

Australian Lutheran College

Where love comes to life through learning

Strategic Direction 2017-2022

Our Vision and Mission

The vision of Australian Lutheran College (ALC), as the theological education and research institution of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA), is to see God's love in Christ coming to life through preparing God's servants – pastors, teachers, church workers and volunteers of all kinds – to serve and lead with confident Christian faith, integrity, competence and compassion in a diverse and changing denomination and world.

To meet that vision ALC's mission is to provide:

- theological education and research for vocation and life, with an emphasis on vocational formation of people to meet the needs of church and world in a post-modern society no longer literate in the Christian faith;
- opportunities for growth, education and training for pre-vocational, vocational and post-vocational needs that include Certificate IV, Diploma, Bachelor, Masters, and Doctoral studies;
- church life research to inform the LCA and the broader community.

The history of Lutheran vocational training and formation in Australia dates back to 1838 when Lutherans arrived in Australia. Following the formation of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) in 1966 (when the two former synods – the ELCA and the UELCA – joined) three training institutions emerged: Luther Seminary, Lutheran Teachers College and Lay Training Centre. Eventually these three were merged into Luther Seminary. Its name changed to the current Australian Lutheran College in 2003. In 2005 ALC was registered with the government as a Higher Education Provider. In 2010 it established Vocational Training and Education (VET) qualifications. ALC's VET partner is the Australian Centre for Advanced Studies. In 2010 ALC joined the University of Divinity, an ecumenical higher education institution, in order to provide undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate degree programs.

Throughout this journey the LCA has continued to maintain and financially support ALC as part of its constitution:

3.1.5 provide pastors and teachers and other church workers for service in the Church and its congregations, and for this purpose to establish and maintain institutions for their training.

Challenges facing ALC

Both the LCA and the world have changed. Some of these changes are reflected below:

Indicator	1993	2011	2016
Baptised members	100,051	67,131	32,964
Attendance at Sunday service	43,380	28,722	15,643
Offering-plate donations (\$)	22,854,807	29,758,854	18,225,622
Pastors ordained per year	10	8	6
Students in Lutheran schools	18,285	38,289	40,201
Lay workers trained per year	26	151	11*

*Note: this figure only takes into account Lay workers who have completed accredited training through ALC – it does not include Lay workers who have attended workshop-based training provided by ALC.

The LCA expressed its priorities in these changing circumstances in its Strategic Direction 2013-2018 document, one of the key guiding documents in developing ALC's strategic direction. ALC must change in order to meet expectations in a financially sustainable way, both challenging internal structures and assumptions, and developing new ways of acting. The changes must also take into account major changes to government policy and the education sector in relation to universities, TAFE, fee support and registered training providers.

ALC's expectation is to see God's love in Christ coming to life as it equips and nurtures students as lifelong learners to serve and lead with integrity, competence and compassion in a diverse and changing church and world.

Our Values

Lutheran Character

As Lutherans we believe that we are saved 'by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith'. In other words, there is nothing we can do to earn God's favour or to gain eternal life. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ has won all this and more for us.

As the LCA states, we therefore serve our mission by being:

- Confessional:** believing the bible to be the Word of God and therefore 'the only source and norm for all matters of faith, doctrine and life', and the Lutheran confessions as true expositions of it.
- Evangelical:** proclaiming that we are justified by God's grace, for Christ's sake, through faith.
- Sacramental:** recognising that God serves us through the preaching of law and gospel, and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- Missional:** responding to God's desire that all people know and believe the gospel
- Ecumenical:** recognising 'the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church' and promoting Christian unity and witness
- Synodical:** walking together with the Lutheran Church of Australia and serving its objects.

Educational and Organisational Character

In addition to those values stated in the LCA Strategic Directions, ALC holds the following further values in service of its mission:

- Creative adaptation to assure better service, educationally-based leadership and financial viability;
- Decision-making focused on those we serve across Australia, New Zealand and Asia as higher priority than the comfort of historic continuity of internal structure, courses or teaching methods;
- Education built on principles of life-long adult learning, critical thinking and reflection, and flexibility in delivery options;
- Professional educational organisation that plans, evaluates and reports on the basis of evidence, including evidence of financial viability.

Our Priorities and Strategies in Education and Research

This statement of strategic direction from ALC's Board of Directors provides the Principal and Leadership Team with priorities for action over the coming 5 years. Implementation of some direction has already begun as essential to the desired financial viability and organisational flexibility.

Equipping people for service in the church and the world

Moving forward, ALC will:

1. work with others in the LCA to define explicit competencies for pastors, lay workers and others studying courses at all levels with ALC;
2. establish specific numbers of students desired in programs, consistent with fiscal needs, and work toward achieving and maintaining those numbers;
3. partner with others (e.g. congregations, schools, aged care services) to form Centres of Learning and Innovation, with the possibilities of co-located adjunct lecturers and shared relevant research;
4. maintain an intentional international role, including partnerships with international theological institutions and serve international students;
5. refine the curriculum and courses to ensure that they meet this strategic direction;
6. develop quality assurance methods that measure teaching, research and student outcomes toward the identified ALC purpose and goals.

Exploring, understanding and discussing contemporary church life questions and issues

As it moves forward, ALC will:

1. expand its research program to ask questions about what it means to be Lutheran in the contemporary world;
2. look outward, engaging with other ways of looking at the world and being in ecumenical partnership with other churches and other parts of the wider community;
3. enable people within the church or its institutions who have a passion, an interest or a curiosity about particular questions and issues to pursue further knowledge;
4. develop a network of people with research skills and expertise to support exploring, understanding and dialoguing contemporary church life questions and issues through building research capacity together.

Listening and responding in partnership to the LCA and its needs and aspirations

As a partner, ALC will:

1. listen to the whole church appreciatively, both in the traditional points of LCA life and the newer emerging ones;
2. strengthen existing partnerships (including LCA College of Bishops, Lutheran Education Australia, other LCA departments);
3. cultivate new partnerships (including Lutheran Aged Care and Community Care);
4. identify ways that participation in the University of Divinity can inform, strengthen and expand our thinking.

Using evidence as a basis for decision-making

As a standard for action, ALC will:

1. require evidence for planning, evaluating and reporting in all phases of ALC life;
2. develop transparent performance data and accountability mechanisms including data for staff time use, student numbers, costs, expenses and stakeholder feedback;
3. make explicit the benefits and costs of being a member of the University of Divinity.

Communicating well with all stakeholders about where ALC is going and why

In order to inform those interested, ALC will:

1. ensure an ongoing flow of information to staff and students on anticipated and implemented changes;
2. provide regular information to all parts of the LCA, its congregations and institutions;
3. develop communication channels with the wider community and other partners including the University of Divinity.

Implementing good governance that can manage well and manage change well

It will be the responsibility of the ALC Board to:

1. function as a Board of governance, delegating management to the Principal;
2. maintain an open channel of communication with the leadership structure of the LCA including the General Church Council (GCC) to facilitate understanding of changes as they occur;
3. have policies for Board processes, the Board–Principal relationship, delegations and limitations, and will focus on this strategic direction (what it wants ALC to achieve);
4. establish budgets and hold the Principal accountable for meeting budgetary expectations;
5. require the Principal and Leadership Team to put in place a change management plan and report to the Board regularly on progress;
6. require the Principal and Leadership Team to support an internal culture that is open to change and continuously learning about and implementing improved approaches to meet the desired strategic direction.

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Adopted by the Board of Directors, 13 April 2017