



Strategic Plan 2009–2015

Updated April 2013

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| Author | Board of Directors, Rev John Henderson – Principal Peter Kaye – Consultgroup |
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1. Who We Are and What We Do

Australian Lutheran College (ALC) is the post-secondary education provider of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA). Its task is to serve the LCA through the preparation and ongoing education of people for service in the church and the world. ALC has enjoyed the unequivocal support of the LCA throughout its existence.

The origins of ALC were as Immanuel Seminary, founded in 1923, Concordia Seminary, founded in 1892, and Lutheran Teachers College, founded in 1968. The two seminaries came together in 1968 following the formation of the LCA in 1966, and the Teachers College joined them on the North Adelaide campus in 1989. The combined institution was incorporated as ALC in 2004.

ALC's legal identity is a Company formed by the General Church Council of the LCA (on behalf of the General Synod), under the Corporations Act 2001, to operate an educational facility. The Company is in effect an incorporated Board of the Church and its capacities and powers are exercised consistently with the constitution and by-laws of the Church.

The theological position of ALC is that of the LCA as contained in the confessional paragraph of its constitution. All our theology has its beginning and centre in the gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news that God accepts sinners unconditionally and forgives them because of Christ. This central teaching of Scripture is spelled out most clearly in the doctrine of justification by faith, which has always been foundational for the Lutheran Church. This states that people, alienated from God because of sin, are put right with God (or justified) through faith in Christ. The Lutheran Church holds that the doctrine of justification is the proper key to unlocking the message of the Scriptures.

ALC accepts the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as God's revealed and authoritative word in all matters of doctrine and life. It also acknowledges and accepts as true expositions of Scripture the symbolical writings of the evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580.

The main benefits that ALC delivers to the Church are:

1. Preparation of pastors,
2. Lay-worker education and training,
3. Pre-service education for teacher accreditation in Lutheran schools, and
4. Continuing and postgraduate studies in theology and education.

The constitution of ALC is scheduled to be updated at the LCA Synod in April 2013. The modified objects of ALC (sections 5.2.1 – 5.2.6 of the Constitution) are:

- 5.1.1. prepare candidates to be pastors of the Church;
- 5.1.2. prepare candidates to be teachers in the schools of the Church;
- 5.1.3. prepare candidates for diaconal work in the Church;
- 5.1.4. provide continuing and postgraduate studies in theology and education;
- 5.1.5. provide education leading to awards and qualifications in theology and Christian service; and
- 5.1.6. undertake such other activities reasonably incidental thereto which promote the mission of the Church.

The first iteration of this strategic plan was prepared over a 4 month period (May–August 2009) commencing with initial preparation undertaken by our Principal and our independent planning facilitator, Peter Kaye from Consultgroup. The plan was updated in April 2011 and a revised plan adopted on 16 May 2011.

The key stages to the initial preparation were:

- i. Review of current operations, market and strategic direction
- ii. Input from ALC management team (confidential questionnaire)
- iii. Planning workshop (Board and management representation) – June

- iv. Planning notes (draft concept of potential direction) distributed for preliminary feedback to governance and key stakeholders.
- v. Planning workshop (13 Board and management attendees)
- vi. Stakeholder consultation and feedback (8 organisations represented)
- vii. Draft plan released for Board and stakeholder feedback (August)

Key developments relevant to the 2011 update of the plan came from nearly two years of operation under the first version, during which time:

- i. VET/Grassroots Training was established in partnership with Delta Ministries, and student numbers starting to exceed targets, particularly in Vetamorphus.
- ii. The Australian Universities Quality Agency conducted a quality audit of ALC, publishing a public report, and ALC submitted an action plan in response.
- iii. ALC was accepted as a Recognised Teaching Institution of the Melbourne College of Divinity in December 2010.
- iv. ALC restructured its internal management and leadership.
- v. The Board of Directors conduct self-reviews in May 2011 and May 2012.

This second revision of the plan reflects our progress over the last two years as we continue to implement our strategies.

The Strategic Plan (2009–2015) has seen ALC extend and widen its range of activities, moving beyond the more familiar Higher Education activities to include a range of Vocational Education and Training offerings. We have also intentionally developed opportunities for people to engage in theology, discipleship, and ministry learning, whether or not they are aiming for a particular degree or qualification, whatever their church or denominational background. It has been a time of great change, and this second review of the Strategic Plan 2009–2015, and its place in ALC planning, is most timely.

