

june 2013

# *Spirited* schools

<b>VET options broaden Y12 outcomes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Australian Curriculum</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Testing times – the pros and cons of NAPLAN</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Year 7 transition on track</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Catholic school difference</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The funding issue - doing more with less</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>New schools</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Who can enrol in a Catholic school?</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The value of religious ed</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Enrolment guide</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Social justice focus</b>	<b>17</b>



**Catholic  
Education**  
Diocese of Cairns

*Learning with Faith and Vision*



## AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

# Positive move in new direction

THE full implementation of Phase 1 of the new Australian Curriculum heralds a new direction for all schools in the Cairns Diocese.

This first phase of the national program delivers a united curriculum across Australia in English, Maths, Science and History. Other subjects will be introduced over the next few years with the entire curriculum rolled out by 2016.

"It's a positive move for our schools and a positive move for Australia," said Ursula Elms, Assistant Executive Director Learning and Teaching.

Students across the country will be taught the same curriculum and in most cases there has been a move to ensure a similar school starting age. This will complement the 2015 move of Year 7 to Secondary schooling, and make it easier for students who move interstate.

"The Australian Curriculum outlines the content and the states provide direction on the pedagogy – the manner in which the content is taught. There's still a shared responsibility there," Ms Elms said.

While every state has taken a slightly different timeline for implementation, all Phase 1 subjects have been required in Queensland by this year.

"All of our schools are delivering Phase 1 subjects this year," Ms Elms said.

"Last year saw the introduction of English, Maths and Science and History has come on board this year."

The Phase 2 and 3 learning areas include: Geography, The Arts, Health and Physical Education, Languages, Civics and Citizenship, Business and Economics and Technology. These learning areas are being written, revised and published currently and the goal is for all Phase 2 and 3 subjects to be implemented by 2016.

"Full implementation means planning, teaching, and reporting to parents," Ms Elms explained.

The Australian Curriculum has been developed in consultation with states and territories. All stakeholders are invited to provide feedback during the consultation period for each learning area. Education authorities in each state and territory have responsibility for implementation of the curriculum and for supporting schools and teachers.

"It has been a big change for the teachers, but one they have engaged with thoroughly and professionally," Ms Elms said.

"It has been said that change is



Maths is one of the Phase 1 subjects already rolled out in schools as part of the Australian Curriculum.

constant in education. It is important to acknowledge that one of the most critical components of a good education is the teacher in the classroom. Good teachers will always promote good outcomes for the students."

“It’s a positive move for our schools and a positive move for Australia”

## NAPLAN TESTING

# Testing times

WHILE NAPLAN testing is now complete and results won't be known for months, students in Catholic schools are already champions as far as the principals and teachers are concerned.

While feeling anxious before the strict, formalised testing of the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy, students did their utmost to put their worries aside and

put their best foot forward when doing the timed tests.

"Students are to be commended for their exemplary behaviour and the conscientious manner in which they completed the test papers," said Andrea Chiesa, Assistant Principal Administration at St Stephen's Catholic College, Mareeba, about the Year 9 students.

Every school must follow strict guidelines

on how the test materials are received, kept secure and delivered, and teachers must also follow protocols for the administration of the assessments. Students are aware of this, which makes some of them uneasy.

"Some do get nervous, and worry about the results," said Brother Bill Tynan, Principal of Mount St Bernard College.

"I told our kids just relax, just do the test and don't worry about it too much.

"We tell them we're going to compare you with yourself, we're not going to compare you with other schools."

NAPLAN assesses students in reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

"It gives a comparison of where a particular cohort of students sits compared to state and national averages," said Ursula Elms, Catholic Education Services' Assistant Executive Director Learning and Teaching.

"It also provides information on how many students are above the national standards and how many are below. This enables us to provide targeted support to those students who are in need.

"Our students perform well compared with state and national results, often demonstrating a higher percentage of students above national minimum standards."

Catholic schools come together to look at NAPLAN results when the data is available and look at any areas that need particular work.

"We firmly believe in the importance

of literacy and numeracy skills and target support and improvement strategies in these areas. Currently we are working with National Partnership funding to improve literacy and numeracy skills in our primary schools through a targeted coaching program which will focus explicit teaching strategies on areas identified through data analysis of NAPLAN and other standardised testing," Ms Elms said.

"NAPLAN is good for data purposes, but it's not the only thing that happens in schools, so it does have a narrow focus," she added.

"Our schools offer a broad and rich curriculum that goes well beyond that captured by the NAPLAN testing regime.

"NAPLAN looks at literacy and numeracy and particularly what can be done in a pen and paper test, so it's not everything that occurs in the schools – that has to be understood as well."

Lea Martin, Principal at St Michael's Gordonvale, agrees.

"At our school we try very hard not to make a huge deal out of it," she said.

"We say to parents that this is a one-off test and the results need to be read in conjunction with all of the classroom assessment and reporting for the entire year."



