New schools opening
MacKillop Catholic College, MOUNT PETER P24
St Joseph’s Parish School, WEIPA P5
More than 1,500 Year 5 to 12 students from Cairns Catholic and State schools, along with hundreds of people from the general community, showed their support against bullying, harassment and discrimination by participating in the Courage to Care Exhibition.

The exhibition, held at the Secilie Mercy Conference Centre, Earlville, was brought to Cairns by Catholic Education from August 14 to September 11.

“The attendance at the exhibition exceeded our expectations,” said Catholic Education’s Assistant Executive Director Identity and Mission, Colin Harvey.

“We had 33 groups from 22 schools go through the exhibition and, combined with the students (Years 5-12) and adults, over 2,000 people were moved by it.

“I think it really spoke to the hearts of participants.”

The Courage to Care Exhibition, which has been shown to more than 190,000 people in Australia including 80,000 students, but the first time in the far north, has Holocaust survivors telling their rescue stories and how small acts of kindness bestowed upon them made an enormous difference and helped them to survive.

The exhibition helps spread the message of anti-bullying and anti-racism and promotes a message of tolerance.

“I think it had an impact on not only the students and adults from the schools that attended but also on the wider community here in Cairns,” Mr Harvey said.

“Hearing the Holocaust survivors’ accounts first hand was an exceptional way of bringing their stories to life and a brilliant way of delivering the message that if we see any form of prejudice behaviour - discrimination, bullying or harassment, then we need to take a stand as individuals.”

Mr Harvey said the exhibition fitted perfectly with the Catholic schools’ Religious Education, English, History and Geography curriculums and said teachers will be following up the theme in their classrooms, combining the exhibition’s information with their schools’ initiatives on reducing school bullying.

“The overriding message is all about standing up for what you think is right,” Mr Harvey said.

“It fitted in so well with our Catholic identity of who we are and with our Catholic ethos.

“I think it impacted across a broad aspect of people because bullying, discrimination and prejudice are still very much a part of our lives today, and I think this sort of program is just a reminder to keep an eye on that and do everything you can to do to stop it.”

In this issue

Courage to stand up for what’s right 2
Positive in the face of adversity 3
Affordability no obstacle to enrolment 5
Demand strong for Weipa school 5
Respecting culture together 6
Celebration of cultural diversity reaps rewards 7
Helping staff gain formal qualifications 8
Leaders learn what works in schools 9
The challenge for schools to be relevant 9
Aspirational despite hearing loss 10

Aiming to be best example 11
Enrolment Guide to Catholic Schools and Colleges in the Cairns Diocese 13
Pedalling for a cause 14
Helping teens make positive choices 14
Re-engaging troubled youth 15
Principal with a difference 16
Student wellbeing key to success 17
Students have a hand in student protection 17
Religious continue to influence 18

Remotest school rejuvenates 19
Not always easy moving on 20
Art as a window to understanding cultural identity 21
Fitting Minds, Igniting Hearts, Serving Others 22
Mark leaves his mark with AFL legacy 22
Schools confront the globalisation of superficiality 23
MacKillop on track for 2016 opening 24
A flow-on from the Courage to Care exhibition, Courage to Care ‘Local Hero’, Carol Mayer has conducted a series of follow up visits to many of the area’s Catholic Schools.

The schools requested the visit by Carol to share her message of resilience, hope and being positive in the face of adversity.

Courage to Care recognises a local hero whenever the exhibition visits a new location – someone in the community who has the courage to care.

In Cairns, local burns victim Carol Mayer was selected. Carol went through a terrible time and now uses her story to inspire others.

“She’s come out of it really courageous because she made a decision not to be a victim, but be grateful and help other people,” Catholic Education’s Principal Education Officer Student Wellbeing, Gary Hall said.

“Now she’s involved in many organisations to help other people like herself and shows her gratitude for what Cairns did for her and her family.”

Carol’s visits are voluntary apart from the schools giving a gold coin donation to the Julian Burton Burns Trust for which Carol is the ambassador.

“When you are first burnt, you enter a dark place, a dark hole, and it’s a long journey to fitting back into society... you can either lie down and die, or try and step up,” Carol said.

“I try to encourage people dealing with all levels of struggle not to sink in to that black hole.”

Ms Mayer’s battle to survive was an amazing journey driven by acceptance, love and an extraordinary appreciation for life, Gary said.

“Carol spoke to students of how giving back to others has been her medicine and urged us all to appreciate and treasure what we have and to encourage and help each other in times of adversity.”

Positive in the face of adversity

“I try to encourage people dealing with all levels of struggle not to sink in to that black hole”

What adults had to say

“Information relevant to our society today, across all generations. Connection of historical stories to actions that we can take to care about others.”

“The session was truly wonderful. The presenters were wonderful. The message was subtle. The displays were well presented and powerful. We had much food for thought. Each person in their own quiet way can make a difference. This is ‘too good to miss.’

“I will try to be more aware of others, their needs and be kind, courteous, loving, and non-judgemental.”

Queensland Catholic Education Commission Executive Director, Dr Lee-Anne Perry (3rd from left) was visiting Cairns during the Courage to Care Exhibition and got to meet Holocaust survivors, Egon Sonnenschein, Lilly Wolf and Halina Robinson.

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Affordability no obstacle to enrolment

Families wanting a Catholic education for their child have always been able to apply for fee concessions in the case of genuine financial hardship. That process is being formalised and made easier by the introduction of a trial tuition fee discount in 2016 for holders of means-tested health care and pensioner concession cards.

As part of the Church’s mission to give priority to the poor and disadvantaged, no child is denied a Catholic education based on financial difficulty. “This philosophy needs to be finally balanced with the need for Catholic schools to charge fees, yet our schools strive to keep fees and levies as low as possible so that more families can choose a Catholic education for their children,” said Executive Director of Catholic Education Cairns, Bill Dixon.

In 2016, holders of eligible and current health care or pensioner concession cards will be entitled to a 70% discount on tuition fees upon verification of the card by the school office. “There is no additional requirements for further information or interviews which makes it an easier process both for the family and the school,” said Mr Dixon.

The need to charge fees stems from the lower government funding provided per student compared with the funding provided per student receiving an education in a government school. “Even when school fees paid by parents are taken into account, Catholic schools, on average, operate with only about 90 per cent of the income per student of government schools, meaning Catholic schools have to operate more efficiently and consistently achieve more with less,” Mr Dixon said.

“The shortfall between the basic costs of running a school and the amount funded by governments is what necessitates a reasonable fee structure so that Catholic schools can operate and provide the high quality of education that they are known for and that parents rightly expect.”

New or existing parents who find themselves in a situation of genuine financial difficulty and who do not hold a concession card, are still encouraged to discuss fee concessions directly with the school principal.

“Every family’s application for fee concession will be treated with understanding, sensitivity and confidentiality, however the process requires full disclosure to determine whether the family’s financial circumstances meet the criteria for additional support. The process looks at family income, the number of dependents and the family’s cost of housing (rental or mortgage),” Mr Dixon said.

“It is imperative that families with the capacity to contribute do so, so that as near as possible to full realisation of this income source can be achieved. “It is the experience of our schools that families who are struggling financially are faithful in paying a contribution to their local school to whatever extent they can afford. “For those who genuinely can’t afford to pay, fee concessions will hopefully remove that barrier to enrolment. The concession card discount applies to tuition fees and not to school levies and charges. The cards must be eligible and current, and list as dependents the students for whom the discount is sought. Families wishing to apply for the discount should contact the school or college to determine eligibility.

Further information on School Fee Discounts and Cairns Catholic Education’s Enrolment Policy can be found on the Catholic Education website at www.cns.catholic.edu.au or at any Catholic school.

Demand strong for Weipa school

The new $6.15 million St Joseph’s Parish School in Weipa, on track to open in 2016, is attracting strong community support.

Originally slated to open with Prep to Year 3 initially, demand has necessitated the additional offering of a composite Year 4-6 class, until stage two is built and one class is offered in each year level in 2018.

“I’m absolutely thrilled with the response from the community,” Principal Rosie Harrison said.

“We’ve had a lot of interest hence we’re adding the Year 4-6 class.”

Principal Harrison said staff members for the new school are in place. Seven teachers, including Rosie and her Assistant Principal Religious Education Amanda Stewart, as well as two School Officers and administration staff have been hired. An eighth teacher is being recruited for the Year 4-6 class.

St Joseph’s is expecting between 80-85 students next year, she said. “We’ve been able to attract very experienced staff who all have at least a minimum of 10 years’ teaching experience. I feel really fortunate to have attracted such good-quality staff. “Another thing I emphasise to parents is the great investment that Cairns Catholic Education has made in the community, not only by providing a fabulous building that’s being set up to cater for 21st-century learning, but also by very generously staffing the school with experienced staff.”

St Joseph’s, the first Catholic school in Weipa, will have a number of learning areas all linked to a central library. The buildings are being constructed to a modern, high-quality standard and have been designed for full IT connectivity with airconditioned operations during all four terms.

“The building is state-of-the-art, up there with any new buildings located in the middle of Brisbane,” said Ms Harrison, who has been hands-on in Weipa since Term 3 to help oversee the school’s development and liaise with the community.

There will also be a large undercover activities area as well as a tuckshop and uniform shop.

“The day and sports uniforms have been designed and excitement is building.

A temporary office has been established at Shop 1 Memorial Square, Central Avenue, Weipa. Those interested in enrolling can drop in, call 4069 9500 or email office.weipa@cns.catholic.edu.au

This initiative will be well-received by a small community such as Babinda. It will give parents the option of enrolling in a Catholic school when this option might otherwise not have been possible. The concession will help families who might be struggling with the present economy.”

Judy Billiau
Principal, St Rita’s School, Babinda
Respecting culture together

When Our Lady Help of Christians Year 2 teacher Glennys Maugeri was in primary school more than 30 years ago, the same school she teaches at today, her Aboriginal heritage was not acknowledged nor spoken about.

Glennys was in a minority back then, being one of only four Indigenous students in OLHOC at that time. And when NAIDOC Week is celebrated in the Cairns Catholic schools and throughout the community today, she can’t help but smile and feel proud.

