

# Thinking Strategically in a Boarding Setting

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## Why?

- High compliance and operational nature of boarding
- Meeting National Boarding Standards (Audit)
- Mindset of Implementing best practice
- Small Market – changing market. Do you know your market?

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## This Session (takeaways)

- High talk from me (apologies) outlining the TSS Boarding strategic process
- Start process of thinking about your boarding offering NOW
- What is your school's broader strategic plan
- Get your staff/Principal/CFO involved in the process
- Earn the knowledge through a process – don't simply take from other cultures
- External consultant – Mark Vincent, Insight Plus
- How?

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## Feedback

- ABSA Audit
- Parental Survey- Open ended questions
- 1. List 3 to 5 things we are currently doing well in boarding
- 2. List 3 to 5 things we need to improve on

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## Start with a Think Tank

- Get the right people there
- Session 1 – working in designated groups
  - What do we do now that we do well?
  - What do we do now that we can improve?
  - What aren't we doing now that we could or should do?
- What areas can we be strategic about in Boarding?
  - Academics
  - Wellbeing
  - Induction and professional learning
  - Service and community
  - Physical facilities
  - Marketing and communication strategy

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## Start with a Think Tank

- Session 2 – Sharing of group work – 5-10 mins per group, must highlight new initiatives/ideas in this time. Present on butcher's paper
- Session 3 – Visiting and interacting with the six strategic areas  
Over an hour period, you will need to..
  - Write on post-it notes any further ideas you might have and stick on each groups presentations.
  - Using your 5 'sticky dots' what are the 5 best ideas worth pursuing across all areas?
  - Take a feedback card. On one side respond to "be sure to..." on the other side, "avoid..."

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# Forces working for and against us

## Restraining Forces

- Demands of family and boarding/other school roles
- Potential for boarding school in Brisbane
- Potential for complacency – crowding
- No real sense of service

## Driving Forces

- Highly competent staff – communication/role models
- Perceived as an authentic boarding school
- Purposeful marketing tool
- Culture among boarding masters
- Location – grounds (all on one campus)
- Sense of community
- Minimised boarding fee increases
- Agriculture prices
- Size of enrolment is providing sense of intimacy

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# TSS Boarding Strategic Priorities – 2017-2020

Academic tone	Strengthening the academic focus and level of achievement across the boarding community
Positive well-being	Promoting the positive well-being, mental health and personal capacity of both students and boarding staff
Induction and professional learning	Providing appropriate induction programs for students and staff and professional learning programs that increase the quality of support for boarders
Service and Community	Fostering a strong sense of community within TSS boarding and a desire for boarders themselves to make positive contributions to the Southport community and their local communities
Physical facilities	Ensuring that the boarding facilities are maintained at a standard expected of one of Australia's top 5 boarding schools
Relational marketing and communications strategy	Targeting specific markets using advocates and word-of-mouth to ensure ongoing enrolments, a strong reputation and greater awareness of the positive features of boarding at TSS

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## Strategic Priority – Academic Tone

Strategic priority	Critical questions	Projects
<b>Academic tone</b>  <b>Strengthening the academic focus and level of achievement across the boarding community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do we make prep homework time more effective?</li> <li>How do we use the budget allocated to prep to secure better outcomes?</li> <li>How can we make it an academic advantage to be a boarder?</li> <li>How do we improve academic tracking of boarders?</li> <li>How do we ensure all boarders have a realistic set plan that families and students buy into (i.e. no one goes under the radar)?</li> <li>How do we support academic boys in Years 11 and 12 (i.e. at higher end)?</li> </ul>	<p>A1. Incentives – Review and, if necessary, modify the concept of House diligence incentives and trophies to recognise and reward outstanding performance</p> <p>A2. Tutor groups – Investigate how specific tutor groups during prep sessions can be more effective in relation to core assessment items, and implement appropriate changes (A Team Tuition)</p> <p>A3. Study planning sessions – Create boarder study planning sessions for Year 7 and 8 boarders, to ensure new boarders have appropriate scaffolds to TSS learning management systems</p> <p>A4. Tracking – To monitor progress and to respond to emerging trends, further refine data tracking initiatives and implement improvements</p> <p>A5. Teacher liaison – Investigate formal liaison sessions between Year 7 staff and Prep teachers to better coordinate joint efforts to support those boys academically and pastorally</p> <p>A6. Budget allocation – Review current budget allocations and realign expenditure to ensure optimal returns and a higher level of academic outcomes</p> <p>A7. SET Plans – After consultation with staff and families, develop an approach to SET planning that all parties have 'buy' in to, and review the outcomes periodically to make further changes as required</p> <p>A8. Academic support for senior students – Design and implement a plan to further support academic students in Years 11 and 12 to ensure they make the most of their academic capability and opportunities at TSS</p>

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## Strategic Priority – Positive Well-being

Strategic priority	Critical questions	Projects
<b>Positive well-being</b>  <b>Promoting the positive well-being, mental health and personal capacity of both students and boarding staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are we doing to support boarding staff and families in the face of increasing boarding and family demands?</li> <li>How do we further build the collegial strength amongst boarding housemasters?</li> <li>How do we include spouses and wider family into the boarding community?</li> <li>How do we keep/retain quality boarding staff?</li> </ul>	<p>B1. Nutrition for well-being – Review, consult with and educate the residential community on diet and nutritional issues and design and implement a range of activities to support the program</p> <p>B2. Boarding families' well-being – To ensure that a positive culture exists among all families attached to our boarding community, evaluate their current perspectives on boarding life and implement initiatives in response to overall concerns about well-being and work/life balance</p> <p>B3. Standards audit – Conduct an independent audit of TSS's boarding standards against National Boarding Standards and implement recommendations as deemed necessary</p> <p>B4. Boarding Compliance Committee – Develop the criteria for an effective Compliance Committee (composition, charter and frequency of meetings) to ensure the mitigation of risks associated with boarding and boarding houses</p> <p>B5. Well-being days – Design and implement a series of activities that will engender collegiality and a stronger sense of family among all boarding staff members, their partners and children</p> <p>B6. Staff retention – In consultation with current staff, explore a variety of ways to enhance conditions and create a positive culture for staff and help retain quality people</p>

