

2026 Annual General Meeting

PAPERWORK PACKAGE

Contents	Page
Board Chair Report	1
Agenda	3
Minutes of the 2025 AGM	4
Election of Directors	10
Treasurer's Report & 2025 Financial Statements	19
CEO Report	21
National Institute Principal Report	23



WELCOME BOARD CHAIR REPORT



It is an immense joy to write this report on behalf of the CEN Board in the 60th year of what has been known as The Union of Parent Controlled Schools, National Union of Associations for Parent Controlled Christian Schools, Christian Parent Controlled Schools, and Christian Education National.

I want to encourage all of us to reflect on the tag line for the 60th celebration year – Planted, Growing, Flourishing. We stand on the shoulders of giants, and it is humbling to be a temporary custodian, seeing CEN diligently stewarded for the benefit of the current and future generations in all our schools.

We hold something unique in the Christian education sector in Australia – deep thinking and practice in what it means to have Jesus Christ at the centre of all we do, and believing we can be part of God’s good design in the redemption of all things, as we work in partnership with family and local church. Articulating this vision for the next 60 years will be a significant challenge. It is a challenge that must be accepted. It will need the participation of all our schools and gifted individuals within our communities.

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE: CLARITAS28

This plan is continuing to guide us as we shared at the 2025 AGM. A wide range of key initiatives are well progressed with a great deal of work going towards establishing a governance desk, strengthening our consulting arm, enhancing alignment between national and state functions, and building a self-sustaining professional learning program. Work on state-specific initiatives have been pleasing and will continue through 2026 and beyond.

NEW CEN LEADERSHIP STAFF

In 2025, we were delighted to welcome Bel Ritchie to the role of Manager of Governance and Consulting Services. Bel brings a wealth of

experience in governance, risk management, and Christian schooling, and has already been a great blessing to our network. Another significant staffing appointment confirmed in late 2025 was Emily Brookes, who commenced in January 2026 as the Manager of Professional Learning and Pedagogy. Emily is a seasoned leader in Christian education, with deep commitment to Christ-centred education.

The recruitment of these talented and experienced leaders will be felt in very tangible ways by schools throughout 2026 and beyond, as their expertise translates into strengthened governance support, enriched professional learning, and practical support for member schools.

The National Board has seen that historic staffing levels were un-sustainable for the workload placed upon the CEN CEO. The bringing in of additional senior staff to enable delivery of strategic imperatives will bring positive change and greater support to member schools.

NEW FEE STRUCTURE FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Throughout the year we were grateful for engagement around a necessary adjustment in our fee structure. The Board have carefully discerned this change, worked through models and options with the management team, and sought advice from school leaders on the approach.

The National Board believe this change in fees is necessary to fully respond to member needs and requests, enable sustainable

staffing levels, allow for long-term budget management, and to continue our partnership with AACCS. We are seeking your trust ahead of the implementation of change, and with new staffing in place, schools should start to see the tangible benefits of this new level of investment. Given the importance of this change, I invite members to share any remaining concerns with me and Carol Unwin, the Board Treasurer.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

We are deeply encouraged by the ongoing increase in the number of students engaging in study through the National Institute for Christian Education. Your staff engaging in robust post-graduate learning opportunities will bring a critical impact in the way your teachers and leaders implement learning and community building from a biblically grounded perspective. We are grateful to Fiona Partridge for faithfully and passionately leading the Institute team.

The NICE Graduate Certificate in Coaching and Mentoring is a wonderful new initiative that we strongly encourage our schools to enthusiastically engage to support and develop current and future leaders.

MakerSpace Podcast

I have loved listening to these engaging podcast episodes beautifully crafted by Sam Burrows, Manager of Biblical Foundations. I want to commend Sam for his work in this area and suggest the deep thinking explored will be a formational resource used by teachers and leaders for many years to come. Stand out episodes for me were with Dr Christa McKirkland, Kara Martin, and I recommend everyone to listen to Ken Dickens and Rod Thompson from November 2025. Ken suggested that what we steward in the educational endeavour is unique, in that our heritage is one of deep wrestling with the Word of God, and how it applies to education.

ADVOCACY WORK THROUGH AACCS

We absolutely live in a volatile time in Australian and world history. In the lead-up to pivotal State elections and the 2028 Federal election, the work of CEN continues, alongside AACCS, to advance the cause of Christian education in political spheres. We know that we are stronger (together) as a group of schools in this vital work.

Our schools are encouraged to engage with local politicians across the political spectrum, to invite them to visit and see first-hand the positive impact that Christian staff and Christian teaching have on our students, our school communities, and on our broader society. Giving students a voice in these visits has been very powerful in changing attitudes of neutral or hostile politicians towards our schools.

STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

We have continued to strengthen our relationships with international counterparts, particularly in New Zealand, Indonesia, and Canada. More recently we have been leaning into building stronger ties with colleagues in the United Kingdom.

It is a joy to learn and grow together with friends across the world, all of us supporting Christian education in our own context and with our own challenges and opportunities. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with a range of dynamic thinkers and influencers in Christian education across the world.

All our CEN and NICE staff, at both national and state levels, have continued to go above and beyond to support our member schools, and we express our heartfelt gratitude to them. Thank you also to each person faithfully serving as a member of our National Board.

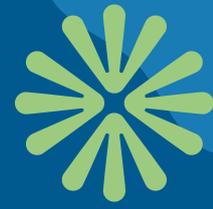
My challenge to each one of us, is that we all have the responsibility to protect and strengthen our schools' mission for future generations. To govern not simply to ensure sustainability, but to ensure faithfulness. To Christ. To families. To the local Church. Diligently working in faithfulness to the calling that founded our schools and the God who sustains them.

Finally, thank you for attending the 2026 AGM and for all that you give to ensure our schools provide God-glorifying, distinctively Christ-centred education, which is firmly grounded in a biblical worldview. Your efforts in Christ are making an extraordinary difference in the lives of students, families and communities.

Yours in Christ

Andrew Goelst

Board Chair



AGM AGENDA

2:30pm, Saturday 14 March 2026
Sydney Central Hotel

1.		OPENING AND WELCOME
2.		OPENING THE WORD
3.		RECOGNITION OF DELEGATES
4.		FIXING OF AGENDA
5.		MINUTES It is recommended that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Sydney Central Hotel on 22 March 2025 be confirmed and signed as a true and accurate record.
6.		MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES Nil
7.		ELECTION OF DIRECTORS
8.		REPORTS
	8.1	Financial Report Audited financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2025 . It is recommended that the audited financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2025 be accepted.
	8.2	Christian Education National CEO Report It is recommended that the CEO's report be received.
	8.3	National Institute for Christian Education Principal Report It is recommended that the National Institute Principal's report be received.
9.		UPDATES FROM THE BOARD
10.		NEXT MEETING Annual General Meeting – 2027
11.		CLOSING

AGM DRAFT MINUTES 2025

22 March 2025, Sydney Central Hotel

1. OPENING AND WELCOME

The meeting commenced at 3:15pm (AEDT) with a welcome and prayer by the Chair, Andrew Goelst.