“It was very hard back then because being Indigenous wasn’t talked about,” she said. “I knew I was of Aboriginal descent, but it wasn’t spoken about at school or even at home. You just didn’t talk about it.

“You didn’t have the books or the teacher knowledge that you do today. Asian and Chinese cultures were spoken about, but our own Australian culture wasn’t spoken about at all.”

Today’s schools are vastly different as Indigenous history and culture are now part of the Australian curriculum and NAIDOC Week celebrations are held throughout the schools.

Cairns Catholic schools celebrated the 2015 event with dance, food, art, culture and exhibitions where students, teachers, families and school communities joined in.

This year’s theme: ‘We all stand on sacred ground: learn, respect, celebrate’ gave Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students an opportunity to share their rich histories and cultures with fellow students, family and school communities.

“It’s important to celebrate NAIDOC Week because we learn from our Indigenous people,” Mrs Maugeri said. “We also respect the ground that we stand on, their sacred ground, and we respect their stories. NAIDOC Week is when we celebrate all these things and we all come together as Indigenous and non-Indigenous.”

Jude Koehler, Indigenous Liaison Officer at Herberton’s Mount St Bernard College, said the college had huge participation at its recent NAIDOC Day celebrations where families travelled long distances to join the students and college in the activities. About half of the college’s 224 students are Indigenous, coming from communities like Cape York, the Gulf of Carpentaria, the Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea.

“It’s a big day here where everyone celebrates their living culture,” she said.

“One of our student’s fathers drove six hours from Aurukun with bully beef and cooked it for everyone. Other families flew in to help with weaving, dancing, singing and other cultural activities.”

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School on Thursday Island also has a large cohort of Indigenous students from throughout the Torres Strait and NAIDOC Week celebrations are always a big event.

“The Torres Strait Islander histories and culture are proudly represented at our school, Principal Sharon County said. “It is significant to us to continue to strengthen an awareness of the local culture and explicitly teach the children and staff so that they, too, are aware of the cultural perspectives that our community holds so close to their hearts.”

Mrs Maugeri is thrilled that schools have come a long way since the days when her heritage wasn’t spoken about or acknowledged.

“We have Aboriginal art in our classrooms today and hearing Aboriginal stories is common now,” she said.

“It’s wonderful that it’s being respected now.”

Aboriginal Boomerang Painting: Mount St Bernard students Sarah Ludwick, Shakira Deeral, Vida Poatchemunika and Collis Nona work on boomerangs for the college’s NAIDOC celebrations.

Contemporary dancing: Participating in the Mount St Bernard NAIDOC celebrations include, clockwise from left, Monique David-Mosby, Jurita Waia, Walter Enosa, Matilda Warria, Elizabeth Thaiday and Rizah Mene.

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Winning all three categories in the Cairns Festival Grand Parade Float Competition was a significant achievement for the entire school community at St Joseph's Primary School, Cairns.

Students, teachers, parents and families spent three months designing the school float, which won Best Overall Float, Best School Float and the People's Choice awards at the annual parade.

“We were absolutely thrilled,” said St Joseph's APRE Janet Zaccour. “The parent committee and many families, led by Jo La Spina, worked tirelessly to design and construct the animals, music and decorations for the float.”

The float celebrated the school’s cultural diversity by including an iconic animal from each of the seven continents as well as 32 flags representing the school’s students’ varied countries of origin.

Not only did the winning entry acknowledge and celebrate its students’ cultural links, it also celebrated its strong Catholic faith.

“The majority of the construction of the float and the animals were from recycled materials, keeping with the Catholic teaching of service to community, respect and care for the earth’s resources,” Ms Zaccour said.

“The 390 hands that held up the globe were made by students to show how our relationship with the earth and all forms of life are interrelated.

“As Pope Francis points out: ‘Human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely interwoven relationships – with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself.’

The $7000 prize money will be used by the P&F committee to improve and support many new school initiatives and classroom resources.
Helping staff gain formal qualifications

Recognising the tremendous influence non-teaching staff have in schools and helping them gain formal recognition is the impetus behind Catholic Education’s new Growing our People strategy.

“Non-teaching staff make up about half of our workforce, and they’re an essential part of our workforce,” said Catholic Education’s Director Leadership and Professional Learning, Vicki Bell.

“It’s an opportunity for them to gain formal qualifications that will enhance their capacity to assist students in our Catholic schools to reach their full potential.”

CES’s new initiative is offering non-teaching staff the opportunity to access Certificate III, Certificate IV and Diploma level courses in areas related to their work, offering certificate level courses in business, community services, disability, education support, basic health care and fitness.

“Our non-teaching staff might be very experienced in their roles with years of experience working with students, but they might not have any formal qualifications to recognise their expertise,” Ms Bell said.

“So what we want to do is create an opportunity for them to gain formal qualifications.

“These staff really are the backbone of our schools. They have a lot of experience and knowledge, and I think that for many of them formal qualifications will confirm what they already know well.

“It also gives them access to the latest educational research and tools, which benefits our students and our schools. It’s also about recognising the valuable contributions they make to student outcomes and student wellbeing.”

Catholic Education Services Executive Director Bill Dixon shows Susie Dickson, left, and Brigitte Pieri from Mother of Good Counsel School the new Growing our People strategy brochures.

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Leaders learn what works in schools

Cairns Catholic Education’s Executive Development for Educational Leaders project received a huge boost recently when five Cairns Catholic Education Services (CES) senior leaders and Principals attended a professional development Benchmark Tour to Los Angeles and Canada in conjunction with the Queensland Educational Leaders Institute and Brisbane Catholic Education.

“The Tour provided an opportunity for people who are leaders either in schools or systems to gain a deeper insight into what works in schools to help improve student achievement and wellbeing,” said CES Deputy Executive Director Diarmuid O’Riordan.

“We were fortunate that five out of the 23 people who attended this tour were from our Diocese, so we were well represented.”

“These five will be collaborating with others in driving a lot of the initiatives here within our Diocese, especially around the formation of a School Effectiveness Framework and the Diocesan Schools Leadership Framework.”

Mr O’Riordan and CES Assistant Executive Director Learning and Teaching Ursula Elms, Director Leadership and Professional Learning Vicki Bell, St Monica’s College Principal Kristen Sharpe and St Andrew’s College Principal Lee MacMaster joined 18 senior leaders on the tour, which was part of the Executive Development for Education Leaders professional learning program by Queensland Education Leadership Institute (QELI) and Brisbane Catholic Education.

“What an amazing experience to be part of a group of 23 educators from Australia visiting schools and system offices in the Los Angeles and Toronto jurisdictions,” said Principal Lee MacMaster.

“We had some great opportunities to see a variety of school types, to witness systems in action and the impact they were having on schools, to hear from world-renowned educationalists and to share great learning experiences and reflections with our travelling colleagues.”

“There are many take-home learnings from the trip, and over the coming weeks and months I will be sharing these learnings with staff at the College,” Principal Lee MacMaster said.

“It is essential for all schools that these frameworks are in alignment and a common and shared language is used in the framework documents.”

Mr O’Riordan said the tour and the new frameworks are designed to benefit students as well as staff.

“Cairns Catholic Education Services see that there are new opportunities with us being involved in partnerships with organisations like QELI and Brisbane Catholic Education, particularly to help develop our people and to ensure that we’re very much at the forefront of latest research and thinking in the whole area of system approaches to supporting schools,” said Mr O’Riordan.

“We do these things because we want to make sure that we’re doing everything we possibly can to improve the learning opportunities for our students.”

The project underlined Cairns Catholic Education’s commitment to enabling education leaders to support their teachers in creating great Catholic schools that ensure all students flourish and achieve success in their learning, he said.

The challenge for schools to be relevant

Catholic schools are being challenged to become more meaningful and relevant in the contemporary world and at the same time, strengthen their Catholic identity.

The main challenge facing the church today is to relearn how to communicate a deeper, more intelligent, more relevant religion that leads to a life of acceptance and love.

To start finding those answers, leadership from the Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton Dioceses and Brisbane Archdiocese travelled to Belgium in May to participate in a two week study intensive program at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, as part of the Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project.

This contemporary research-based strategy aims to investigate the current situation of Catholic schools and to examine how the school population sees the future of the school. School data is critiqued against the project’s preferred positions, and strategies for schools to enhance their Catholic identity are consequently developed.

Heading the Cairns contingent was Bishop James Foley and Vicar for Education, Fr Neil Muir. Catholic Education’s Executive Director Bill Dixon, Assistant Executive Director Identity and Mission Colin Harvey and Identity and Mission Senior Education Officer Toni Foley also attended.

Future study programs will include participants from school leadership teams who will engage in the two week course which investigates the theology behind the data collection and preferred school options. The study intensive exposes these adult learners to lectures on the Enhancing Catholic Identity Project’s theory and methodology, including many that present the deeply provocative theology that lies at the heart of the project.

Tasked with heading the project in Cairns schools, Ms Toni Foley said the world in which the modern Catholic School is now contextualised is vastly different and a more challenging setting than that of the past.

“Our schools operate in a complex, multi-modal, multi-cultural environment that is held at the same time in tension with a plethora of religious beliefs, socio-economic states and varying family compositions.

“It is also widely acknowledged that there are an increasing number of students and their families less engaged with formal life of the Church,” Ms Foley said.

“The Enhancing Catholic Identity project was initiated by the Victorian Catholic Education commission and the faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at Catholic University (KU), Leuven, Belgium to promote Catholic school dialogue as a project for challenging our schools to become meaningful and relevant in our contemporary world.”

Queensland consortium participants in the 2015 Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project intensive study program, KU Leuven gather in front of Maria-Theresia Theological College in Leuven, Belgium.
LIKE most seven year olds, St Michael’s Year 1 student Cale Gravagna loves chatting, playing with his friends, going to school and telling stories. Unlike most seven year olds, Cale was born with a profound hearing loss.

Also unlike most seven year olds, Cale was nominated to deliver a speech to the Prime Minister of Australia and 100 other politicians and guests at Parliament House in Canberra in August at the First Voice Power of Speech event.