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# Strategic Priority – Induction and Professional Learning

Strategic priority	Critical questions	Projects
<p><b>Induction and professional learning</b></p> <p>Providing appropriate induction programs for students and staff and professional learning programs that increase the quality of support for boarders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do we induct new boarding staff into the school so that they feel part of the boarding community?</li> <li>How do we cater for residential masters and maximise their effectiveness in their duties?</li> <li>How do we induct in a consistent way, new boarders especially in the first 4 weeks of term – checklist perhaps?</li> <li>What are other boarding houses doing in terms of induction that can be shared (getting away from fieldom syndrome)?</li> </ul>	<p>C1. Duty of Care Program – Provide opportunities for all resident staff to complete training contained in Duty of Care Book 1 and 2, to ensure staff are aware of their obligations as boarding masters</p> <p>C2. Induction manuals – Design and publish manuals outlining procedures for the induction and orientation of new boarding students and staff so that they are familiar with the routines of boarding life in a timely manner</p> <p>C3. Survey feedback – Prepare and conduct an online survey of resident masters to gather feedback relating to duties and learning opportunities, and develop appropriate responses for future consideration</p> <p>C4. Annual Sharing Session – Facilitate a half-day workshop annually at which ideas and initiatives are explored and discussed, and the best of these are disseminated across all Houses for implementation</p> <p>C5. Boarding appraisal system – Review, and modify if required, the boarding appraisal system to ensure appropriate support mechanisms are more in place to improve processes and systems at TSS</p> <p>C6. ABSA conferences – In addition to regularly attending ABSA conferences, seek opportunities for staff to speak at those and similar events internationally to demonstrate that TSS is a leader in this sector of education</p>

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# Strategic Priority – Service and Community

Strategic priority	Critical questions	Projects
<p><b>Service and Community</b></p> <p>Fostering a strong sense of community within TSS boarding and a desire for boarders themselves to make positive contributions to the Southport community and their local communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do we further instil a sense of service in our boarders?</li> <li>In what format should service take place – house, year group?</li> <li>What can boarders be doing for the Southport community?</li> </ul>	<p>D1 Boarder-day boy gap – Investigate strategies that will bring groups of day boys and boarders more closely together (without diluting the strong sense of identity amongst boarders) to overcome misconceptions and to widen friendships among boys of different backgrounds and bring families together</p> <p>D2 Culture of ‘attending to the small things’ – To maintain high standards and exemplary levels of behaviour, design a range of programs and activities focused on etiquette, courtesy and dress standards</p> <p>D3 Service to the Southport community – In conjunction with Anglican churches and other civic organisations in Southport, design and implement a program of activities to lift TSS’s profile in the local community and increase the boarding school’s reputation as a good corporate citizen</p>

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## Strategic Priority – Physical Facilities

Strategic priority	Critical outcomes	Projects
<p><b>Physical facilities</b></p> <p>Ensuring that the boarding facilities are maintained at a standard expected of one of Australia's top 5 boarding schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the market leaders in physical facilities in boarding, from a boarding house/dorm/dining hall perspective?</li> <li>Who can we learn from</li> <li>What can be done in terms of dining facilities?</li> </ul>	<p>E1. Learning from the leaders – Identify those boarding schools whose facilities are considered at the leading edge, visit those schools and compile a list of recommendations for consideration by the Headmaster and School Council</p> <p>E2. Dining facilities – in line with the project outlined above, develop a range of initiatives that will enhance the dining experience for the boarders – menu, amenities, dining formats</p> <p>E3. Maintenance schedule – Maintain a prioritised program of upkeep that will keep all boarding facilities at a level in line with Australia's top 10 boarding schools</p>

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## Strategic Priority – Relational Marketing and Communication Strategy

Strategic priority	Critical questions	Projects
<p><b>Relational marketing and communications strategy</b></p> <p>Targeting specific markets using advocates and word-of-mouth to ensure ongoing enrolments, a strong reputation and greater awareness of the positive features of boarding at TSS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do we enhance the relational marketing strategy?</li> <li>How can we deepen our penetration in core markets?</li> <li>Where are the new, emerging boarding markets?</li> </ul>	<p>F1. Boarding communication – Biannually (perhaps through apparent survey) review all boarding communications to ensure consistency in messages and presentation, and to align communication format, platforms and frequency with parents' expectations</p> <p>F2. Demographic analysis – Improve the process for researching boarding trends and potential enrolments at TSS and for identifying emerging markets and opportunities</p> <p>F3. Annual events calendar – at the end of each year, formulate a unique program of events and functions designed to stay in touch with current families, extend relationships with past families and reach out to prospective families</p>

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## Milestones and Markers

By 2020 it is expected that the following outcomes will have been achieved:

- a more deliberate academic program tailored to smaller groups that monitor throughout the year
- new boarders and boarding staff better inducted
- a greater sense of boarding community – more spouse family involvement
- a better culture of service – i.e. a culture of service in boarding
- physical facilities enhanced, especially dining hall and food offerings.