2. OPENING THE WORD

Andrew Goelst shared three scriptures, personal testimony, and encouraged the group in two areas: Guard our hearts, and be above reproach during this season.

3. RECOGNITION OF DELEGATES

Association Name	Delegate Name	
OFFICIAL DELEGATES (CREDENTIALS PROVIDED)		
Abraham Kuyper Christian Education Association Ltd	Wayne	Speirs
Association for Christian Education Inc	Bruce	Whyatt
Association for Christian Education Mount Evelyn Inc	Ally	Osborne
Association for Christian Education of Frankston Inc	Troy	Gaskell
Berakah Christian Education Ltd	Shane	Duke
Blue Mountains Christian Education Association	Melissa	Collins
Christian Schools Tasmania	Trevor	de Kievit
Circular Head Christian School Association	Jacqueline	Huisman
Covenant Christian School Association Ltd	Melissa	Brown
Devonport Christian School Inc	Hanna	Udy
Donvale Christian College Inc	Tim	Argall
Emmaus Christian School Canberra	Dan	Anderson
Foundation Christian College Association	Walter	Ten Haaf
Geelong Association for PC Christian Education	Christopher	Bongers
Geraldton Christian Community Schools Association Inc	Sophia	De Lange
Illawarra Association for Christian PC Education	Andrew	Spence
Launceston Christian Schools (Inc)	Margaret	Dingemanse
Leighland Christian Parent Controlled School Association Inc	Steven	Davis
Melton Christian Centre Ltd	Mark	Andrews
Mid North Christian College Association Inc	Rachel	Richardson
Namoi Valley Christian School Ltd	Travis	Lions
Nepean District Christian Education Association Ltd	Jenny	Harricks
Newstead Christian School Inc.	Richard	Holloway
NT Christian Schools	Phillip	Leslie

Association Name	Delegate Name	
OFFICIAL DELEGATES (CREDENTIALS PROVIDED)		
Plenty Valley Christian Education Inc	Ange	Smith
Southern Highlands Christian School Ltd	Luke	Geradts
Tamworth Christian Education Association Ltd.	David	Jones
The Association for Christian Education of Blacktown Ltd	Tania	Vander Noord
The Association for Christian Education of Dandenong	Damian	Wong
The Carnarvon Christian Parent Controlled School Association (Inc)	Stella	Jinman
The John Wycliffe Christian Education Association	Ian	Fryer
The Sutherland Shire Christian School Association Ltd	John	Ishak
Torrens Valley Association for Christian Education Inc	Emily	Brooks
Townsville Christian Education Association	Marcelle	Calitz
Wagga Wagga Christian College Association Inc	Dominic	Bowen
Warragul District PC Christian School Assn Inc	Aven	Eddington
APOLOGIES		
Wakefield Regional Christian School Association Inc		
Ballina Christian Education Association		
Covenant College, Tuggeranong, ACT, Association Inc		
OBSERVERS		
Elim Christian College	Julian	Adamson
Lachlan Macquarie Institute	Vanessa	Anderson
Circular Head Christian School	Jonathan	Arnold
Dubbo Christian School	Paul	Arundell
Plenty Valley Christian College	Peter	Bain
CEN NSW/ACT State Council	Anne	Baker
Christian Education National	Coby	Beames
Maranatha Christian School	Jeremy	Bergstrom
Christian Education National	Adrian	Bosker
Christian Schools Tasmania	Brian	Bosveld
Wagga Wagga Christian College	Dominic	Bowen
Christian Education National	Yvonne	Bradley
Torrens Valley Christian School	Emily	Brookes
Christian Education National	Sam	Burrows
Elim Education	Murray	Burton
Leighland Christian School	Melissa	Butcher
Elim Christian College Mt Albert	Tania	Calvert
Plenty Valley Christian College	Courtney	Chhuon
Orange Christian School	Yooie	Choi
Dubbo Christian School	James	Corfield

Association Name	Delegate Name	
OBSERVERS (Continued)		
NT Christian Schools	Nicola	Crook
Christian Education National	Mark	Cutchie
Leighland Christian School	John	de Jong
Mount Evelyn Christian School	Michelle	Dempsey
Plenty Valley Christian College	Greta	Dench
Geraldton Christian College	Tracey	du-Pont
Foundation Christian College	Geoffrey	Edwards
Christian Education National	Jo	Fahey
Rehoboth Christian College	Rachael	Fairlamb
Christian Education National	Tanya	Fletcher
Rehoboth Christian College	David	Geijsman
Christian Schools Tasmania	David	Gillman
Melton Christian College	David	Gleeson
Christian Education National	Andrew	Goelst
Leighland Christian School	David	Grey
Tyndale Christian School	Rebecca	Hall
Carinya Christian School (Gunnedah)	Mark	Hampstead
Namoi Valley Christian School	Peter	Henderson
Calderwood Christian School	Darren	Hutton
NT Christian Schools	Rachel	Herweynen
Maranatha Christian School	Bill	Jackson
Wagga Wagga Christian College	Rahmi	Jackson
Fuller Theological Seminary	Matthew	Kaemingk
Leighland Christian School	Karla	Kelman
Launceston Christian School	Stuart	Kent
Foundation Christian College	Clinton	King
Illawarra Christian School	Simon	Lainson
Christian Schools Tasmania	Anthony	Laning
Elim Christian College Henderson	Andy	Lawrence
Mount Evelyn Christian School	Rob	Lichtendonk
Christian Education National	Rebecca	Luscombe
Newstead Christian School	Glenn	Mace
Leighland Christian School	Natasha	Mackinnon
Bayside Christian College	Andrew	Manning
Nepean Christian School	Nicole	Mannyx
Rehoboth Christian College	Nicole	Marmion
Donvale Christian College	Gavin	Martin

Association Name	Delegate Name	
OBSERVERS (Continued)		
Covenant College	Joshua	McEwen
Leighland Christian School	Katrina	McNab
Rehoboth Christian College	Seth	Merlo
Plenty Valley Christian College	John	Metcalf
NT Christian Schools	Alice	Mustin
Donvale Christian College	Alison	Nissley
Christian Education National	Nicole	Nyhouse
Plenty Valley Christian College	Vanessa	Ogden
Rehoboth Christian College	Jack	Packard
National Institute for Christian Education	Fiona	Partridge
Rehoboth Christian College	Nicole	Pleysier
Circular Head Christian School	Ara	Popowski
Donvale Christian College	Jon	Price
Covenant College	Jason	Riding
Bayside Christian College	Melissa	Rumble
Leighland Christian School	Elizabeth	Scheu
Christian Education National	Melinda	Simson
Christian Education National	Narelle	Sketcher
Maranatha Christian School	Andrew	Snook
Southern Highlands Christian School	Geoff	Stedman
Dubbo Christian School	Clifford	Stephens
Christian Education National	Peter	Steunenberg
Christian Education National	Mark	Steyn
Southern Highlands Christian School	Meg	Story
Launceston Christian School	Ian	Sypkes
Foundation Christian College	Claire	Thomas
Southern Highlands Christian School	Carol	Unwin
Christian Education National	Lucy	Van Rossen
Dubbo Christian School	Jill	Vippond
Christian Education National	Lucy	Van Rossen
Devonport Christian School	Mike	Vos
Researcher, Lecturer, and Author	Chris	Watkin
Chairo Christian School	Peter	Wells
Rehoboth Christian College	Bruce	Whyatt
Launceston Christian School	Peter	Young

4. FIXING OF AGENDA

The draft agenda was confirmed as provided.