Two children from each state in Australia and New Zealand, all cochlear implant recipients, were invited to speak at the prestigious event.

“He wasn’t really nervous giving his speech at Parliament House, which surprised us,” said his mother Donna.

“While we were waiting for his turn, because he was the sixth child to do his speech, he was pretty keen and kept asking me if it was his turn next. So, that was really good.

“I was a nervous wreck though. My husband John and I were holding our breaths the whole way through!”

Donna said Cale worked on his speech for two months, writing it, rewriting it and practising it.

“He had it pretty down pat,” she said.

Cale’s hearing loss was detected at birth through the Queensland New Born Hearing Screening and he was fitted with bilateral cochlear implants when he was seven months old. With the help of weekly speech therapy session at the Hear and Say Centre, Cale developed an excellent vocabulary.

Catholic Education’s Inclusion Education Teacher - Hearing Impairment, Geraldine Sorrell, said the opportunity was a credit to Cale, his family, the early intervention team and St Michael’s School staff.

“Cale’s teachers have done an excellent job of integrating current technologies into everyday teaching and learning,” she said.

“It goes to show, with the right supports in place, students with significant hearing loss can be aspirational.

“It’s great to see a child with such a significant hearing loss doing so well at school.”

Donna and John are “extremely proud of our boy”.

“It was an amazingly special moment for our family,” Donna said. “We were all there, including his sister Evie, grandmother, aunt and uncle, to witness this wonderful achievement.

“We are so fortunate that today children like Cale have every opportunity in life to succeed.”

Today, Cale is reading and writing at the same level as his peers, his pronunciation is clear and he loves to talk.

“When I was seven months old I was the first baby boy in Queensland to get two cochlear implants at the same time,” Cale said in his speech to then Prime Minister Tony Abbott.

“When I was switched on I looked at Ma and smiled because I heard her talk for the very first time. Ma cried! The next day when my other processor got switched on, it was too noisy so I cried!”

Proud parents John and Donna Gravagna and sister Evie were thrilled with Cale’s speech to then Prime Minister Tony Abbott at Parliament House.

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Aiming to be best example

WHILE St Augustine’s Mossman new Principal Paul Rayner has been an educator for years, including being Assistant Principal, Mission and Staff Well-Being at St Mary’s Catholic College for four years, he says his latest role is a whole new learning curve for him.

Not only is he making the transition from being a high school teacher to being a primary school principal, he is also adjusting to working in a smaller school environment.

“Making the transition from secondary to primary is bit of a jump,” he said. “The challenges of teenage students, puberty and what comes along with that are things you don’t see at a primary level.

“These young students have big smiles, lots of laughter, a joy of learning and they just love being at school. There’s an innocence and a freshness from them and their joy, their love of learning and being a part of the school community.”

St Augustine’s School Mossman has over 180 students, 11 teachers, a teacher librarian and 10 school officers, compared to his former school St Mary’s, which has more than 800 students and a much larger teaching and support staff.

“You have to be across so many more things as a principal of a smaller school,” Mr Rayner said. “Whereas a principal in a large school delegates responsibilities to the teachers and staff, at a smaller school you don’t have the same staff numbers, so you are the go-to person.

Mr Rayner started in his new role at the beginning of Term 3. He lives in Cairns and enjoys the commute to work each day.

“I love the drive up the coast, looking out across the Coral Sea and listening to the radio. I love the view and the peace and quiet going to and from work.”

And he loves being at a smaller school.

“Because it’s a smaller school community, there’s an intimacy that exists,” he said.

“The school is small enough that you can get to know all of the students, but it’s also a large enough population that it’s able to get a large number of resources to be resourced adequately.”

The school was built in 1934 by the Sisters of Mercy and is next door to the Parish and its priest Karel Duivenvoorden, who visits the school regularly.

Mr Rayner’s plans for the school include making it the best example of a Cairns Diocese Catholic school, which he believes is “a quality education factoring on the five focus areas of academic development, physical development, social learning, emotional learning and spiritual growth”.

“With a large number of Aboriginal students in the community, I also have a vision to connect and engage in the local Aboriginal heritage and knowledge of the area and incorporate that into school life,” he said.

“Mossman has a strong Aboriginal community and I want the students at our school to be part of that and have a sense of pride of who they are and what they are and to be the beacons that allow their stories to be alive in our school.”

Teaching in a cultural context was highlighted when St Augustine’s students recently participated in a Connecting to Country Art Exhibition where they created Indigenous art objects including pottery, weaving, sculptures, books, games and posters. The exhibition was held in the Douglas Shire Council and opened by Mayor Cr Julia Leu.

“The children were very engaged in this learning process,” said teacher Debbie Rasmussen. “The cultural context is really important. They feel ownership of their learning and are so proud of what they have done.”

“That’s one way that we’ve created engagement of Aboriginal knowledge in the school,” Mr Rayner added.

“Next year we’re very keen to explore language and culture within the classrooms as part of the Australian curriculum, so this Aboriginal knowledge isn’t just developed for the Aboriginal students but it goes right across the school community so all students get access to that knowledge and that learning.”

Mr Rayner is excited about his new role at the school and moving it forward from strength to strength.

“In my short time here, I have seen that the staff are extremely committed, positive and go the extra mile for the students,” he said.

“It’s a happy cheerful place, and I think everyone is just so positive, enthusiastic and proud of their school, and I look forward to many happy years being a part of this community.”

Mossman has a strong Aboriginal community and I want the students at our school to be part of that and have a sense of pride of who they are..."
Enrolment Guide to Catholic Schools and

Our Primary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Offering</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Enrolment Information</th>
<th>Specialties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atherton St Joseph’s School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>Cnr Alice &amp; Jack St, PO Box 829</td>
<td>Rev Michael Lindsay</td>
<td>Prep enrolments Term 1, 2 and 3 for following year. Applications any time, subject to vacancy and interview. Contact Annette Born.</td>
<td>Instrumental music specialist, specialist HPE and LOTE P-9. Strong community &amp; Parish links. Emphasis on Social Emotional Learning and student &amp; parent partners. A caring environment that values family and developing the whole person inspired by Jesus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babinda St Rita’s School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>7-13 Church St, PO Box 363</td>
<td>Judy Billau</td>
<td>Prep enrolments Term 3 for following year. All other enrolment applications welcome at any time. Vacancies in all year levels. Contact Judy Billau, Debbie Kunarz or Lisa Calcagno.</td>
<td>A small school with a big heart! Small class sizes allow for differentiated learning with teachers working in partnership with families. A strong emphasis is placed on values and Social and Emotional Learning. Specialist teachers in Health, Physical Education and LOTE across Prep – Year 6. Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Gardening and cooking program, instrumental music program by tuition and school choir foster the development of the whole child. ICT is integrated into all learning areas with students having 1:1 access to iPads and Chromebooks to develop life-long learning skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bentley Park St Therese’s School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>135-167 Robert Rd, PO Box 529</td>
<td>Kevin Browning</td>
<td>Prep enrolments open start of Term 4 and close on 30 November 2015. All other applications welcome throughout the year, subject to vacancy and interview. Contact Vera Skinnert.</td>
<td>Students strive to excel through heart, spirit and mind, experiencing learning opportunities that inspire, challenge and equip students with the knowledge, skills and values for success within the 21st Century. Emphasis on core skills and understanding integrating innovative ICT to prepare students for the world of tomorrow. Students gain a strong sense of social and ethical issues of the modern world by developing a sense of service to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimbulah St Anthony’s School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>3 Hyde St, PO Box 128</td>
<td>Brad Williams</td>
<td>Enrolment applications any time of the year. Prep interviews Term 3 for the following year. Vacancies in all year levels. Contact Brad Williams.</td>
<td>We promote Social Emotional Learning and foster a love of learning. A small community school with a huge place. Emphasis on foundations, learning for life, mutual respect and social justice. Small class sizes allow for more personalised teaching and learning. HPE and IT are major curriculum focuses along with extensive literacy and numeracy programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earlville Our Lady of Help School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>12 Balacalava Rd</td>
<td>Luke Brown</td>
<td>Limited vacancies across year levels. Applications for Prep – Y6 considered throughout the year, subject to vacancy and interview. Contact Madalena Sneyd.</td>
<td>A caring, inclusive community that provides Social Emotional Learning, Instrumental Music program, Language Lessons, strong focus on Literacy &amp; Numeracy and Anti Bullying programs. OLHOC is committed to preparing students for the 21st Century.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordonvale St Michael’s School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>58 Mill St, PO Box 64</td>
<td>Lea Martin</td>
<td>Prep – Terms 1 &amp; 2 for following year, anytime for other year levels. Vacancies in all year levels. Contact Justine Hind or Donna Gawley.</td>
<td>Small school with country, family atmosphere. Specialist in the arts, school football and netball teams, instrumental teachers for private tuition, strong Social Emotional Learning focus, peers support program, chess club and environmental clubs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innisfail Good Counsel Primary School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>96 Ranken St</td>
<td>Liam Kenny</td>
<td>Enrolment enquiries welcome any time. Prep Terms 3 &amp; 4 for following year. Limited vacancies P-6. Contact Liam Kenny (Principal) or Annette Dunne (Secretary).</td>
<td>Value strong partnerships with families &amp; encourage building of relationships within caring and safe learning community. Specialist teachers in Performing Arts &amp; HPE (Prep – Y6). Student Council (Y5-6), Social Emotional Learning, Performing Arts &amp; HPE (Prep – Y6). Student Council (Y5-6). Mini Vinnies Chapters provide leadership opportunities. Camps - Y6 Longreach, Y5 Chillagoe Excursions - YA Herbertson, all other classes local excursions. Strong sporting and cultural involvement District &amp; Regional events and comps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manunda St Francis Xavier’s School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>5 Atkinson St, PO Box 565</td>
<td>Brendon Alexander</td>
<td>Term 2 for the following year. Some vacancies across all year levels. Enquiries welcome. Contact Julie Storrs.</td>
<td>Specialist programs in Music, Japanese. Strong sporting tradition. Sister school in Japan - cultural exchange program and homestay biannually. (YRDO) iPad program as part of curriculum – work with device in the classroom. External music providers for ICT, students wishing to do instrumental music involve in Battle of the Bands contest. ’TuneTime’ Friday acknowledges choices students make, links to school and buddy program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mareeba St Thomas’ School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>63 Constance St</td>
<td>Ria Petersen</td>
<td>Term 2 for following year Interviews to be held early in Term 2. Induction to new families and end of Term 3. Some vacancies across all year levels. Enrolment enquiries to Connie Martens.</td>
<td>Religious Education at St Thomas’ is not confined to RE classes or liturgical occasions; Christ is at the centre of all endeavours. Specialist teachers deliver Australian Curriculum in Performing Arts &amp; HPE. Student excellence showcased through school-based programs in instrumental music, public speaking, chess, band, student representative council and Sporting Schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mossman St Augustine’s School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>24 Gragan St, PO Box 327</td>
<td>Paul Rayner</td>
<td>Prep enrolments: term 2 for following year although applications welcome anytime, subject to vacancies and interview.</td>
<td>Specialist PE and Information Literacy Skills programs, instrumental music program, emphasis on values and Social Emotional Learning, Peer Support program, Buddy program Prep &amp; Year 6, Life Long Learning Awards evenings, small school, supportive community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cairns Mother of Good Counsel School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>394 Sheridan St, PO Box 22N</td>
<td>Ruth Malbon</td>
<td>Prep Term 1 and early Term 2 for following year. Some vacancies across all year levels. Enquiries welcome, with interviews accepted throughout the year. Contact Desley Jones.</td>
<td>Our small community minded school has a strong Social and Emotional Learning focus, with specialist, Japanese, Arts and PE programs, instrumental music, school choir and strong ICT integration. Our committed staff are preparing students for their future, supported by faith and Gospel values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta Park St Anthony’s School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>11 Loeven St, Parramatta Park</td>
<td>Gavin Rick</td>
<td>Enrolment enquiries anytime. Prep enrolments conducted Term 1 &amp; beginning Term 2. Contact Vette Bacc: 2 streams P-6.</td>
<td>A community that values learning, community, respect and love. A school for healthy minds, bodies and spirits. Social &amp; Emotional Learning through a Catholic spiritual lens. Strong academic focus and commitment to contemporary learning with a 1:1 iPad program in Years 4-6. Strong parent engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravenshoe St Brendan’s School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>6 Moffatt St, PO Box 249</td>
<td>Catherine McBride</td>
<td>Term 2 for Prep following year. Vacancies in Years 1, 2, 3 and 5, waiting lists all other levels. Contact Catherine McBride or Debbie McConnell.</td>
<td>Strong inter-school sporting program, reading rotations across years levels, ICT technologies to enhance numeracy teaching, Literacy Enhancement Teacher, community involvement, choir, instrumental music program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silkwood St John’s School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>8 Green St, PO Box 8</td>
<td>Vicki Conomo</td>
<td>Preferred enrolment time Term 2 onwards for following year. Vacancies across all year levels.</td>
<td>Through living and proclaiming Christ’s Gospel values and a comprehensive scholastic curriculum, we help each child become a totally integrated, self-disciplined and creative mind. A caring, secure, supportive environment endows each child with a sense of belonging. Instrumental music program, camp experiences all years, wide range of sporting events, LOTE, commitment to developing digital literacy in each student. A strong community of families working together and sharing in the education of their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Johnstone St Rita’s School</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
<td>8 Green St, PO Box 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Preferred enrolment time Term 2 onwards for following year. Vacancies across all year levels.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tuesday Island: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School
- Enrolment: No limit
- Contact: Thirza@tis.qld.edu.au
- Principal: Father Michael
- Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Holy Cross College
- Enrolment: No limit
- Contact: email@hcc.qld.edu.au
- Principal: Father Michael
- Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Trinity Park: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School
- Enrolment: No limit
- Contact: Thirza@tis.qld.edu.au
- Principal: Father Michael
- Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Parramatta: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School
- Enrolment: No limit
- Contact: Thirza@tis.qld.edu.au
- Principal: Father Michael
- Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