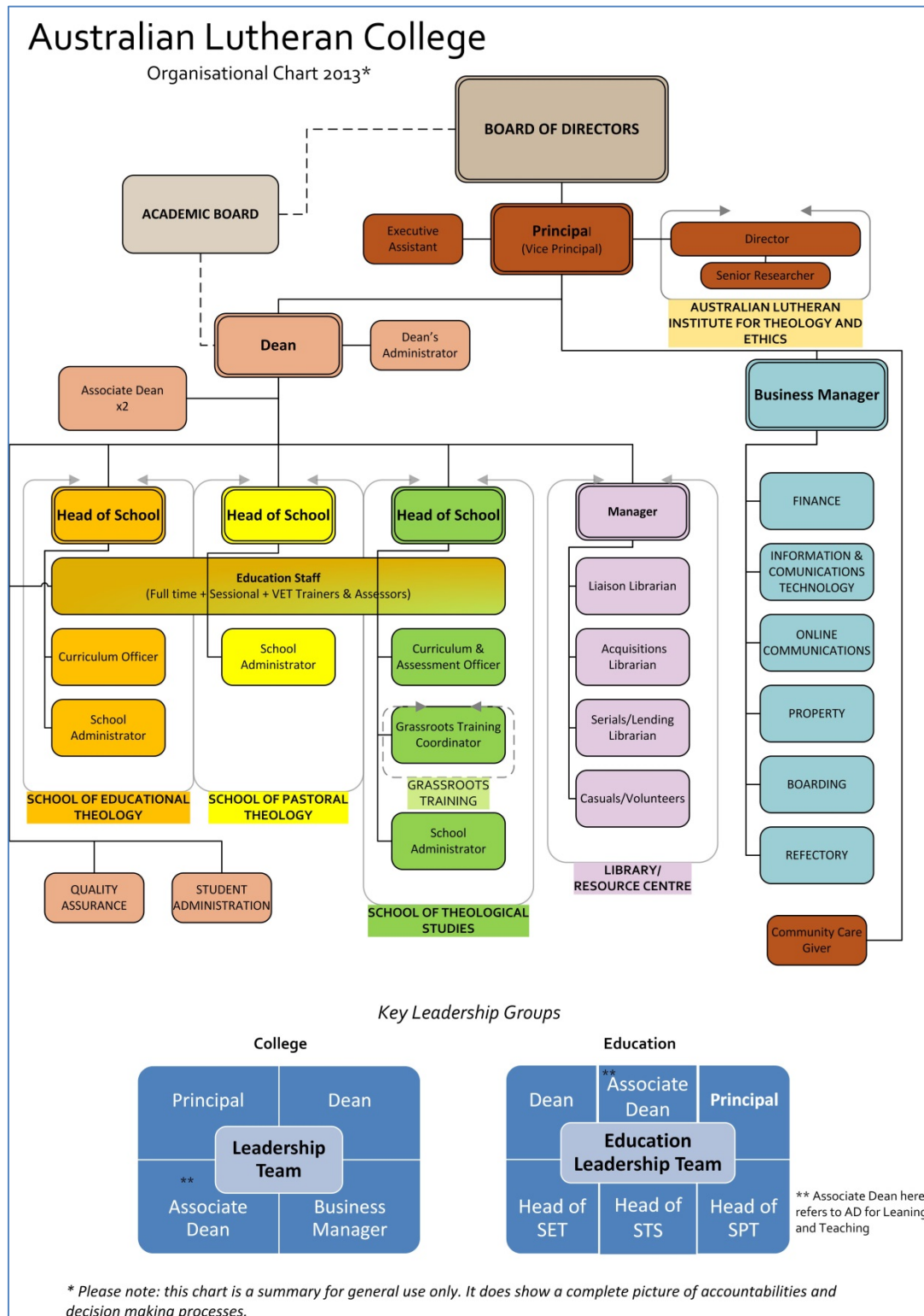
David Gogoll
Board Chairperson

2. Board and Structure

The work of ALC is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Lutheran Church of Australia and its operations are managed by the Principal (appointed in 2008). All management and operational functions are delegated to the Principal.

Australian Lutheran College Board of Directors consists of ten directors who are:

- the President of the Church;
- two pastors and two lay members of the Church elected by the General Synod;
- one pastor and four lay members of the Church appointed by the General Church Council.



3. Educational environment

The Board recognises that ALC developed a Higher Education Provider (HEP) Strategic Plan 2008–2012 as part of its Quality Audit HEP provider requirements.

In 2009, under the new Strategic Plan, it was agreed that this plan would better serve as a sub-plan (ALC Strategic Higher Education Sub-Plan). In 2010 ALC leadership began revising this sub-plan. The revision was interrupted by the 2010 Australian Universities Quality Agency audit.