5. MINUTES

The meeting accepted that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Sydney Central Hotel on 16 March 2024 as provided are a true and correct record.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Nil.

7. ELECTION OF FOUR DIRECTORS

In February 2025, Marzelle Delpont resigned as board director due to personal time restraints. The Chair thanked Marzelle for her faithful service to CEN.

The official delegates completed an affirmation voting slip, and the meeting affirmed the re-election of Tanya Fletcher as a Director of Christian Education National Ltd., for a three-year term. As only one nomination was received for the two current vacancies, the CEN Board may choose to appoint an additional board member to fill the vacancy until the 2026 AGM is held.

8. REPORTS

8.1 Financial Report

The Treasurer and Business Manager gave a brief verbal summary to support the financial report provided in the papers. The treasurer noted a typo in the finance report - the use of '2023' in the budgeted line should read 2024.

Carol thanked the CEN community for participating in CEN and NICE offerings – reminded the group that the end goal of CEN is supporting our member schools.

The meeting resolved to receive the Audited financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2024, with thanks.

8.2 CEO Report

Mark Steyn, CEO, spoke to the report provided in the meeting papers.

A new Strategic Plan for CEN was released, and a copy handed to all delegates.

Mark highlighted and spoke to a few areas of the strategic plan.

Mark shared some additional updates:

- Consultation is in progress regarding funding models and greater alignment among states. Have started consulting with Business Managers, will also consult member school boards and principals. The aim is not to increase revenue but sustainability and equity.
- Two new CEN executive positions are being introduced in 2025: Leadership & Consulting Manager, Governance Manager.
- There are 5 Focus areas of CEN offerings: Governance, Teaching & Learning, Operational Support (SEOs), Consulting, NICE
- Reminder about the culture of CEN:
 - We are a membership organization not the gurus.
 - We are here to help you flourish.
 - We recognize the greatest threat and want to help you overcome it.
 - We wish we could do everything, but we know someone who can.
 - We love the open door, you are welcome to the table.

- CEN will soon be recruiting SEOs:
 - NT SEO (with Alice Mustin moving to CEO Role)
 - TAS SEO (Adrian finishing up in role at end of year)

Mark thanked Adrian and Alice for their service.

The meeting resolved to accept the CEO's report (as received in the meeting papers) with thanks.

8.3 NICE Principal Report

Fiona Partridge, NICE Principal, released the new NICE Strategic Plan "Kanangra" 'A beautiful view' and a copy was distributed to each delegate. NICE Strategic Priorities are aligned with CEN Core Values as NICE exists primarily to support CEN member schools.

- Fiona thanked schools for supporting NICE.
- The NICE Team has spent time examining and refreshing some language in the NICE Vision Statement and Purpose.
- Fiona thanked the CEN National Board and Mark's leadership as CEO.

The meeting resolved to receive the NICE Principal's report (as received in the meeting papers) with thanks.

9. UPDATE FROM THE BOARD

Board Chair, Andrew Goelst shared some updates from the Board:

- Fee Model consideration: CEN wants to consult members well.
- Focus on financial sustainability for CEN is due diligence.
- Acknowledged and thanked the CEN and NICE Staff Team.
- Encouraged schools to engage with NICE Study.
- The Board will monitor implementation of the new strategic plans.
- The Board would like to see increased collaboration with like-minded organisations.
- Focus on National Board sustainability – prayerfully consider new directors.
- John de Jong is chairing a committee to plan a celebration of 60 years of CEN in 2026.

10. CONSTITUTION CHANGES

Board Secretary Tanya Fletcher spoke to the review process of the CEN and NICE constitution updates. The Constitutions were reviewed in 2024 as highlighted at the 2024 AGM. The aim was to bring CEN and NICE into alignment with each other, and update some outdated language and references. The process involved initial legal advice from Prolegis, then the National Board reviewed and approved NICE constitution. The CEN Constitution was sent out to CEN members for review in Sept 2024, a few questions for clarification were received but no amendments required.

A question was asked about the CEN Board being the sole member of NICE, and whether that creates an inherent risk or vulnerability to the CEN Board. No immediate risk identified, but the CEN Board will revisit and consider.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the draft CEN constitution (Attachment A) be approved to replace the existing CEN constitution (Attachment B).

11. NEXT MEETING

Annual General Meeting 2026 – date and location to be advised by CEN in due time.

12. CLOSING

Director John de Jong closed the meeting in prayer.

NATIONAL BOARD NOMINATION

Nomination of Directors

The Constitution of Christian Education National Limited provides for the election of eight directors to serve on its board and up to two appointed directors. Directors may be re-elected or reappointed as Directors provided their period of service as a Director does not exceed a period of nine (9) consecutive years. Appointed directors serve until the AGM following their appointment.

Directors who have served during 2025-2026 are:

CUTCHIE, Mark	Director	VIC	Elected 2018, 2021, 2024
DE JONG, John	Director	TAS	Appointed Sept 2023, elected 2024
FLETCHER, Tanya	Secretary	VIC	Elected May 2022, 2024, Resigned Aug 2025
GOELST, Andrew	Chair	TAS	Elected 2020, 2023, Eligible for re-election 2026
METCALFE, John	Director	VIC	Board appointed May 2018 by virtue of his AACS Directorship
OGDEN, Vanessa	Director	VIC	Board Appointment Aug 2025, Eligible for election 2026
SPENCE, Andrew	Deputy Chair	NSW	Elected 2020, 2023, Eligible for re-election 2026
UNWIN, Carol	Treasurer	NSW	Board appointed February 2020, elected 2020, 2023, Eligible for re-election 2026

Nominations Received

Name	State	Nominating Association
GOELST, Andrew	TAS	Launceston Christian School Inc
OGDEN, Vanessa	VIC	Plenty Valley Christian Education Inc
PLEYSIER, Nicole	WA	Association for Christian Education Inc
SPENCE, Andrew	NSW	Illawarra Association for Christian PC Education
TEN HAAF, Walter	WA	Foundation Christian College Inc
UNWIN, Carol	NSW	Southern Highlands Christian School Ltd

NATIONAL BOARD ELECTION



Andrew Goelst

Andrew is a happily married to Jacqueline with 3 adult children and 1 child still at school. They were in fellowship for 34 years, and in leadership roles since 2001 at Tamar Valley Christian Church, Exeter, Tasmania. In December 2024 have moved to Northwest Tasmania to live near their first grandchild and now attend The Village Church, Devonport. He was Board Chairman of Launceston Christian School for 10 years, and resigned as Deputy Chair at the end of 2024 after 2 years. In the past 25 years Andrew has undertaken work in over 60 schools across all three sectors in Tasmania and project managed over \$80M in construction to create twenty first century indoor and outdoor learning environments.