St Monica's College
- Enrolment: No limit
- Contact: email@smc.qld.edu.au
- Principal: Father Michael
- Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

St Clare's College
- Enrolment: No limit
- Contact: email@scqld.edu.au
- Principal: Father Michael
- Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

St Bernard's College
- Enrolment: No limit
- Contact: email@sbrcqld.edu.au
- Principal: Father Michael
- Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

St Stephen's College
- Enrolment: No limit
- Contact: email@ssc.qld.edu.au
- Principal: Father Michael
- Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

St Joseph's College
- Enrolment: No limit
- Contact: email@sjqld.edu.au
- Principal: Father Michael
- Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Weipa: St Joseph's Parish School
- Enrolment: No limit
- Contact: email@ssjピーの林.edu.au
- Principal: Father Michael
- Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School (Cairns)
- Enrolment: No limit
- Contact: email@ssjピーの林.edu.au
- Principal: Father Michael
- Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

St Monica's College
- Enrolment: No limit
- Contact: email@smc.qld.edu.au
- Principal: Father Michael
- Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Our Secondary Colleges

Cairns City
- St Mary's Catholic College
  - Year 7 – 12
  - Girls and Boys
  - Contact: office@smc.qld.edu.au
  - Principal: Father Michael
  - Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Cooktown
- Holy Spirit College
  - Year 7 – 12
  - Co-educational
  - Contact: office@hsccqld.edu.au
  - Principal: Father Michael
  - Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Herberton
- St Patrick's Catholic College
  - Year 7 – 12
  - Co-educational
  - Contact: office@spccqld.edu.au
  - Principal: Father Michael
  - Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Innisfail
- Good Counsel College
  - Year 7 – 12
  - Co-educational
  - Contact: office@goodcounsel.qld.edu.au
  - Principal: Father Michael
  - Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Mareeba
- St Stephen's Catholic College
  - Year 7 – 12
  - Co-educational
  - Contact: office@ststephens.qld.edu.au
  - Principal: Father Michael
  - Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Paramatta Park
- St Augustine's College
  - Year 7 – 12
  - Boys
  - Contact: office@saqc.qld.edu.au
  - Principal: Father Michael
  - Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Woree
- St Gerard Majella School
  - Year 7 – 12
  - Co-educational
  - Contact: office@sgms.qld.edu.au
  - Principal: Father Michael
  - Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Our P-12 Colleges

Mount Peter
- Mackillop Catholic College
  - Year 7 – 12
  - Co-educational
  - Contact: office@mcc.qld.edu.au
  - Principal: Father Michael
  - Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Redlynch
- St Andrew's Catholic College
  - Year 7 – 12
  - Co-educational
  - Contact: office@sscc.qld.edu.au
  - Principal: Father Michael
  - Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.

Port Douglas
- St Joseph's College
  - Year 7 – 12
  - Co-educational
  - Contact: office@sjqld.edu.au
  - Principal: Father Michael
  - Enrolment Information: Vacancies across all year levels. Contact Sharon County.


St Stephen's College offers a diverse and holistic curriculum which allows students to develop academically, socially, emotionally, spiritually and physically. Excellent reputation in academic achievement including Vocational Educational pathways, Modern facilities, Trade Training Centre for certificate courses and a significant focus on technology in all curriculum areas. Specialist areas include languages (French, Japanese and Italian) and Music and the Arts. Focus on Gifted and Talented programs. Scholarships available for Year 7 students. We care, we listen, we provide, we respond, we learn.
Pedalling for a cause

Cahn Butler-Channell of St Augustine’s College is going to cap off his last year of high school in a very unique and compassionate way. Instead of partying and joining in Schoolies Week celebrations, the Year 12 student will ride with the Beat Cancer Tour in the prestigious Santos Tour Down Under cycling event, known as Australia’s Tour de France, in Adelaide January 18-24.

The born-and-bred Cairns student decided to try and make a difference in the fight against cancer and is on a mission to raise funds for cancer research, after being personally affected by the disease.

Cahn understands first-hand how cancer can affect people and their loved ones.

“My grandfather (Gramps) died from spinal cancer, and our close family friend Therese died from a brain tumor,” he said.

“I couldn’t do anything to help them, but I’m doing something now.

“I’m not the only one affected by it. There are thousands upon thousands of people out there who are affected by it every single day, and I think this is just a small way I can try and give back to them and to the community.”

Cahn’s dream is to become a professional cyclist in Europe and this event is a huge stepping-stone for him. While his Beat Cancer Team will take part in every stage of the Santos Tour Down Under race and be treated like the professionals, his focus is on completing the 900km ride over the week and raising the fundraising criteria of $14,000.

“There is no event like this in the world where you can ride alongside the pros and be treated as a pro,” he said. “I’m excited to be able to contribute to raising funds for the Cancer Council by doing something I love.”

Cahn has shown a strong passion and talent in athletics since he was a youngster.

His mum, Marg Judd, a Year 6 teacher Holy Cross, remembers how he used to run laps inside and outside his Clifton Beach home with a neighborhood friend, timing them as they raced.

“I used to feel sorry for this neighborhood boy as Cahn would want to do laps over and over again, and this poor kid was tired,” she laughed.

When Cahn was seven he was competing in gymnastics at a state level, and his athletic prowess just kept growing.

“He participated in gymnastics, tennis, track and field, triathlon and across country, and every time he has done a sport he has gone on to be selected to play representative sports,” his mum said.

Today, Cahn’s focus in on raising money to help cancer research and training for the challenging 900km event ahead with his team, of which he is the only Far North Queensland member.

“He’s quite an outstanding elite athlete,” St Augustine’s Principal Br Darren Burge said.

“To get invited to be part of this event is quite a statement in itself.”

Br Darren couldn’t be more proud of his student.

“There is a boy coming out of our school who is a talented young man with a social conscience,” he said.

“This is the type of student that we have coming out of our Catholic schools, and I think that is a good thing to celebrate in this world when you hear so many negative things.”

You can help Cahn raise funds for cancer research by donating at www.beatcancertour.com.au/team/2016/

Helping teens make positive choices

Recognising the changing needs of teenage students today, Family Life Education (FLE) programs in Cairns Catholic schools are shifting towards gender-specific classes for students in Years 7 to 12.

