



# COMPASSIONATE & DIVERSE NATION

## WELCOMING AS A MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY

We recognise that we are a nation of diverse cultures, languages, faiths, ethnic groups and experiences. We celebrate and value the strength of this diversity and hope to see it reflected in our leaders, key decision makers, institutions, industry, sports and media.

We seek to be a compassionate nation, where every person is treated fairly and made to feel welcome and safe – regardless of their country of origin or mode of arrival. We seek to act with courage and conviction to build a just and peaceful world; To train up global citizens who uphold human rights everywhere, acting in the best interests of all people and the planet.

Our desire is to show Christ's love in action,  
in a world that is groaning for redemption.

## OUR HOPES

- That a person's race, religion or cultural background is no barrier to them living, working and participating as an equal member of society.
- That all people will experience the same rights and can play the role they wish, free from preconceptions, stereotypes and discrimination.
- That society's diversity is celebrated.
- That people who come to Australia – either as migrants, refugees or people seeking asylum – are treated equally and fairly.
- That our fair and compassionate treatment of people who seek safety on our shores reflects a compassionate and caring nation.

## A BIBLICAL MANDATE

- The laws of the covenant regularly require Israel to make room for those who come from outside Israel, to provide for their welfare, and to enable them to join the community and be subject to the same covenant (see for example: Exodus 12:48-49; Leviticus 18:26; 19:9-10, 33-34).
- The prophets pointed toward a future where those of other nations came to Israel, joining in harmony and worship of God (Isaiah 14:1; Micah 4:1-3).
- They also taught the vital importance of acting with mercy and compassion toward those within Israel who were in need (Isaiah 1:16-17; 3:13-15; 58:6-7), and that God answers the cries of the poor (Isaiah 41:17; Ezekiel 22:29-31; see also Luke 1:46-55).
- This call to compassion is echoed and indeed strengthened in Jesus' life and teaching (Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 6:20-25).
- The early church and the writers of the New Testament strongly picked up this theme of care for the needy in the lives of their community and in their own teaching (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; Hebrews 13:1-3; James 1:27; 1 John 4:19-21).

## THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Hospitality is a key biblical theme. It is often linked to receiving an unexpected blessing as the stranger who could be a threat, meets a deep need. The writer of Hebrews notes Abraham and Sarah's experience of welcoming strangers who turned out to be angels, and hints that we might have a similar experience (Genesis 18:1-15; Hebrews 13:2).

Sometimes openness to the other makes stretching demands. We are even to love our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48). Jesus redefined the idea of the neighbour, suggesting that the neighbour is anyone who needs our help (Luke 10:25-37) and reminds us that help is sometimes given by the one least expected to provide it (in the Luke 10 parable, the person from Samaria – an otherwise despised nation). Jesus takes this to a new level when he suggests that if we ignore the hungry, the stranger the sick and the imprisoned, we reject him (Matthew 25:41-45).

Our country is made up of people from many different cultures, languages and ethnic groups. Many have a long history in this land, others are newly arrived. Sometimes those most recently arrived come from harrowing experiences. There is no doubt that Jesus defines them as our neighbour.

## FOR DISCUSSION

- Is our school a community of welcome and embrace for people from many tribes and tongues, and how can we be better hosts?
- In the Bible, angels are often portrayed as messengers from God. In what way might students from different languages and cultural backgrounds be God's messengers (angels) to your school community?
- What role does your school play in building a compassionate and diverse nation? Should this be a priority for a Christian school?