He has significant experience in whole of campus master planning, community engagement and school governance. He has delivered keynotes and workshops at State and National Education Conferences. Andrew was Manager – Risk, WHS and Compliance, for the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office having responsibility for 38 Schools covering some 3500 staff and 16000 students. Through all of this he has a sound grasp of the governance, risk management, facility and safety needs for K-12 schooling, and change management techniques particular to schools. He is now a Director for a growing consulting engineering firm and with that firm is currently supervising the construction of \$500M in state-of-the-art new campus buildings for the University of Tasmania. Andrew has served on the CEN National Board since 2020, was elected Deputy Chair in 2022 and served as Chair from 2023-2026. If re-elected he hopes to serve on the CEN Board for the full 9 years allowed.

How do you understand the Bible to be authoritative for all of life?

From my earliest memories I have believed, and lived, that the Bible is the inerrant and inspired Word of God. It is applicable to all my life and

for the discipleship of all nations. The inerrancy of scripture is critical and utterly foundational to our Christian faith. In this moment in history, this is especially true for Western Civilisation. We must be unwavering in our stance on Biblical authority and hold up high the light and beauty of the Word of God. Alongside the Bible, we also need the tested and proven statements of Faith of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Three Forms of Unity. These statements of faith bring a grounded basis for the application of scripture into every area of our lives. All scripture points to our Saviour Jesus Christ and to our Heavenly Father's redemptive plan for creation. The reading and study of God's Word should be our daily bread. This should impact our hearts and our minds.

What do you consider to be the purpose of a Christian school?

The purpose of a Christian school is to partner with families and churches to uncompromisingly deliver authentic Christ Centred Education to students. We can best outwork this by embedding HIStory into everything we do and live out a Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration worldview. Through implementation of this purpose, the Christian school gives parents a choice on which foundation their child's education will be based. This needs to be outworked within Government and Societal expectations by our schools standing on the cornerstone of Jesus Christ, honouring our heritage and interpreting how in 2026 to bring the hope of Christ into every curriculum area. This is an ongoing exploration that requires partnership of schools, parents, churches, CEN, NICE and other recognised Christian bodies to faithfully administer and provide leadership to what we have been entrusted to steward. In this area I have been strongly influenced by Dr John Collier and his paper on "The Icing or the Cake", Rod Dreher's The Benedict Option and Vishal Mangawadi's – The Book that Made Your World. More recently books by Dr Matthew Kaemingk, Reformed Public Theology and Prof

Richard Mouw, Uncommon Decency, have been very influential, particularly in challenging how we extended compassion and hospitality to the world around us.

Reflection on Core Value 5 – Ongoing Christian teacher development underpins quality Christian education.

In all my years working with schools, I firmly believe you can't have a great school without a great principal. In the same sense you can't have the delivery of authentic, embedded Christ centred education without teacher development that inculcates this into the lives of our individual educators. What occurs in each of our classrooms must not be 'icing on the cake Christian education', but the hope of Jesus Christ must infuse what our teachers

do, and this must be diligently developed over many years with lifelong learning. Our schools cannot achieve this alone. In this area we are stronger together, CEN, NICE, Alphacrucis, and Transformation by Design are crucial. We need to be concerned about and seek to explore ways to support our teachers when it seems that biblical literacy is reducing within our resource pool. Quality Christian education must be grounded in a sound theological knowledge of the Word of God that impacts the heart and the mind of our educators. Exploring and seeking to have greater understanding of this Core Value, has been a large part of my formation as a Board Member and partnering with CEN. Alongside Biblical Literacy we need to explore how we encourage and support faithful local church membership of all staff who work in our schools.



Vanessa Ogden

Vanessa and her husband Craig have been involved at Plenty Valley Christian College for over 17 years. They have four children who have all graduated from the college and Craig is a current teacher and the Director of Christian Formation. She has served the PVCC community as a board member for the past six and half years and was Vice Chair for 2 years. Vanessa is a Registered Nurse with over 30 years of clinical experience. She currently leads a Virtual Care team for St Vincent's Health Australia, has completed a Master of Nursing with a double major in Education and Leadership, and is involved in the implementation of new and innovative models of clinical care. Vanessa has a long history of involvement in Christian education having

attended Mountain District School and Mount Evelyn Christian School. She is passionate about supporting, equipping and developing the God-given gift of education within schools that seek to honour God and transform students, families and communities in every aspect of school life.

How do you understand the Bible to be authoritative for all of life?

I understand the Bible to be authoritative for all of life because it is the inspired and inerrant Word of God. As Scripture testifies to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, it reveals what is true and exposes what is false in my life. It corrects, shapes, and teaches me how to live in a way that honours God. As 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Continued over page

Vanessa Ogden continued

teaches, God uses His Word to equip His people for every good work.

Because Scripture is “God breathed,” its authority rests in God Himself. It carries the weight of His voice, making it the final standard to which all other authorities—personal, social, or institutional—must ultimately submit. Its promises are trustworthy, and its wisdom applies to every part of life.

The Holy Spirit Illuminates Scripture, helping me understand and apply God’s truth. As I read and meditate on His Word, God transforms my heart and aligns my life with His purposes. Jesus Himself affirmed the authority of Scripture throughout His teaching and ministry, demonstrating that God’s Word is to guide, shape, and direct every aspect of life.

What do you consider to be the purpose of a Christian school?

I understand the purpose of a Christian school to be the integration of academic learning with a biblical worldview. A Christian school equips students to see and interpret the world through a God shaped, scriptural lens, where the Bible informs teaching across all subjects. Christian education aims not only to develop knowledge but to help students understand God's purpose for their lives and to encourage a personal relationship with Him.

The purpose of a Christian school extends beyond classroom instruction. It is expressed through the character, culture, and daily practices of the whole school community. Staff model Christian faith and values, showing students what it means to live out the gospel in everyday life.

A Christian school also partners intentionally with parents, supporting them in their responsibility

to nurture their children’s spiritual and academic growth. It provides a safe, caring, faith based environment where students are encouraged to grow in wisdom, character, and service. Ultimately, a Christian school seeks to form young people who love God, pursue truth, and contribute positively to their communities.

Reflection on Core Value 3 - Parents have the prime responsibility for the education of their children

I believe parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children. Children are God’s gift to their parents, and He entrusts them with nurturing their growth not only academically but “in the ways of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Because of this calling, parents are the foundational shapers of their children’s learning, character, and spiritual development.