“Boys and girls today face the same issues regarding sexuality, however they want to approach these issues from different angles,” said John Shag, Coordinator from Natural Fertility Services (NFS), the agency which has been presenting FLE in the Cairns Diocese for 20 years.

“They find it easier to open up in gender-specific classes.

“Today’s teenagers encounter a highly sexualised society. Through multi-media and the internet they are really bombarded with suggestions that sex and physical appearance are the most valid measure of worth.”

While both girls and boys are presented with sessions on self-esteem, body changes, fertility, pregnancy, methods of family planning, sexually transmitted infections and party behaviour, the emphasis is different, he said.

Mr Shay said one of the major issues facing teenagers today, particularly boys, is the problems with easy access to pornography.

“It’s obvious in some primary schools sessions that there has been porn exposure,” he said. “Dealing with it is difficult at this early age, because they shouldn’t have had to see it in the first place.”

“In secondary school we deal with it more directly. What we do is to normalise what is ‘normal’ sexual behaviour.

“We have such a problem today around the sexualisation of young people and the economically driven concept that pornography is normal, so we talk openly about it. “Pornography does do damage to a young male’s view of sexuality and females in general, and we see this evidenced in the changing attitudes and interests of young people in our school sessions.”

Trish Logan, Natural Family Planning Educator with NFS, said girls need a strong sense of self-worth to make positive choices sexually and minimise negative experiences on the journey to adulthood.

“The issue of western diet is discussed as well because the chemicals, sugar and processed foods today have an effect on a girl’s fertility and their moods,” she said.

“Poor body image and low self-worth do affect sexual choices.”
Re-engaging troubled youth

While all Cairns Catholic school teachers strive to make a positive difference in the lives of their students, there is a small group of teachers in the Diocese who face unusual and demanding challenges helping their students succeed.

The teachers at the Cairns and Cooktown campuses of Holy Spirit College, a Flexi School for disengaged young people headed up by Principal Erica Prosser, are not your ordinary teachers.

They are working with students who have struggled with school and society throughout their lives. Some of these students have unpredictable behaviour; some come from traumatic backgrounds and some are depressed, anxious and even suicidal.

“Being out of school for so long has meant a range of challenging behaviours with many of these students, and this then challenges staff to find the right approach to guide the student positively,” Cooktown Head of Campus Clinton Wearing said.

“The teachers have to be ultra, ultra prepared. They have to be on top of everything, but at the same time they have to be able to change things at the last moment. They have to be able to read the mood of the kid all the time and make adjustments accordingly.

“We have to be flexible for students because mainstream school has failed them, so we’re their last chance.”

The Cairns campus opened at the start of the school year with 46 students while the Cooktown campus opened in Term 3 with 43 students, including 32 boarders.

Attendance, homework, structured classrooms with 43 students, including 32 boarders.

The teachers at both campuses have worked in remote communities before, gaining experience with disengaged youth and students with low numeracy and literacy skills.

“The common denominator among those teachers who are successful in the remote context is their ability to form strong relationships, to be consistent in their approach and to have high but realistic expectations,” Clinton said.

“They must also be able to teach explicitly and must create a positive learning environment.”

While working in remote communities has helped teachers, students at Holy Spirit College present different challenges with many having been referred to the school by organisations like Youth Justice or the Department of Child Safety.

“You do take it home with you sometimes,” said Paul Sampson, music and maths teacher at the Cairns campus.

“I did find that difficult the first six months because of the level of trauma and the level of difficulties these guys are having. As so many of our students are predominately from Child Safety or Youth Justice, you can imagine the level of trauma and difficulty in their young lives, so it’s really difficult not to feel their pain and not be concerned.”

However, Paul said the rewards were worth it.

“Some of the students are in such crisis that to be able to engage them, create relationships with them and get them coming back day after day is really empowering for teachers,” he said.

Educators at both campuses take an individual approach towards each student, understanding their needs.

“We see ourselves, including the students, more like a community rather than a school - a community where everyone cares for each other,” Cairns campus art teacher Marc Bikim said.

“The students see the school as a home where the staff members are like their second parents, people who care for them.”

Marc said the change in the students in just three terms since the Cairns campus opened is one of the most rewarding experiences he has achieved as a teacher.

“They show more politeness and respect. In fact, for most of them, they like coming to school and feel more secure and safe. Whenever they were told that, for whatever reasons, there will be no school, they were not happy, unlike a normal stream school where everyone is happy to get a school day off.

“I was attracted to come to Holy Spirit College because I want to continue to work with disengaged students and make a difference in their lives. I believe that the intrinsic reward that I will obtain if I achieve that is the most rewarding self-satisfaction in the career of a teacher.”

All Holy Spirit College teachers want to help, want to make a difference in the lives of disengaged students.

“If we weren’t here doing what we do, who then is looking after and taking care of these young people?” Clinton added.

“They would just slip through the cracks.

“By working with these young people the community benefits by less community dysfunction and less social problems that have a high probability in escalating as the young person gets older.”

Developing students’ spirituality is also important for teachers at both campuses.

“I believe the Cairns Catholic education system is really open minded to the idea of individuality and spirituality, and it’s really building bridges to open up a new pathway for the students,” said Cooktown music teacher Daniel Briffs.

“And that pathway isn’t suicide, it’s not drugs, it’s not a negative pathway; it’s about pushing them forward into something where they can be the leaders of the future.

“We’re talking about students who are 100 per cent disengaged from school and now we’re talking about them being future leaders in the community. That wasn’t even thought of 20 years ago.”

BELOW: Cairns Art and Maths Teacher Paul Sampson jams with music students

Holy Spirit College Cairns campus music and maths Teacher Paul Sampson jams with music students

We have to be flexible for students because mainstream school has failed them, so we’re their last chance.”
Principal with a difference

IKE all principals at Cairns Catholic schools, St Joseph’s School, Atherton Principal Michael Lindsay is passionate about developing the intellectual, spiritual and emotional growth of his students and school. But there’s one noticeable difference about the Atherton school principal.

Principal Lindsay brings a new spiritual enrichment to his school after being ordained a Deacon by Bishop James Foley in August.

“I am still the same person as before, doing much the same things as I did,” he said. “The duties and responsibilities of being a school principal have not changed. Rather, the role has been enhanced with ordination.

“A principal in a Catholic school has always had the ultimate responsibility, supported by the Assistant Principal Religious Education (APRE), for faith leadership within the school community.

“Ordination enhances this role especially in that as Catholics we believe that ordination, like any sacrament, brings certain graces. These graces will serve the parish school community and beyond.”

Deacon/Principal Lindsay took over the helm at St Joseph’s this year after being APRE at St Stephen’s and teaching at St Augustine’s College in Cairns.

He was drawn to serving the Church as a deacon before he was married and spent more than three years completing a series of courses in Pastoral Ministry, Scripture, Homiletics, Liturgy and Canon Law as well as being involved in ongoing spiritual formation.

He hopes his new deaconship will strengthen the Catholic influence in the school community.

“As a deacon/principal, I like to think in similar terms as a religious Brother or Sister who might also be a principal/teacher – the school is enhanced by a more visible presence of the ministry of the Church by way of those who have taken life-long vows to serve in the name of Christ,” he said.

“I, too, have taken life-long vows to serve Christ in the Church of Cairns and this enhances my leadership of the school.”

While Deacon Michael’s primary diaconal ministry is within his role as St Joseph’s Principal, he will also assist Parish Priest Fr Greg Moses when needed during masses, baptisms, funerals and witness weddings.

“Leading these services for members of the school community is very close to my heart,” he said.

“While priests minister primarily to those gathered around the parish, deacons minister primarily to those who might not yet gather as part of the parish community,” he said.

“Therefore, as a deacon/principal I meet them where they do gather - like in our Catholic school - and minister to them there.

“For me, this is precisely what I see Jesus doing more often than not in the Gospels – going and meeting God’s people wherever they are.”

RIGHT: Celebrating after Michael became Deacon were his wife Melanie and children Isaac and Sophia.

Bishop Foley ‘laying hands’ on Michael Lindsay during the orientation ceremony.

Curriculum for Life...

Years 11 & 12

Authority Registered Subjects:
- Religion & Ethics
- English Communication
- Prevocational Maths
- Creative Arts
- Agricultural Practices
- Industrial Technology
- Hospitality Practices
- Information Communication Technology

OP Eligible Courses:
- Study of Religion
- English
- ESL English
- Maths A & B
- Modern History
- Physical Education
- Visual Art
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Legal Studies
- Graphics
- Physics
- Business Communication
- Technologies

Vocational Courses:
- Cert III Education Support
- Cert II Public Safety
- Cert III Sport & Recreation
- Cert II Outdoor Rec
- Cert III Basic Health Care
- Cert II Engineering Pathway
- Cert I Construction
- School Based Apprenticeships

Scholarships:
- Colleen & Frank Sims Scholarship
- Sr Mary McHugh General Excellence
- Sr Pam Murray Performing Arts Scholarship
- Academic Scholarship
- Principal’s General Excellence Scholarship

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Years 7 to 10

Foundation Courses:
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- SEL, Science, Social Science, PE, IT & in
- Yr 10 - Careers, Cert I Hospitality

Rotation & Electives:
- Textile & Food Tech
- Industrial Tech
- Graphic Design
- Visual Art
- Business Education
- Media
- Drama
- Digital Technology
- Music
- Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Project
- Industrial Trade Skills
- Cert I Conservation Land Management

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Students have a hand in student protection

While Cairns Catholic education focuses on the welfare of students every day, two new events held during Catholic Education Week in July added extra impact to the message of child safety. A Safety Hero Design Competition for students and a Safeguarding Children Conference for educators were held for the first time this year and both were hailed successes.

More than 100 entries were received in the Safety Hero Design Competition where students created a Safety Hero character. Elements from the winning entries will be incorporated into posters to be displayed in schools. “Judging was very difficult,” said Catholic Education’s Student Protection Officer Ann Barr. “The entries that were submitted were of such high standard that we needed to award seven major prizes (mini iPads) instead of six.”