In 2010 ALC achieved status as a Recognised Teaching Institution of the Melbourne College of Divinity. At the end of 2011 MCD became Australia's first specialist university, known as MCD University of Divinity (MCD). This shifted ALC into a university environment. At the end of 2012 all remaining ALC awards were taught out and in February 2013 ALC successfully applied to the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency for withdrawal of registration in order to operate entirely as a college of MCD for the purposes of Higher Education. Currently all Higher Education students are students of MCD.

In 2011/12 ALC consolidated its position as a partner institution of the Australian College of Ministries for the delivery of Vocational Education and Training program. Course offerings were simplified, and the Diploma of Management dropped as being out of scope. In an unplanned move ALC ceased offering Vetamorphus (essentially a Certificate III in Christian Ministry and Theology (Cert III CMT)) in schools. Focus has shifted to the Certificate IV in Christian Ministry and Theology, with the intent to examine the delivery of a Cert III CMT once again for 2014, but no longer as part of the Vetamorphus network.

In 2012 the Education Staff and the Learning and Teaching Committee drafted a new Learning and Teaching Plan. When completed in 2013 it will replace the ALC Strategic Higher Education Sub-Plan. The new plan informs all educational praxis at ALC and is designed to intentionally link with and underpin the ALC Strategic Plan, starting with the same strategic vision and drilling down to measurable educational goals.

4. Financial and property environment

The operations of Australian Lutheran College are heavily subsidised by the Lutheran Church of Australia, which regards ALC as a prime ministry conducted on its behalf:

- The campus is owned by the LCA and occupied by ALC on a 55 year lease with a peppercorn rental.
- The LCA annually provides a large cash injection to the operations of ALC, in the region of \$1.2 – 1.3 million. While mainly intended for the support of ALC's educational and formational programs, the auditor has identified that a large proportion of these funds are spent maintaining and improving the heritage listed property, and providing other services to the church, such as the membership of LCA commissions, councils, and committees.

In 2013 the LCA is considering a major site redevelopment which will have ramifications for the operations of ALC. If approved by Synod in April 2013 the effects of the redevelopment are likely to be felt from 2015/16, with a potential new building on the existing site in 2018. Future strategic planning for ALC must take this into account.

5. Planning environment

In March 2013 the Council of MCD University of Divinity adopted a **Strategic Plan 2013–15**

In April 2013 the leadership of the Lutheran Church is presenting a **Strategic Directions** document for adoption at the General Convention of Synod.

Future ALC strategic planning will need to take these documents into account.

6. Vision

To provide and facilitate Lutheran theologically-based education in which we live our faith in one true God who sent Jesus Christ as Saviour, demonstrating love for the world, compassion for all people, and engagement with the needs of society.

7. Mission

We will:

- focus on student learning
- value the formation of each person for service in the church and the world
- foster a culture that values each person and celebrates each person's positive contribution to the community and its mission
- confess Jesus Christ with energy, clarity, and conviction, upholding and evaluating the biblical witness as the foundation of our Lutheran faith, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in conformity with the Lutheran Confessions and the faith and practice of the universal Christian church
- build and sustain a worshipping community of students, teachers, and staff
- respect and engage with those whose beliefs and practices differ from ours

8. Strategies

1. Strengthen our position in Higher Education (HEd)

i. Become part of a consortium of theological colleges

In the changing educational environment and the advent of the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency, a small institution such as ALC needs to join with others in order to ensure ongoing viability.

In 2010 ALC became a college of the Melbourne College of Divinity, now MCD University of Divinity.

This has not been a simple change for ALC and has involved major institutional and individual rethinking, and a great deal of work to align ALC needs with MCD award and administrative structures. ALC is playing an active hand in assisting MCD to determine its own renewed directions and operations as it converts itself into a bona fide specialised university. The work of integration and compatibility is ongoing and energy consuming.

Targets:

- a. All ALC HEd students enrolled in MCD awards – completed January 2013
- b. ALC participation on boards and committees of MCD – ongoing. (Note: Appointments for 2013 were completed March 2013, and on many occasions members will attend meetings using video conference facilities.)
- c. Withdrawal of registration – completed February 2013
- d. Review MoU with MCD – Principal – November 2015 (end of current MoU), or earlier if required through restructure of MCD.

ii. Build our research profile

Targets:

- a. Engage new teachers with research credentials – Principal and Dean – ongoing
- b. *Lutheran Theological Journal* to be peer reviewed – LTJ Editorial Committee – December 2013
- c. Teaching staff encouraged to publish – Dean – ongoing
- d. Establish position of Associate Dean for Research – completed

iii. Provide an up-to-date Distributed Learning facility

Although some ALC programs require on campus study, the majority of ALC students study remotely. In order to serve the church ALC must provide quality learning opportunities for those students.