Christian schools serve as partners in this task—not substitutes. Their role is to support, complement, and build upon the values and formation established in the home. When schools honour the central role of parents, they help create consistency between home, church, and classroom.

Christian education is most effective when lived out as a community of believers—parents, teachers, administrators, and students working together with shared faith and purpose. This partnership relies on parents being actively involved in the life of the school and contributing to its mission.

When home and school serve alongside one another, children experience a unified approach to faith and learning. This collaboration forms a true partnership aimed at raising children who know, love, and follow the Lord.



Nicole Pleysier

Mrs Nicole Pleysier gained her Bachelor of Arts in Education in 1994 and has held a variety

of positions at Rehoboth's Primary Schools as well as worked in a regional Western Australian Government school. Nicole, along with her husband and their four children, are all successful Rehoboth graduates. In her opinion, the best bit is that her two oldest grandchildren have also started attending – that is three generations of Rehobothians!

Nicole has worked as a teacher, Arts Specialist, Curriculum Coordinator, and served eight years as Principal before stepping into the CEO role in 2024. Alongside these roles at Rehoboth, Nicole has served as the WA CEN State Executive Officer for the past 3 years. She has a deep love for children, is passionate about all kinds of creative pursuits, and enjoys serving others with her gifts.

How do you understand the Bible to be authoritative for all of life?

One of Rehoboth's distinctives is the conviction that Scripture is God's infallible truth. The Bible was written by human hands, yet it is God-breathed, inspired by God Himself. The Scriptures are His revelation to mankind.

John 1:1

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.'

We live in a culture where truth is increasingly subjective, so the Bible serves as a conduit to the heart of our Creator, helping us to know and love Him more deeply. For the person of faith, the Bible is our 'True North' and we believe that Truth is absolute in the Father.

While we often speak of the 'books' of the Bible, it is one book and one unfolding story. It tells of the origins of the world, humanity's ongoing struggle against the lordship of the King, the Redeemer's blood sacrifice, and the enduring

hope of restoration, the return of Jesus, and the coming of a new Kingdom.

John 1:14

'The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.'

What do you consider to be the purpose of a Christian school?

Christian schooling is distinct from Christian education. The primary responsibility for Christian education rests with parents. Christian schooling, however, is a partnership in which staff, bringing particular expertise, have the privilege of working alongside parents in several key areas.

Within this partnership, staff deliver the government-mandated curriculum, teach Biblical Studies, invest pastorally in students, and create learning opportunities that are all shaped by a biblical worldview.

James 2:14-26 tells believers that 'faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead'. Therefore, Christian education is not just what we say, but also how we live. In the same way that parents are called to model Christ-like behaviour, we also want to point students towards Christ through our actions.

Reflection on Core Value 7 - We are stronger together as a group of schools

I have had the privilege of serving as CEN's Western Australian State Executive Officer for the past couple of years and have seen firsthand the myriad challenges schools face in different seasons. The statement that nothing is new under the sun (Eccl 1:9) is most certainly true. While a challenge may feel new to you, it is highly likely that there is collective wisdom within our network of schools.

Being part of CEN has blessed us at Rehoboth in many ways, particularly when we were a small and relatively immature school compared with some of our Eastern States counterparts. Over the past 10-15 years, we have grown in size and maturity, becoming a far more sophisticated

Continued over page

Nicole Pleysier continued

organisation. With this growth comes an economy of scale not afforded to many of our sister schools, particularly those in harder-to-staff regional contexts. It is therefore imperative that, as a 'bigger sister,' we support those whose journeys are more isolated and have limits on their leadership capacity.

While these points are true organisationally, on a personal level there is great comfort in having brothers and sisters in Christ whom I

can also call colleagues. In my current role, I am blessed to work with a team of gifted and dedicated leaders; however, it is also invaluable to be able to reach out beyond our own context to someone not intimately intertwined with our day-to-day operations for feedback or a fresh perspective. I have deeply valued the pastoral care I have received through my wider CEN network, as well as the challenge and growth that have come through my association with it.



Andrew Spence

Andrew went to a public school in country NSW. He studied mechanical

engineering at the University of Wollongong at both Undergraduate and Masters levels and has completed a Masters of Business Administration. He has been employed with BlueScope Steel for more than 35 years in various roles including mechanical design, project management, maintenance management, operations management, business improvement and is presently a Project Director for the Australian roll forming business. Andrew is married with 3 children, and he and his family are active members of Figtree Anglican Church.

Andrew has been actively involved in education, professional and community organisations for many years. He was on the Board for the St Columba Preschool in Figtree for several years. He was also a member of the Illawarra-Sutherland Regional Group Committee for Engineers Australia for more than 20 years. He was a long serving member of the Australian Asset Management Council Committee and was on the Australian Society for Bulk Solids Handling Committee for several years. Andrew has been Chairperson for the ICS Parent Committee since the AGM in 2008 and on the ICE Board for the past 13 years, as Chairman since 2016. Andrew has served on the CEN National Board since 2020.

How do you understand the Bible to be authoritative for all of life?

As God is the creator of the entire universe, his Word to us through the Bible has authority over the entire universe, including everything in it. The Bible speaks to the entirety of the human condition, as God, who crafted us and gave us life, knows what we need. The Bible connects all parts of our existence together and provides a complete 'manual' for how we should live.

What do you consider to be the purpose of a Christian school?

A Christian school supports parents as they strive to obey God's requirement for us to teach our children all things in the context of His Word (Deut. 6:6-9). A Christian school aims to ensure learning is contextualised using a thoroughly Biblical world view. A Christian school should exemplify a covenant community, striving to deliver excellence in all areas of endeavour.

Reflection on Core Value 4 - Parents are supported and equipped to effectively govern our schools.

I see effective governance as an increasingly challenging task, with second and third generation parents now on Boards, operating in an increasingly secular society. Providing governance support requires more than simply conveying the principles of governance, something I believe CEN has been able to deliver very well. A challenge for CEN in this supporting role is to adequately convey the 'value' of governance guidance that is over and above the perfunctory, as well as determining how best to do this.



Walter Ten Haaf

Walter Ten Haaf is a highly suitable nominee for the CEN Board of Directors, bringing strong governance experience, industry expertise, and a demonstrated commitment to Christian organisations. He currently serves on multiple boards, including Foundation Christian College Inc., West Australian Shalom Group Inc. (Shalom House), and Shalom Family Church, providing him with well-rounded experience in strategic oversight, compliance, and faith-based leadership.

Walter is the owner and director of Kyros Homes, a registered building company, and holds a Diploma of Building and Construction. He is nearing completion of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) course and is currently studying toward an Engineering degree. In addition, he actively trains apprentices, reflecting his commitment to mentorship, workforce development, and long-term capacity building.

Walter holds a valid Director Identification Number and demonstrates the integrity, practical wisdom, and governance capability required to serve effectively on the CEN Board of Directors.

How do you understand the Bible to be authoritative for all of life?