Winners were Sean McCormack (St Joseph’s School, Parramatta Park), Alexa Szerstuk (St Thomas’s School, Mareeba), Hannah Malone (St Therese’s School, Bentley Park), Andrew Lennon (Holy Cross School, Trinity Park), Eli Whyte (St Therese’s School), Ruby Hester (Holy Cross School) and Samara Wescombe (Holy Cross School).

“We chose five design elements from the winning entries to include in a number of posters, which are age appropriate, for our schools,” Ms Barr said. “We also chose two character designs that we aim to develop safety awareness using their adventures as a learning tool.”

The Safeguarding Children Conference was designed to assist school leadership teams with identifying, responding and minimising the risk of harm to children and young people. “The theme of the conference was focused on building and maintaining child safe organisations,” Ms Barr said. “Staff in schools are very good at identifying concerns for students and because of this, principals and staff not only need to have an awareness of their reporting responsibilities, but they also need to have a clear understanding of why they need to respond to student concerns appropriately.”

Keynote presenters included Penelope McEnroe, the National Head of Program for Child Wise, and Narelle McMahon, the National Protection and Prevention Officer from the National Committee for Professions Standards Australian Catholic Church.

Ms Barr said the day-long conference, which also included keynote speeches and concurrent workshops, attracted more than 70 participants. “We are fortunate in Catholic Education because every week is focused on the wellbeing and safety of our students – not just one week a year,” she added. “It is an element of our core practice that we take very seriously and aim to build on every year.”

C AIRNS Catholic schools are known for providing the best possible opportunity for student learning to occur in a safe, caring and supportive environment, and this genuine approach to student wellbeing has recently been enhanced with the appointment of a new Principal Education Officer Student Wellbeing.

Gary Hall, who has more than 20 years’ teaching experience, started in the new role in Term 3 and will be working closely with schools, principals and teachers to develop student wellbeing as an essential aspect of a student’s education.

“Gary’s genuine desire is for all students to succeed and fulfill their potential,” Catholic Education Services Executive Director Bill Dixon said.

“He believes in the need to identify and address student welfare, believing this is paramount to student learning outcomes.”

Along with his passion and deep interest in student wellbeing, Gary’s experience as an educator has provided him with valuable learning experiences around student wellbeing and its relationship to behaviours and learning outcomes.

“Student wellbeing can be described as having a holistic view of a child’s development that allows a young person to thrive, flourish and learn,” Mr Hall said.

“I see my role as supporting Cairns Catholic education in engaging students in recognising the relationship between wellbeing and learning in addition to engaging with educators to further develop their understanding of their roles in supporting the students in their care.

“The role will allow me to assist schools to develop a whole-school approach that recognises positive behaviours of the mind and provides the opportunity for students to achieve positive outcomes that supports lifelong social, emotional, spiritual and educational development.”

His work will involve the development of systems that assist with the identification of children at risk, not only academically but at risk in their overall wellbeing. He will support schools with the development of case management procedures and further develop structures and processes to assist teachers deal with difficult behaviours.

Mr Hall’s role will also enable him to support schools with the implementation of the National Safe Schools Framework and engage the school communities with the analysis of the Safe Schools Audit Tool data.

His will enhance the strong Social Emotional Learning (SEL) practices already in place in Cairns Catholic schools, which all have a SEL coordinator and engage in a variety of programs that help build a positive school culture.

“Presently, there are a variety of positive behaviour models and wellbeing approaches schools engage with to address student wellbeing,” he said. “My role offers an opportunity to explore, develop, synthesise and share all these approaches and provide a Diocesan wide positive behaviour approach to student wellbeing.”

Mr Hall believes the welfare of students goes beyond the provision of a solid academic education.

“We aim to provide a relevant curriculum in an ever-challenging environment by developing students who will demonstrate a state of positive emotion and social functioning to engage as successful contributors to society,” he said.

“Students need to feel they belong and are in a safe and supportive environment where they are encouraged to see their mistakes as learning opportunities, be resilient, persistent, engaged and confident in their learning and enjoy positive relationships.”

Next year Cairns Catholic Education will introduce Visible Learning as a platform to further develop student learning. The use of focused feedback as part of the school wide positive behaviours approach will further support the aims of student wellbeing.

With the introduction of Shared Information Services rolled out last year and this year, it provides an opportunity to engage schools in the collection and interpretation of information that can further inform their strategies and goals specific to student wellbeing.

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The Safeguarding Children Conference was designed to assist school leadership teams with identifying, responding and minimising the risk of harm to children and young people.

“The theme of the conference was focused on building and maintaining child safe organisations,” Ms Barr said. “Staff in schools are very good at identifying concerns for students and because of this, principals and staff not only need to have an awareness of their reporting responsibilities, but they also need to have a clear understanding of why they need to respond to student concerns appropriately.”

Keynote presenters included Penelope McEnroe, the National Head of Program for Child Wise, and Narelle McMahon, the National Protection and Prevention Officer from the National Committee for Professions Standards Australian Catholic Church.

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Catholic Education Services Executive Director Bill Dixon with the Hero Safety Design Competition winners, from left, Hannah Malone, Eli Whyte, Andrew Lennon, Sean McCormack, Alexa Szerstuk, Ruby Hester and Samara Wescombe.
Religious continue to influence

WHILE today’s Catholic schools in the Cairns Diocese enjoy up-to-date technology and 21st century educational tools, the influence of passionate educators with few resources more than two centuries ago is still very much alive and appreciated in the schools today.

Religious Orders, like the Sisters of Mercy and the Marist Brothers, worked with few educational tools centuries ago, but their role in establishing Catholic Schools, educating young people and keeping Catholic ethos alive throughout the years is one of the keys to the success of Catholic education today.

All Catholic schools in the Cairns Diocese were founded by or adopted by a Religious Order, and while not all Orders are present in the schools today, their rich Catholic influence has sustained over time and continues to have a valuable impact in today’s schools.

Marist Br Darren Burge, Principal of St Augustine’s College Cairns, is the only Religious Principal heading up a Cairns Catholic school today in the Cairns Diocese. Combined with three other Marist Brothers currently at St Augustine’s, the college has one of the strongest connections to a Religious Order in Australia today.

“We have four Marist Brothers here - Br Joachim, Br Tony and Br Patrick and myself,” Br Darren said.

“To be honest with you, I would think you’d be hard pressed to find that presence anywhere in Australia with any Religious Order.”

Br Darren said the Marist Brothers philosophy of following Mary’s influence is very much evident today. The college is known for having a strong family quality among the school community, which Br Darren credits to the Marist philosophy.

“We believe strongly in the family spirit,” he said. “When we talk to parents, students and staff one of the first things that comes up every time is that they really feel like they’ve joined an extended family, and that comes from the Marist heritage.

“And the staff and students really value the presence of the Brothers.

“There’s a wonderful connection over a number of years with the Brothers and the school community. I think it adds a unique dimension to the school.”

Sr Therese, a Sister of Mercy, has been a part of St Monica’s College Cairns for 50 years as both a Deputy Principal and teacher. She volunteers her time at the college today to help with archive work and to help the College maintain its strong links with the Sisters of Mercy.

“The connection with the Religious Order provides an anchor for the values such as compassion, caring, a sense of community, working together, appreciating that everyone has a contribution to make, appreciating the value of women and girls and a strong sense of social justice,” she said.

“The story of the founder (of Sisters of Mercy) and the early religious give a framework around which to educate the young into the values and culture of the College.”

The Sisters of Mercy were also foundational at Mount St Bernard College in Herberton. The College was gifted by the Sisters of Mercy to the Diocese in 2006 and has three Mercy Sisters remaining at the college. Sr Pam Murray, Sr Mary McHugh and Sr Ines Demartini have been part of the school periodically since 1955, 1950 and 1938 respectively.

Mercy Traditions of faith, service, care and support are kept alive by the Sisters, who attend most school liturgies and masses.

“Having the presence of these three tremendous Sisters of Mercy add to the value, ethos and heritage of the school,” Principal David Finch said. “They provide a remarkable example to all students and staff.”

Sr Rovena Duffy, also a Sister of Mercy, was the last Religious Principal at Our Lady Help of Christians School Earlville, from 1976-78, and was a teacher at the school in 1970. She is still active at OLHOC and St Joseph’s Cairns today, teaching English as a Second Language.

Even though there were limited resources in the early 1970s and Sr Rovena remembers using coloured rods and graded readers as their basic teaching tools, the Sisters of Mercy still made an enormous difference.

“The Mercy charism permeated the school in which the sisters worked, and the Sisters showed a deep, personal interest in the students so the students would receive the best education.

“Founders of Religious Orders and their members have been called directly by God at one point in their lives for a specific purpose. I think that’s the value of it today - the charism and the connection with God.”

“The value of a school adopting the charism of a Religious Order keeps the students in touch with the purpose of a Catholic school – that is, to bring the love of God into all those associated with the school and to ensure the education and development of the whole person.”

Sister Rovena Duffy still plays an active role at OLHOC and St Joseph’s teaching English as a Second Language.

GRAB YOUR 2015 CAIRNS CYCLING AND WALKING GUIDES AT YOUR LOCAL NEWSAGENCY*
Remotest school rejuvenates

An exciting rejuvenation at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School campuses on Thursday and Hammond islands in the Torres Strait, the Diocese’s most remote school, is heralding a bright new era for the historic school.

The school’s campus on Thursday Island includes Prep to Year 6 classes, while the Hammond school caters for Pre-Prep to Year 3 students.

Led by new Principal Sharon County who started at the helm in Term 2 this year, the school’s two campuses have been undergoing a renewal with the addition of new technology and updated facilities.

Both campuses now have a portable IT lab and both are developing the use of iPads and interactive whiteboard or touch-screen technology in all classes.

The Thursday Island campus has also refurbished its administration area and Early Childhood facilities as well as recently building a new library.

“The new library is a focal point for the school and is used after school hours for both school and parish meetings,” Ms County said.

“A wide variety of new non-fiction resources, including readers, has improved the depth of library resources for all levels.”

The Hammond Island campus has a new playground and a new undercover area that is used by both school and community members for special events and celebrations.