In 2013 ALC launched iLearn, with plans to roll this facility out in time across all courses and units.

Targets:

- a. Launch new Moodle-based Learning Management System and roll out initial units – completed February 2013 with iLearn
- b. All students enrolled through iLearn – Dean’s Office and Education Staff – February 2014
- c. Addition of units to iLearn – Dean’s Office and Education Staff – ongoing

NOTE: this sub-strategy also applies to Strategy 2 – VET.

iv. Assure the future supply of qualified teachers in required areas

ALC has long been working with the LCA to develop a coordinated succession plan. This process needs to be reinvigorated to reduce educational risk.

Targets:

- a. Consolidated and workable succession planning process – Principal and Dean with Board of Directors and Academic Board – August 2013
- b. Prospective teachers identified and work begun on obtaining required qualifications – Principal and Dean with Academic Board – December 2013.
- c. Secure funding for preparation of future academic staff – Principal – August 2013, or as required

v. Collaborate with stakeholders in the provision of HEd courses

ALC provides most of its educational services into a specific niche market. It is important that we prepare people as well as possible for the ministry they are to undertake. Regular review, evaluation, and consultation with stakeholders are essential.

Targets:

- a. Develop an MoU (or similar) with Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) for its pre-service and in-service training needs – Head of School of Educational Theology (SET) – December 2013
- b. Determine the future direction of Lutheran pre-service training for teachers given the added pressure and cost to students, the loss of elective opportunities, and other barriers – Head of SET with LEA – December 2013
- c. Engage the LCA College of Presidents in a review of the training program for pastors and the awards required by the program – Dean’s Office and Head of School of Pastoral Theology (SPT) – April to November 2013

2. Deliver quality Vocational Education and Training (VET)

i. Partner with a Recognised Training Organisation (RTO) for the delivery of VET qualifications

In 2010 ALC became a partner with the Australian College of Ministries (ACOM). This partnership has been tested since, especially during the restructuring of ACOM in 2011/12. ALC has made a strategic decision to remain with ACOM and utilise the resources it provides. This does not prevent ALC utilising another RTO should the need arise.

Target:

- a. Review partnership with ACOM – Principal with Head of School of Theological Studies (STS) – December 2013 (end of current MoU)

ii. Collaborate with stakeholders to further develop the Certificate IV in Christian Ministry and Theology (30772QLD)

ALC actively consults closely with a range of LCA entities to develop units for the Cert IV CMT, including representation and membership on Boards and committees that are responsible for the various ministries e.g. Board for Lay Ministry, Board for Child, Youth, and Family Ministry – Head of STS – ongoing

iii. Develop a Certificate III in Christian Ministry and Theology for senior secondary students

In 2010/11 ALC had the experience of ‘hosting’ Vetamorphus, essentially a Cert III CMT. When reoffered the program in 2012 ALC declined for a number of factors, in the belief that it is strategically advantageous for it to develop its own Cert III CMT using ACOM as the RTO, clear of the factors influencing the roll out of Vetamorphus.

Targets:

- a. Assess viability of an ALC Cert III CMT in consultation with LEA – Head of STS – May 2013
- b. Prepare and advertise an ALC Cert III CMT for 2014 – Head of STS – June 2013

iv. Establish LCA recognition for ALC VET trainers

The LCA has traditionally given formal approval to all who teach at ALC, and has been asking questions about the role and status of lay teachers, particularly in the VET area. A new paradigm is needed for the manner in which the LCA endorses such teaching, taking into account the roles of trainers and teachers in the learning and growth of students.

Targets:

- a. Open discussions with the LCA College of Presidents on the matter of VET trainers and other non-ordained teachers – Principal – August 2013
- b. Develop a method of endorsement and/or approval that is acceptable to ALC and to the LCA – Principal – January 2014

v. Develop training for specific targeted groups e.g. Indigenous

Regularised training for specific groups only becomes possible when the various ministries of the church are ready to engage – e.g. Finke River Mission, North Queensland Mission Board, LCA College of Presidents, with aboriginal congregations, pastors, and evangelists, regarding the future training needs for aboriginal pastors and evangelists.