I understand the Bible to be authoritative for all of life because it is God's revealed Word and His instruction for how we are to live. It does not simply offer spiritual encouragement; it provides moral, relational, and practical guidance that applies to every area of human life. Throughout Scripture, we see consistent patterns: obedience brings blessing, pride leads to downfall, repentance restores relationship, and God remains sovereign over all circumstances.

The lives of Jesus, the prophets, and the kings demonstrate that God's authority extends beyond religious rituals into leadership, justice, relationships, humility, and decision-making. Jesus Himself modelled truth, grace, and

obedience to the Father, showing that God's Word shapes character, priorities, and action. The prophets called people back to God's standards, reinforcing that His commands are not optional but foundational. The repeated consequences faced by rulers and nations show that no one is beyond accountability.

Because Scripture declares that there is nothing new under the sun, its wisdom transcends culture and time. Human nature has not changed, and neither has God's character. Therefore, the Bible serves as the ultimate standard by which beliefs, values, and choices are measured, guiding every aspect of life under God's authority.

What do you consider to be the purpose of a Christian school?

A Christian school exists to support and extend what parents are already teaching in the home. It does not replace the family's responsibility for spiritual formation but partners with parents to reinforce biblical truth, Christian character, and consistent values within an educational setting.

It may also provide opportunities for outreach, provided that all activities remain aligned with the school's constitution and foundational beliefs. Maintaining this alignment protects the integrity and mission of the school.

I do not believe a school is the church, though the influence and presence of the church can be expressed within it. A Christian school is fundamentally an educational institution, but one that should be fully grounded in God's Word. Every subject—whether science, history, literature, or the arts—should be taught through a biblical worldview. Christian ethics and principles should shape both the curriculum and the culture of the school.

In this way, faith and learning are not separated but integrated, forming students not only academically but spiritually and morally as well.

Continued over page

Walter Ten Haaf continued

Reflection on Core Value 4 - Parents are supported and equipped to effectively govern our schools.

I strongly affirm Core Value 4, as Scripture places the primary responsibility for a child's upbringing and education with parents. When God entrusts children to a family, He also entrusts parents with the duty to guide, teach, and disciple them. Education is therefore not something delegated away entirely, but something parents remain accountable for before God.

For this reason, it is both wise and necessary that parents are supported and equipped to effectively govern our schools. One of the distinctive strengths of our schools is that

they remain parent-controlled. This preserves their original purpose and biblical foundation. However, in today's increasingly complex and regulated environment, governance requires more than goodwill and passion. Legislative requirements, compliance obligations, and societal pressures mean parents face greater exposure and responsibility than ever before.

Our schools were founded by faithful volunteers with hearts to serve God. To carry that vision forward, we now need parents who not only share that heart but are also equipped with appropriate training and understanding. Strong governance requires both spiritual conviction and practical competence, ensuring we faithfully steward these schools for the next generation and beyond.



Carol Unwin

Carol has been involved with Southern Highlands Christian School for over 15 years as a company member, during which time she served 12 years as a Board member and 4 years as Chair. Carol's involvement came about as her brother had enrolled his children and encouraged her to get involved. At first, Carol was unsure of how she could contribute to the running of a school but over time God taught her that it was less about if she was qualified and more about if she was willing and that He would equip her.

Carol has a Bachelor of Commerce degree in accounting and has had a varied working life in large and small organisations. The last 10 years have seen Carol running my own bookkeeping business.

Carol has been a member of Highlands Baptist Church for over 25 years, 9 years of this she was the youth group leader and organiser. For the last 9 years, Carol has also been a member of RUACH/Called By Name home church for over 10 years. Over the last 20 years, Carol has also been able to participate in mission trips to Vanuatu and Vietnam and has also served as board member/treasurer for a not for profit venture in Vanuatu.

Carol has been serving as the Treasurer on the CEN National Board since 2020.

How do you understand the Bible to be authoritative for all of life?

The Bible is the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God. It is as relevant now as it was when written. Human kind has at all times since the Garden of Eden been, in our natural state, out of relationship with God. The Bible charts our fall and then points us to the wonderful redeeming gift that God was to provide to allow us to commune with Him again - Jesus. There is nothing to be added to the Bible, it is all we need.

What do you consider to be the purpose of a Christian school?

A Christian school's purpose is to partner with Christian parents in the education of their children, to ensure that their world is not defined by the populous of the day but that in all areas it is seen through the lens of God. This has many challenges in our modern world - such as religious freedom, gender fluidity, anti-discrimination. My desire is that all students within our schools (whether from Christian families or not) are exposed to the incredible gift of Jesus and that prayerfully either during their time at school or after accept that gift. I pray that those students that do accept Jesus as their personal saviour are able to leave school with a steadfast faith that will not be swayed by the world we live in but yet show compassion toward it.

Reflection on Core Value 5 - Ongoing Christian teacher development underpins quality Christian education

Our secular universities produce teachers and those teachers can be Christians, but they don't produce teachers that can teach from a Christian worldview. That is our responsibility. If we as governors of a Christian school want a Christian worldview taught we have to enable those we employ to do that. Teacher development is a requirement under the AITSL Standards. We need to ensure that this development enhances their ability to teach with a Christian worldview. This needs to be through initial and ongoing training, encouraging an environment where colleagues not only want to improve their own skills but also of those around them. As it says in Proverbs 27 - iron sharpens iron. This is, like the craft of teaching, a lifelong journey. As an individual school this sort of professional development can be hard to provide by ourselves. That is why it is important to have an organisation such as CEN that provide these opportunities such as ITEC and NICE.

FINANCIAL REPORT

SUMMARY

2025 has again been a consolidating year for CEN, while still being able to start implementing strategic initiatives, with a net consolidated group loss of \$116,178 (a loss was budgeted for in 2025 of \$406,240). Factors influencing the result were continued strong enrolments for National Institute of Christian Education (NICE), strong participation in conferences and two key executive roles not being filled until later in the year.

REVENUE

Income from all sources increased by 5.15% when comparing 2025 results to 2024 (if you exclude State Revenue the increase was 5.6%). NICE built on the strong improvement of the 2024 year with a consolidating increase in income of 4.6%. Unfortunately, professional learning had a decrease of 17% from the previous year, wiping out the gain from the 2024 year. There is still strong consultancy demand and conferences for the year were very well attended.

EXPENDITURE

Expenditure on services increased when comparing 2025 results to 2024 by 4%. If you exclude State expenses the increase was 0.2% but this needs to be offset by the knowledge that two key roles that had been included in the budget were not filled until quite late in the year which would have changed this %. NICE expenses saw a decrease this year of 3.2%, this is a one off as 2024 saw a catch up in affiliation fees to Alphacrucis due to timely invoices not being received by NICE. There has also been a decrease in travel costs overall, some of this is due to doing things differently e.g., board meetings, but also due to it not being an ITEC year.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

CEN's cash position is more than adequate with liquidity expressed at 2.2:1, meaning that \$220 in cash at bank is on hand for every \$100 of

current liabilities owed at the end of the financial year, although this is a slight decrease over 2024 which was 2.3:1. There has been a 9% decrease in cash on hand. Funds continue to be spread over the Baptist Financial Services higher interest accounts and Commonwealth Bank transaction accounts in line with day-to-day requirements and to ensure we appropriately stewarding the funds.

