.4.2. president of the canonical administrators for secondary, special and special assistance schools.

9. Education and design brief

- 9.1. Master plans must be supported by an education and design brief. The brief is prepared by the Infrastructure Design Advisory team, informed by consultation with the school and community, and should be approved by the school prior to the commencement of master planning. Further detail is provided in the School Master Plan Procedures.

10. Key considerations when preparing a Master Plan

- 10.1. The Master Plan Project team is required to consider a series of influencing factors when developing the educational brief, master plan brief and working with the architect to develop the master plan, including:
 - 10.1.1. sufficient provision of internal and outdoor areas to meet the school's long-term enrolment benchmarks and curriculum needs
 - 10.1.2. the requirement for designs to be flexible, adaptable, child safe and deliver teaching excellence
 - 10.1.3. how the proposed architecture and design will meet the expectations set out in the [Vision for Instruction](#), [Vision for Engagement](#), [Form follows faith: Designing for Catholic identity in MACS schools](#), the local context of the school and the community
 - 10.1.4. consideration of information technology, security and safety, and lifecycle costs
 - 10.1.5. aligns with [universal design principles](#) to ensure facilities are more inclusive and better accommodate the diverse needs and abilities of students and staff
 - 10.1.6. the context of the school's location in the design and its surrounding neighbourhood
 - 10.1.7. maximising performance of the building shell while maintaining comfort and amenity for users such as lighting, ventilation and acoustics
 - 10.1.8. environmental and sustainability impacts of the design
 - 10.1.9. adequacy of existing infrastructure services
 - 10.1.10. traffic management and safety
 - 10.1.11. existing site and maintenance conditions
 - 10.1.12. compliance and hazardous materials management.

11. Master Plan endorsement

- 11.1. Schools are required to submit their master plan to the Chief Planning and Infrastructure Officer for review and endorsement every eight years. The endorsement process, including roles and responsibilities, is detailed in the School Master Plan Procedures.

12. Procedures

The procedures to implement this policy are documented in the School Master Plan Procedures and Relocatable and Demountable Buildings Procedures.

13. Definitions

Definitions of standard terms used in this Policy can be found in the [Glossary of Terms](#).

Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA)

Victorian Catholic Education Authority is the block grant authority for capital purposes.

Long-term enrolments (LTE)

The number of student enrolments projected for a primary or secondary school at least 25 years after its opening. LTE is a measure of the sustainable school population and is calculated using a

methodology that identifies a predicted value (number of enrolments) and a prediction interval (time). The actual enrolment may fluctuate over time. The predicted value is called the estimated long-term enrolment: this value is used most. LTE represents the most likely size of the base school population in the future.

14. Related policies and documents

Related MACS policies and documents

School Master Plan Procedures
Procurement and Contract Management Policy
Relocatable and Demountable Buildings Procedures

Resources

[DEECD Guidelines for School Playgrounds](#)
[DEECD Landscaping Guidelines for Bushfire Prone Areas](#)
[Form follows faith: Designing for Catholic identity in MACS schools](#)
[Designing for Mission: Ensuring the Church's property reflects and supports its priorities](#)
[Designing for Mission: Land assembly and master planning](#)
[Landscape Planning for Catholic Schools](#)
[Learning Environment Design and Use](#)
[Master Planning Guidance Notes for Schools](#)
[Master Plan Report Checklist Guidance Note for Architects](#)
Roof Drainage Design Guidance

Policy information

Responsible director	Director, Finance, Infrastructure and Digital
Policy owner	Chief Planning and Infrastructure Officer
Approving authority	Executive Director
Assigned board committee	Finance and Audit Board Committee
Approval date	7 May 2026
Risk Rating	Moderate
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POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned Framework	Infrastructure
Related documents	School Master Plan Procedures
Superseded documents	School Master Plan Policy– v3.0 – 2024 School Master Plan Policy– v2.0 – 2022 School Master Plan Policy – v1.0 – 2021