Target:

- a. Maintain openness to training for targeted groups, and actively develop training partnerships when the opportunity arises – Heads of Schools – ongoing

3. Provide for continuing education

i. Promote and grow Grassroots Training

To fulfil its mission ALC needs to engage with the ‘non-accredited’ side of Christian education, providing accessible and affordable learning opportunities to the people of the church in practical ways. Under the Strategic Plan (2009–2015) Grassroots Training has been established for that purpose, leveraging off the skills learned through the delivery of VET courses.

Targets:

- a. Design a plan to position Grassroots Training in the popular imagination of the LCA as the go to place for practical and meaningful short term courses, workshops, and growth in discipleship – Grassroots Coordinator – December 2013
- b. Develop mutual agreements with LCA Districts on the delivery of workshops and learning opportunities in their areas – Grassroots Coordinator – December 2013
- c. Increase by at least a factor of 3 the number of workshops and learning opportunities available through Grassroots, holding and promoting events in local regions – Grassroots Coordinator – June 2014
- d. Complete market research to determine the need to continue producing the series of study booklets – Head of STS – December 2013
- e. Determine the future of 'Gold' – Head of STS/Grassroots Coordinator – July 2013

ii. Professional development training

Education takes place in an environment of life-long learning. More and more people are looking for a sense of order and recognition in the learning opportunities they encounter. ALC aims to provide clearer learning pathways for service in the church and the world.

Targets:

- a. Plan enhanced training opportunities for Specific Ministry Pastors building on the current Adelaide-based intensives – Head of SPT with the LCA College of Presidents – December 2013
- b. Chart training pathways for aboriginal pastors and evangelists – Head of SPT with aboriginal pastors, Finke River Mission Board, the LCA College of Presidents, and other relevant parties – December 2014
- c. Determine how ALC should engage with the various professional development opportunities provided by LEA and its regions, e.g. Equip, Pathways, and Leadership Development Program – Head of SET, with LEA and relevant parties – December 2013
- d. Cooperate with the LCA Continuing Education for Pastors (CEP) program and support the coordinator, – Principal – ongoing
- e. Determine the viability of short courses and workshops based on the Twenty20 workshops on Governance, Administration, and Finance – Head of STS with Grassroots Coordinator – December 2013

4. Develop the research centre

i. Launch the Australian Lutheran Institute for Theology and Ethics (ALITE)

Launched in 2012, ALITE is now operational and preparing for its first projects.

Target:

- a. Complete planning of processes and provision of documentation for project proposals and approvals – Director of ALITE with the ALITE Steering Committee – July 2013

ii. Deliver meaningful research for the church and its ministries

Targets:

- a. Establish short term research projects

ALITE has offered a series of short term grants to attract research proposals. 4–5 of these moving to possible approval in the first quarter of 2013.

- b. Attract longer term research projects

As an example for 2013–14 LEA has injected funds to engage a full time research officer for two years.

iii. Organise a research-based conference in conjunction with the 2017 Luther celebrations

Targets:

- a. Consult with LCA and other stakeholders about the desirability and potential nature of a conference in the 'Luther Decade' – Director of ALITE with Principal – December 2013
- b. Plan and implement Conference – Director of ALITE with Principal – December 2015

5. Strengthen ALC's financial base

i. Develop financial clarity

Target:

- a. Financial transparency in all ALC's financial systems and reporting – Business Manager – completed 2012/13
- b. A financial model that will provide ongoing support for ALC's learning and teaching program – Principal and Business Manager, with Finance Committee – December 2014

ii. Grow income streams

Ideally the best way to grow the income of ALC is to increase student numbers. Strenuous attempts are being made to do this, particularly through the School of Theological Studies and Grassroots Training. These strategies have been embedded in the Strategic Plan since 2009. In addition to these the following strategies will be pursued:

Targets:

- a. Signed memorandum of understanding with LEA that identifies funding sources for the provision of services in the training and development of teachers and educational leaders – see 8.1.v.a – Principal with Head of SET – December 2013
- b. Agreement with the Lutheran Church of Australia that specifies funding for the training of pastors, teachers and lay workers, as well as other functions of ALC – Principal with Leadership Team and Heads of Schools – December 2014
- c. Similar models of funding for services across all stakeholders – respective heads of schools and 'relationship managers' – ongoing

iii. Examine alternate sources of funding / income generation

Targets:

- a. Replace the potential loss of income through the loss of the current boarding operation – Business Manager and Principal – December 2015
- b. Use project based fundraising, and develop a 'menu' of ongoing projects to attract larger donors – Principal and Business Manager, with Board of Directors – December 2013