OPERATIONS

It is pleasing to see the continued engagement of our community in the courses provided by NICE. Fiona and her team need to be congratulated for their continued proactiveness in promoting and encouraging the students in their care. As NICE is a key pillar of CEN, it will continue to be a focus of the National Board and CEO.

Consultancies are continuing to be a strong growth area for the business. As the Consultancy Manager has now been appointed, we will be transitioning to a proactive consultancy business unit.

As with consultancies, professional learning now has a new manager that will be driving this business unit and will be a keen focus for the National Board and CEO.

FINAL COMMENTS

2025 was the first full year with our new CEO and implementing the new strategic plan. Moving into 2026 and the years ahead it will be a fine balance of ensuring we, as an organization, are supporting our community in the areas they require and strengthens Christian education whilst ensuring our organization is sustainable not just for now but for the future. As we move forward, we continue to put our trust in our faithful God and remember that we are stronger together.

Carol Unwin

Treasurer,
CEN National Board

CEN FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2025

To access the CEN Financial Statements for 2025, please scan this QR code below or use the URL link provided.

Some printed copies of the financial statements can also be found at the conference registration desk.



<https://tinyurl.com/cenfinancials2025>

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NATIONAL *CEO REPORT*



As I reflect on the year that has been, I do so with gratitude and a growing sense of responsibility.

Christian Education National exists to serve a community that does not belong to itself, but is entrusted with something far larger: the formation of young people in the light of Christ, for the good of the Kingdom and the world. This calling requires humility, patience, and a constant returning to first principles.

One of the great encouragements of 2025 has been the deepening of our work with the State Executive Officer (SEO) team. I am deeply thankful for this group of leaders. Together, we have worked intentionally toward stronger alignment between national and the states, sharing resources, learning from one another, and identifying best practice that serves the whole movement rather than isolated interests. This spirit of collaboration has borne fruit, particularly through the Teaching & Learning Summits, which have become places of rich professional and theological conversation. We look forward to extending these summits into additional states in 2026.

Governance continues to be an area of careful stewardship. The ongoing governance webinars (Flint & Steel) have been a steady source of wisdom and encouragement, helping boards grow beyond compliance toward thoughtful, future-oriented governance that serves schools well.

In 2025, CEN continued to walk closely with schools experiencing significant difficulty. At times, this work has felt akin to intensive care (quiet, costly, and often unseen). Yet it has also been profoundly hopeful. We have been encouraged by schools that, having come through their own seasons of hardship, now extend generosity and support to others.

The support offered by Foundation Christian College to Carnarvon Christian School is one such example. It speaks powerfully to the depth of community within Christian education, a community shaped not by competition, but by shared burden and shared hope.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that many of our schools are flourishing. We give thanks for this, while also reminding ourselves of the subtle dangers that accompany success. Flourishing can tempt us toward self-congratulation or toward taking ourselves too seriously. The work entrusted to us calls instead for gratitude, vigilance, and a posture of dependence.

Internationally, the year included study tours to both the United States and New Zealand. In the US, we attended the Converge Conference (a gathering of fourteen Christian schooling organisations from around the world) which provided rich perspective and renewed conviction about our shared calling. In New Zealand, we had the privilege of attending the NZACS Teachers' Conference, *Flourishing in the Classroom*, and visiting a number of Christian schools. This experience was deeply formative. Many participants described the tour as transformative, not simply in terms of ideas gained, but in how it reshaped imagination for what faithful Christian teaching can look like in everyday classrooms.

We have been encouraged by schools that, having come through their own seasons of hardship, now extend generosity and support to others.

Our partnership with EduDeo Ministries has also continued to grow. Jo Fahey (CEN) and Daniel Bradbury (MECS) travelled to Indonesia to support teacher training in explicitly Christian pedagogy, a trip generously supported by EduDeo. We see this as a significant opportunity: to grow our own staff through global engagement, and to serve schools in developing contexts with humility and care.

Considerable work was undertaken in 2025 to reshape CEN's business model. We have reviewed our membership benefits and service offerings with an eye toward clarity, value, and long-term sustainability. This process has been marked by broad consultation across member schools. We have also mapped patterns of engagement and will be working intentionally with schools who have not yet known how or where to connect. Our desire is not simply participation, but meaningful partnership.

A key strategic milestone this year was the appointment of a Manager of Governance & Consulting. This role strengthens our capacity to serve schools well into the future, and I am grateful for the support and collaboration of the States throughout this process.

It has been a privilege to visit every state and territory this year, though not yet every school. I look forward to continuing those visits, listening carefully, and learning from the lived realities of our communities.

Beyond Australia, CEN was invited to facilitate the strategic planning process for the Society for Christian Schools in British Columbia (SCSBC), based in Vancouver. This was a significant honour and a reminder of the trust placed in our collective wisdom and experience.

Our consulting work has grown substantially, spanning community engagement, organisational and structural reviews, strategic planning, 360-degree reviews, financial and business management support, executive recruitment, culture reviews, and bespoke projects such as multi-school organisation feasibility studies. We are grateful that schools entrust us with this work, often at critical moments.

As always, the year included farewells and new beginnings. The departure of long-serving leaders was felt deeply. At the same time, new leaders have stepped into the movement. We recognise that we can do more to integrate

and welcome these leaders into the life of our community, and this remains an area for growth.

CEN's ongoing investment in the National Institute for Christian Education (NICE) continues to bear fruit. I was encouraged by the recent NICE planning retreat and by enrolments exceeding budget expectations. NICE remains a significant strategic investment for CEN, and I commend its programs to our member schools.

Our conferences this year were well attended, and we are deeply thankful for the support of the community. We are consistently encouraged to hear how learning, reflection, and shared practice at these gatherings translate into real change within schools.

Planning has also commenced for ITEC28, and I am grateful for those who have already committed their time and wisdom to the planning committee. Their willingness to serve is a gift to the movement.

On a more personal note, 2025 was a year of settling into a new role, and into life on the East Coast. I continue to find great joy in visiting schools and asking a simple but searching question: What makes your school Christian, and how do you know? The answers are becoming more thoughtful and more grounded, and I am encouraged by the progress across our schools.

Yet the greatest risk remains before us: the possibility of a disconnect between what is articulated at board level and what is enacted in classrooms. Our work is not yet done. CEN's calling is to encourage, strengthen, and gently spur one another on, so that our deepest convictions are faithfully embodied in daily practice.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the faithful service of the CEN Board, its sub-committees (particularly the Audit & Risk Committee and the 60th Anniversary Committee) and the CEN staff. Their quiet diligence and perseverance make this work possible.

I remain grateful for the trust placed in CEN and pray that we continue to serve with humility, faithfulness, and hope as we seek the flourishing of Christian education for generations to come.