Ms County, who helped paint the exterior of the Thursday Island school with other volunteers in their own time, said the rejuvenation, which includes a dynamic new website, extends beyond new structures and facilities.

“Our moral imperative is to improve student outcomes focusing on student wellbeing and their outcomes in literacy and numeracy,” she said.

“Providing a quality education in partnership with our families and local community is paramount to our renewal process.”

“By recognising and affirming their culture and the culture of all our students in a faith-based, welcoming, caring, relaxed learning environment, our school environment promotes a sense of belonging and development - spiritually, physically, socially, emotionally and academically.”

“Providing a quality education in partnership with our families and local community is paramount to our renewal process.”

“The school’s rejuvenation, which includes a dynamic new website, extends beyond new structures and facilities. Our moral imperative is to improve student outcomes focusing on student wellbeing and their outcomes in literacy and numeracy.”

“Leading a school in such a beautiful part of Australia is an amazing experience.”
Not always easy moving on

FIVE senior leaders from Cairns Catholic schools will be facing one of their toughest challenges during this last term of 2015.

St Monica’s College Principal Kristen Sharpe, St Therese’s Bentley Park Principal Kevin Browning, Holy Cross Principal Wendy Manners, St Gerard Majella Principal Terry Grant and St Andrew’s College Deputy Principal Head of Middle Years Mark Kennedy are all moving on to other parts of Australia.

Ms Sharpe is moving to Brisbane to be the Principal of Stuartholme Catholic School after 30 years with Cairns Catholic Education, including five as Principal of St Monica’s.

While Ms Sharpe is originally from Canberra, she has special ties with the college, having been a Visual Arts Teacher at the school in 1987. She said she was going to miss both the college and Cairns.

“People in Cairns are genuine and friendly,” she said. “You can have eye contact and smile at people on the street and they don’t think you’re crazy!”

“And I’ll miss the camaraderie of the staff here at St Monica’s and my principal peers.”

She’ll take away with her many fond and funny memories. One of the funniest incidents she remembers was when she put on “drunk” goggles in a Social and Emotional Learning lesson with the College’s adopt-a-cop and being filmed as she staggered along the designated line.

“This delighted the Year 11 class to no end,” she said.

“But the most rewarding thing has been to see my students and my staff blossom, to see them reach their potential and thrive and truly believe in themselves.

“Believe that they are capable to learn, that they can be anything and do anything that they set their minds to achieve,” she said.

I want to continue to contribute to Catholic Education and to the education of young women - this is what truly gives me joy,” she said.

She does hope to move back to Cairns one day.

“At this time I hope to return to Cairns to either work or retire,” she said.

Mr Browning is taking over the Principal’s role at St Catherine’s Primary School in Berwick, Victoria. He’s not just leaving the school he has been Principal at for four years, but he is moving away from the school where he spent time as a student, completing his primary schooling there.

“We really had a lot of people invested in our children’s education, who wanted to help them reach their potential,” he said.

“This is the community I grew up in and to which I have returned as Principal 23 years later,” he said.

“What I will miss most about the school is the great sense of team, the collegiality of staff, the fantastic relationships with parents and outstanding kids who make it just such a joy.”

He has spent 16 years working in the Cairns Diocese including being the Principal at St Anthony’s, Dimbulah for five years and Principal at St Joseph’s, Atherton for three years.

He said the most rewarding experiences while at St Therese’s are “Seeing students succeed in ways that they didn’t think possible”.

While he said it will be hard to leave the school, he is doing so to expand his knowledge.

“My reason for leaving is simply to broaden my horizons with respect to leadership and to develop an appreciation and awareness of leadership in Catholic schools in other parts of the country,” he said.

“Experiences such as these are wonderful opportunities to also see new things and ways of doing things, to extend networks and to grow both personally and professionally.”

Wendy Manners, Principal at Holy Cross School, Trinity Park will also leave at the end of this year to take up the leadership of Francis Jordan Catholic School, Currambine in Western Australia. Mrs Manners has been the Principal at Holy Cross since 2010 and has served at a number of schools and Catholic Education Services in her 10 years in the diocese.

She said she would miss the Cairns lifestyle, considering she moved north from much colder areas of Australia, and was leaving the Cairns Diocese at a time when some very progressive and wonderful new ideas and directions for leadership were being actively embraced.

“But even though I am moving to the other side of the country I am sure that there will be the same vision for Catholic Education and that is about what is best for the children, helping them to be the best person they can be through following the teachings of Jesus,” she said.

Terry Grant, Principal of St Gerard Majella School, Wooree, also recently announced his resignation after eight years at the school and earlier appointments as Principal of Tully and North Cairns in his 31 years’ service to the Diocese of Cairns. Mr Grant moved to Brisbane late last year as a family move in support of his wife Lorraine’s new business interests.

“I am leaving with some sadness. It’s a very rewarding job where you become involved in shaping the lives of our students and learning a lot in the process.”

“It’s good that I can now support Lorraine in her career given how she has supported me in mine,” he said.

Mr Kennedy will head up the Year 9 Westcourt Campus at St Joseph’s College in Geelong after spending 11 years at St Andrew’s in various leadership roles including APRE, Junior Years, Deputy Principal Head of Junior Years and Deputy Principal Head of Middle Years.

“I will miss everything about St Andrew’s,” he said. “The school has been my home away from home, and I love everything about the place.

“The people are amazing at St Andrew’s as there is such a warm and caring environment created from the staff, students and parents.”

Mr Kennedy moved to Cairns from Ballarat at the start of 2005 when he was employed as St Andrew’s to be the Year 8 Coordinator. He was also a player/coach for the Cairns Saints AFL team for a number of years, which included helping the team win a number of premierships, and he helped develop St Andrew’s AFL program.

While he loves Cairns and St Andrew’s, he said leaving the city is a family-based decision.

Mr Kennedy will head up the Year 9 Westcourt Campus at St Joseph’s College.
FOR Good Counsel College student Lisa Vue, creating art has helped her unlock her identity.

Lisa collected six awards at the recent Energy 2015 Art Exhibition for senior school students at the Cairns Tanks Art Centre with her print making entry ‘Kuv Y og Hmoob’ (I am Hmong). Lisa began with a lotus leaf as a symbol of her culture and used its fan shape to create a series of delicate prints that convey both the beauty and history of Hmong culture.

Although born and bred in Innisfail, Lisa, 18, used the process to explore her Hmong heritage and culture.

“People often ask me: ‘Where are you from?’ and I say: ‘I am from here, I am from Australia, I see this as my home’,” she explained.

“But my culture is Hmong, and I am very proud of who I am. I personally think it is a very beautiful culture, very rich in symbols and with very complex ceremonies like marriages and funerals.”

Lisa’s research found the Hmong were people without a country, frequently displaced through war and violence despite being a peace-loving people. The Hmong people originated in southern China but were dispersed southwards into Indochina through the mountainous terrain of Laos, Vietnam and Thailand before the post-Vietnam War upheavals saw many Hmong further dispersed to small communities across the world.

Lisa’s parents came independently to Australia from Laos in the early 1990s, originally to Hobart, where they met and then re-located to Innisfail. Her father, Cheng, works on her grandparents’ banana plantation at Garrahdunga while her mother, Chia has a nail salon in Innisfail.

They have five children of whom Lisa is the oldest to Sandra, 17, Jenny, 15, Tim, 14 – all at Good Counsel College, and Brendon, 7, a student at Good Counsel Primary.

“It’s been really tough for my parents, coming to a new country,” she said. “They work really hard to make sure we get an education and get settled.”

Lisa said her father got up in the dark every morning to work the bananas before returning at breakfast to take the children to school, then back to work until he picked them up again after school and then back to the bananas to well after dark.

Lisa prefers to help her mother in the nail salon. “I tried working at the farm once, it was too hard. I told my father I was never going back,” she laughed.

“I feel we are pretty lucky to come here. It’s very tropical - we live very freely and it’s like a small country town.”

Lisa is also grateful for the education she is receiving at the college. “I know it’s very strict but everyone feels like family here,” she said. “Everyone’s willing to help you and we’re getting a really good education.”

She is one of 17 Hmong students at the college. One of the features of the modern Catholic school is that it seeks to build bridges of understanding between the Catholic faith and other cultures and religions.

For Hmong students it is about further understanding their spirit belief systems, known as Shamanism, which recognises the existence of spirits in all things. Each person has several spirits including the spirits of their ancestors to provide guidance and protection. Shamans work in Hmong communities to call back wandering spirits to bring harmony back to the person affected.

For Lisa this has brought an interesting perspective.

“We don’t specifically have a god but our shamanism is like Jesus,” she said. “God chose Jesus to come to the earth to help people just as Shamans help those in our community.”

Lisa’s next career steps probably involve university studies in midwifery or nursing. But her art is also calling – one of her prizes is a curated exhibition of her work at the Tanks Art Centre.

“My art teacher, Mrs (Seva) Norman said: ‘Whatever you do, keep the art in you’.”

Lisa’s full list of awards include a Creative Generation Excellence Award, A Cell Art Selected Award, an Ergon Energy Encouragement Award, a PAEA Encouragement Award, a Kick Arts Curator Award (this award gives her access to professional support from the Kick Arts Centre and they feature her work on their website), plus the Tank Arts Curator Award (this means Lisa will have her own exhibition at the Tanks Art Centre early next year).

Lisa with her art teacher Seva Norman.

— SPIRITED SCHOOLS - NOVEMBER 2015 —

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Prep to Year 12
ENGAGING Minds, Igniting Hearts, Serving Others was this year’s theme of Catholic Education Week in Term 3, Week 3 when schools celebrated their distinctive mission and shared the great things they are doing with their school, parish and wider communities.

As part of state-wide celebrations, St Augustine’s College teacher Richard Bassano, was recognised as the Cairns Diocese recipient of a Spirit of Catholic Education Award for demonstrating excellence in his work. Richard, left, is pictured with Queensland Governor General, Paul de Jersey.

On a local level, the Cairns Diocese Docemus Awards (meaning ‘to teach’) recognised a number of recipients for their exceptional commitment, achievement and contribution to Catholic Education.