Mark Steyn

CEO,
Christian Education National

National Institute for Christian Education *Principal Report*



Established in 1979, the National Institute for Christian Education is unique in its core vision and purpose.

As I reflect on the 2025 academic year for the National Institute for Christian Education, I do so with gratitude to God for his continued faithfulness. It is a privilege to walk alongside Christian educators committed to serving Christ through their vocational calling. In particular, our posture as a faculty this year has been framed by Romans 12:12: "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." We have sought to be joyful in hope, holding fast to the calling of Christian education even amid complexity and change; patient in affliction, recognising the pressures faced by educators, institutions, and schools; and faithful in prayer, acknowledging our dependence on God for wisdom, provision, and endurance.

2025 has been a year of further consolidation and growth. The Institute has continued to see increasing engagement across its courses, school-based cohorts, and research activities. This growth has not simply been numerical; it has also been formative, marked by deepening scholarly rigor, strengthened partnerships, and renewed clarity around our vocation as a community committed to faithful Christian scholarship and service.

ENROLMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Overall enrolments in 2025 exceeded budgeted expectations across all three study periods. The final figures of 251 enrolments across Semester 1, Semester 2, and Summer Intake, represent the highest annual enrolment total under recent accreditation requirements.

The Summer Intake study period at the end of 2025 was particularly encouraging. Sustained personal contact with students regarding study pathways and course completion plans resulted

in strong uptake by the commencement of the study period. This pattern reflects a growth in our active student body, with many educators continuing their studies beyond initial NICE@School cohorts and completion of the first two core subjects.

Course completions in 2025 included graduates across the Master of Education, Master of Education (Leadership), and Graduate Certificate programs, with a total of 19 graduates either completed or predicted by the academic year's end. Graduation continues to be a significant marker of faithful perseverance for our students, many of whom balance study with demanding leadership and teaching roles.

NICE@SCHOOL AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

School-based cohorts remain a defining strength of the Institute's work, supporting CEN and non-CEN schools in the equipping of educators working out their school vision and mission in practice. In 2025, NICE@School groups were delivered across multiple schools. These cohorts enable educators to study together within their own communities, fostering shared language, practice, and reflection on theological underpinnings.

The final figures of 251 enrolments across Semester 1, Semester 2, and Summer Intake, represent the highest annual enrolment total under recent accreditation requirements.

It was a blessing for myself, Dr Julia Verdouw, and Dr Jill Ireland, along with faculty from Alphacrusis UC to attend and present our current research at the International Network of Christian Higher Educators (INCHE) conference in the Netherlands.

COURSES AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The Institute continued to offer its four accredited postgraduate courses:

- Graduate Certificate of Education
- Graduate Certificate of Education (Leadership)
- Master of Education
- Master of Education (Leadership)

A significant milestone in 2025 was the development and approval of a new Graduate Certificate of Coaching and Mentoring, co-developed with Alphacrusis University College. This course responds directly to the growing demand for biblically grounded leadership, coaching, mentoring, and supervision in Christian schools. Delivery will commence in 2026, with strong early interest from recent graduates and school leaders.

Internal review work commenced on existing leadership subjects to ensure continued alignment with stakeholder needs, scholarly developments, and the Institute's reformational heritage and will continue in 2026.

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

Research continues to be a core expression of the Institute's positioning as a scholarly community and thought-leader. Under the leadership of Dr Julia Verdouw, 2025 saw further strengthening of a research culture and sharing of learnings.

Key research activities included ongoing projects investigating effective online pedagogy shaped by biblical rhythms; Stage two research into professional learning associated with the CEN resource and curriculum approach, *Transformation by Design*; and faculty involvement in externally funded research projects.

It was a blessing for myself, Dr Julia Verdouw, and Dr Jill Ireland, along with faculty from Alphacrusis UC to attend and present our current research at the International Network of Christian Higher Educators (INCHE) conference in the Netherlands in April 2025. We were excited to visit the Dreistar University campus, strengthen our connection with their faculty.

The May 2025 Research Symposium, *Educating for Hope*, provided a rich space for scholarly dialogue among academics, school leaders, and practitioners. Thank you to Dr Julia Verdouw who leads our research components with grace and integrity.

PUBLICATIONS

The Institute continues to contribute to the wider Christian education community through publication. Work progressed in 2025 on an edited research volume scheduled for release in 2026, and ongoing publication of the Christian Teachers Journal (CTJ). It is pleasing to see many CTJ articles generated by student

engagement in the Institute. These publications serve both our internal teaching programs and the broader Christian education movement, strengthening the Institute's role as a thought-leader. We are pleased to see Dr Julia Verdouw invited joined the International Journal for Christian Education editorial team.

FACULTY AND STAFF

The strength of the Institute lies in its people and heritage. In 2025, we were blessed by a committed team who serve with generosity, intellectual depth, and pastoral care for students. Special mention to Dr Jill Ireland who regularly provides her expertise on a voluntary basis. I am blessed to work with the permanent Institute staff team: Dr Julia Verdouw, Dr Chris Rayner, Dr Charlie Justins, and Sam Burrows, supported by our Academic Administration Coordinator, Sarah Wright. Pete Steunenber is a gift to the Institute as Business Manager along with the CEN office staff and CEO, Mark Steyn.

In 2025, Emily Shea (NICE Graduate, NTCS staff, and PhD Candidate) and Dr Dave Loewen (SCSBC Chief Executive Officer and adjunct Regent College) joined our adjunct team along with Joel van Bentum as a tutor in the leadership strand. We are blessed through their work with us. We congratulate adjunct lecturer Dr Miriam Lili who completed her PhD, conferred in May 2025.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: KANANGRA28

Significant progress was made in 2025 towards implementing the Institute's Strategic Plan, Kanangra28. A staff retreat provided space for prayerful reflection, strategic discernment, and planning. Key areas of focus included

Regularly our end of semester student evaluation responses includes feedback on how approachable, knowledgeable, and supportive our lecturers are, enhancing the students' learning experience.

strengthening the Institute's role as a thought-leader in Christian education; expanding research collaboration; developing alumni pathways; and exploring sustainable models for measuring transformational impact.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

As we conclude 2025, we do so with a deep sense of gratitude and humility. The work of the Institute is, at heart, an act of worship and service, an offering made in response to God's call to love him with heart, soul, strength, and mind, and to love others.

I am grateful to the Institute board for its prayerful oversight and to Alphacrucis University College for a strong and collegial partnership as our accrediting body.

Above all, we give thanks for the educators who choose to study with the National Institute and the school communities that support them. It is our privilege to serve in this part of God's world.

Dr Fiona Partridge

Principal
National Institute for Christian Education

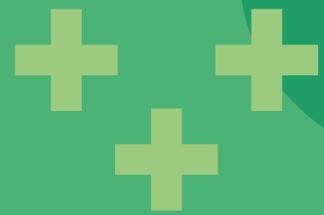
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