Mark leaves his mark with AFL legacy

WHEN Matt Walsh, Mark Kennedy, Luke Parsons and Cameron Byrne played footy together more than 10 years ago for the Redan Football Club in Ballarat, Victoria, they had no idea the huge impact they would eventually make on AFL programs in two Cairns Catholic colleges.

Matt is one of the most popular players for the Cairns AFL Saints, having reached a milestone when he kicked his 1000th career goal this season after playing and coaching the Saints for more than 10 years. He is Director of Sports at St Augustine’s College, but says it was Mark Kennedy who was responsible for igniting the AFL passion at St Andrew’s and St Augustine’s.

Mark, Deputy Principal of Middle Years at St Andrew’s, came to Cairns more than 10 years ago to take up a position at St Andrew’s and to become Assistant Coach for Cairns AFL Saints. His influence helped shape the sport in both colleges today.

He recruited Matt, Luke (now PE teacher and AFL coach at St Augustine’s) and Cameron (now teacher and AFL coach at St Andrew’s) from Victoria to Saints and to St Andrew’s, igniting the AFL development in the college.

Matt and Luke have since taken up positions at St Augustine’s, where they kick-started the college’s AFL programs and attracted huge response from the students.

“We have about a third of the college population playing AFL,” Matt said. “That’s around 250 boys across all age groups.”

The teams have seen many successes in the last four years since Matt joined St Augustine’s, including winning the Gold Coast Sun’s Cup in the Under-14 AFL competition, a state-wide event, for the past three years.

“That’s the first time the school has achieved that at state level,” Matt said. “It just goes to show you how much AFL has grown here over the past four years.”

St Andrews has about 200 students playing AFL, including 50 girls.

“This year we had two female teams play in the local Jo Butland Cup competition at Cazaly’s,” Cameron said. “It was the first time, and they loved it. Both teams (Years 8-9 and Years 10-11-12) came in second, so they’re all pretty excited to have another go next year.

“Catholic schools and their sense of community bring everyone together, and sport is also just brilliant at doing that and building relationships with the students,” he added.

Matt agrees.

“We instill the Catholic values of respect, care and compassion, honesty and service in the boys,” he said.

“Our sports motto is ‘Humble in Victory, Gracious in Defeat’, and I think it really covers those Catholic traits well.”

“I’ve been immersed in the Catholic culture and it’s changed me as a person, Before I came to Cairns I was a non-practicing Catholic, and since I moved up here and been involved in Catholic schools I try and uphold those Catholic values in my everyday life.

“I think that’s definitely shown on the football field in my discipline, respect, care, compassion, honesty.”

Mark, who was the first to come to Cairns and who was the one to recruit the others, is also the first one to leave the city.

Defeat’, and I think it really covers those Catholic traits well.”

Cameron Byrne coaches St Andrew’s College Senior Girls AFL school team.

Left to right are Brian Hurdley, St Andrew’s (Secondary Teacher Award), Robyn Chambers, St Joseph’s Parramatta Park (Primary Teacher Award), Jan O’Donnell, Our Lady Help of Christians (Volunteer Supporter Award), Madonna Snell, Our Lady Help of Christians (School Officer Award), Janet Zaccour, St Joseph’s Parramatta Park (Leadership Award) and Fr Frank Gordon, St Francis Xavier Parish (Lifelong Contribution Award).

“An example of the esteem he is held in was recognised recently when he was given life membership to the Cairns Saints Football Club for his 11-year contribution.

“His efforts at St Andrew’s, where he has coached for many years, has allowed the college’s AFL teams to develop into some of the strongest and most respected in the region.

“Mark will leave behind a legacy in AFL in Cairns that will be remembered for years to come.”
Schools confront the globalisation of superficiality

We live in an Australia of burgeoning secularism, one where individual choice can be seen as its own justification. Within this context, educators of young people, particularly within the Catholic system, face two challenges in particular: the need to educate for choice, and the need to educate for depth.

Confronting today’s young people are choices of an extensive nature, far more than confronted their parents – not just choices of websites, or choices of TV stations, or choices of stores in shopping centres, but also choices concerning values and beliefs and lifestyles.

A choice enables us to be free, but choice is not its own justification. Education about choice is a real challenge for those charged with forming the young.

Five or six years ago, Allen Close wrote an article in the Weekend Australian in which he reflected on his generation, which was then just touching 40. He was struck by the childlessness of so many of his social circle and of the failure of himself and others from his circle to have established sustained relationships. He wrote;

What happened that so many of us have ended up entering middle age the way we have, on a grim treadmill of hope and disappointment. Our marriages ending, our families are split asunder, our assumptions about life devolving into confusion and loneliness?

We had choice, is my answer. More, I would suggest, than most of us knew how to handle. We got selfish, or greedy, or something. We left our partners because we could. We terminated our babies because we could. We discarded the rules, loosened the ties that bind, stretched the limits of the allowed, and this left us dependent on instincts, on our untutored human frailty.

In the fight for freedom which we considered our right we lost the quiet skills of commitment and relationships. We lost the gentle wisdom of putting our own needs second ... the art of love.

Unless there is education about discernment, the consideration of what directions and consequences choices will lead us to, students may make disastrous options or at the least become mired in indifference.

Another challenge is the need to educate for depth.

When in Rome for the canonisation of Saint Mary MacKillop in 2010, the then recently deposed prime minister, Kevin Rudd, visited Fr Adolfo Nicolas SJ, the present Father-General of the Jesuit order. In the casual way that one employs when having morning tea with someone, Rudd asked Nicolas what he believed to be the major challenges facing western society. Nicolas replied ‘the globalisation of superficiality’.

In a world of massive and instant communications and distractions, it is possible never to go beneath the surface, never to go in to those deeper places where our humanity registers.

In year 12 classes I used to employ the Cro-Magnon cave paintings, which show the earliest homosapiens to be tool-makers, lovers, thinkers and worshippers.

You can see evidence of the axe as the tool; see the lover in the flowers that were laid around the bodies of the dead; the thinker in the scratchings and calculations made on the wall; the artist in the paintings; and the worshipper in the subjects conveyed by the paintings.

In essence one might say that nothing has changed, that human nature appears to have a consistency and a constancy. There can be no full humanity without those dimensions of creativity, of love, of thought, and of worship. To be fully human we must develop on all fronts.

To help our young people mature we should guide them on what Teilhard de Chardin called that most difficult of journeys, the journey within.

Educators live in a world these days of NAPLAN, of issues affecting numeracy and literacy, and of where their school comes on a league table. This is increasingly to the detriment of education for depth and discernment. I do think it is time for principals to look closely at the phenomenon and to see what can be done about it.
FOUNDING Principal Luke Reed had a positive feeling from the start that the 2016 opening of Mount Peter’s MacKillop Catholic College was going to be a welcome success, considering the early interest and enthusiasm shown by the community. But it was a sign from Cairns Regional Council – or perhaps from Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop herself – that confirmed his belief.

The first stage of the $5.7 million new Prep to Year 12 Catholic college near Edmonton is well on track for its 2016 opening, catering initially for Prep to Year 3 students and growing into a full Prep to Year 12 college. Interest in the new school is high and enrolment positions for 2016 are quickly filling up.

The college’s street address was originally on Springs Road, also known as Deppeler Road West, but Cairns Regional Council approached the Catholic Diocese with a request to change the name of the street to MacKillop Road. “We were thrilled with the suggestion and the new name of the road,” Mr Reed said. “It’s a wonderful tribute to Saint Mary MacKillop and it’s a great beginning for the school.”

The community has shown a huge interest in the college, which is gearing up for its opening for first term of 2016 with its first stage – Prep to Year 3 classes.

“There is great excitement,” Mr Reed said. “The kids are excited and mums and dads are excited.

“People are saying to us all the time how delighted they are that there is a Catholic school in this area.”

The college is already in the process of planning for the expansion of the college to have facilities ready for Year 5 and Year 6 in 2018 and 2019. Design and planning will occur in 2016 with construction in 2017.

Due to the great deal of feedback from families requesting secondary options be available as soon as possible, the college is exploring the possible early expansion into secondary school (Year 7) in 2018.

“MacKillop’s case for the early commencement of secondary school would be strengthened by expressions of interest from local families keen to have a secondary school option at MacKillop from 2018.

“The college would appreciate if interested families would provide details of children they would strongly consider enrolling at MacKillop if the secondary school option was available,” Mr Reed said.


“Completing the on-line form is for planning purposes only and does not commit families to enrolling their children at MacKillop Catholic College,” Mr Reed said.

One of the aspects of the new school design at Mount Peter that impresses Principal Reed is the use of flexible classrooms where the classrooms have been designed to use the space.

“Gone will be the traditional classrooms where rows of seats faced the front of the class and the teacher. They will be replaced by open spaces with comfortable furniture and different learning areas, some private and some open.

“We want a flexible learning environment to enhance student learning,” Mr Reed said. “Our teachers are very excited to

MacKillop Catholic College’s Principal Luke Reed welcomes students Aya Gharmachi and Zacary Veronese to the new school in Mount Peter, which is opening in 2016.

start engaging the students in this new environment.”

The school will also have an Outside School Hours Care Facility operated by Catholic Early Learning and Care.

Families interested in enrolling at MacKillop are encouraged to submit their applications soon to avoid missing out or being placed on a waiting list.

Those interested can phone 4045 5262, email office.mountpeter@cns.catholic.edu.au or visit www.mackillopcatholiccollege.qld.edu.au.

MacKillop Catholic College’s Open Day

Sunday, 8th November

10am – 1pm

On-site at 1 MacKillop Road, Cnr Mount Peter Road, Mount Peter

Rolling events every hour:

* Tours of facilities under construction
* Addresses by the architect, Catholic Education leadership and the College Principal
* Meet the teaching staff
* Free sausage sizzle and kids’ activities
* Enrolment applications being taken on the day

MacKillop Catholic College, Mount Peter will open with Prep to Year 3 at the start of the 2016 school year. The College will grow to offer Prep to Year 12. Enrolments are now open for 2016 and beyond.

Phone 4045 5262 or email office.mountpeter@cns.catholic.edu.au

www.mackillopcatholiccollege@qld.edu.au