NAPLAN testing can be a worrying time for students and needs to be taken in context with everything that occurs in schools.

# 'Being there' for Indigenous students

FOR Sr Mary Garnier, one of Catholic Education's new Indigenous liaison officers, her role is about 'being there' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Sr Mary, who was born on Hammond Island in Torres Strait, belongs to the Handmaids of Our Lord Order in Edmonton. She works with St Therese's School Bentley Park and St Michael's at Gordonvale after nearly half a century of service to education in Papua New Guinea. She also assists with the flexible learning program for disengaged young people.

"Sometimes it's about being the person they feel comfortable enough to talk to and express their feelings about things that might be concerning them at home or school," she said. "Once we start talking we can work out ways to fix things."

Sr Mary's new role takes her from the classroom to the community and into the homes of our Indigenous students as Catholic schools seek to better engage Indigenous families in Catholic education. It includes encouraging Traditional Owner Elders to visit schools to talk about local Indigenous culture to staff and students.

Priscilla Muriata is performing a similar role at St Clare's in Tully and St John's at Silkwood. Born and raised in Tully, Priscilla's involvement in Catholic education began with the enrolment of her daughter Cameron in Year 8 at Good Counsel College in Innisfail.

Her role is to encourage more Indigenous families in the local area to consider a Catholic school for their children. "Some families think that they can't afford a Catholic school, that these schools are just for white people and rich people," she said.

"But Greg (Greg Hoare, Principal at St Clare's) told me Catholic schools were set up to serve the needs of poor people, and that's my message."

There are now 804 indigenous students enrolled in Catholic Education's 26 schools and colleges, representing 7.7% of total enrolments, up from 5.5% last year. An encouraging sign has been the growth in Indigenous enrolments in Prep and Year 8.

A further encouraging sign has been the improvement in Year 12 outcomes for Indigenous students. Although only about half of Indigenous Year 12 enrolments were OP eligible in both the last two years, of those students, 62.5% achieved in the OP 1-15 range in 2012, compared with 25% the previous year.

The percentage of Indigenous Year 12 students receiving a VET qualification also increased last year to 53% from 38% the previous year. The percentage receiving a QCE increased from 83% to 88%. At Mount St Bernard College at Herberton, all Indigenous Year 12 students finished last year with at least one qualification – VET, OP, or QCE.

For new liaison officers like Priscilla and Sr Mary it is about ensuring all Catholic schools in the Cairns Diocese have at least one Indigenous staff member to encourage enrolments and create linkages with local communities.

In addition to liaison officers like Priscilla and Sr Mary, Catholic Education Services employs a careers and transitions Indigenous education officer to work with senior students such as Breanna Lyall, (above), to provide pathways for them to access tertiary, VET and employment pathways. Ensuring Indigenous students are on track to exit Year 12 has helped boost Indigenous post school outcomes. School captain of Mount St Bernard College at Herberton, Breanna will be one of 100 students Australia wide to attend the Learn Earn Legend Work Experience in Canberra. The program provides Indigenous students in Years 11 and 12 the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the Australian Government and explore the job opportunities and career pathways available to them in the public sector.



Priscilla Muriata



Sr Mary Garnier

## Year 7 transition on track

CATHOLIC schools in the Diocese of Cairns are on track to manage the transition of Year 7 from primary schools to secondary colleges in 2015.

Assistant Executive Director School Development Paul Cazzulino, who is coordinating the transition program, said that, like the Prep year, the Year 7 move to secondary was a generational change in education in Queensland.

"While we welcome the change as a good outcome for the education of our young people, it nevertheless impacts all areas of our operations from staffing to capital works to budgets and training," he said.

"A very big part of this is to reassure our students and families that their needs and interests are both recognised and addressed."

He said the Catholic sector placed a very high priority on informing the families of the current Years 5 and 6 students who together would make the transition as Years 7 and 8 in 2015.

"And those in Year 6 in 2015 will find they are the 'senior' students at our primary schools."

Mr Cazzulino said the secondary colleges were aware that in 2015 a third of their students would be new to the college and requiring a deal of extra attention for orientation in helping the students settle into their new surroundings.

"It's about making sure the young people and their families are ready for secondary school and that the schools are ready for them," he said.

He said the colleges would be learning lessons from primary teachers about the needs of a new secondary cohort aged 11-12 years.

Mr Cazzulino said Catholic Education had commenced a program for primary teachers wanting to move into the secondary system. He said current modeling suggested the primary schools would have 16 teachers above staffing entitlements in 2015 and the secondaries would have 53 too few teachers.

"Teachers moving from the primary sector to the secondaries will help this but with the added advantage that they will bring very useful primary experience and insights for the Year 7s."

He said more than \$9.6 million was being spent at all secondary colleges in the Cairns Diocese with the exception of St Andrew's which is Prep to Year 12.

This will see some 31 classrooms built or renovated plus an additional 45 boarding places – 35 at St Augustine's (also for St Monica's students) and 10 at Mount St Bernard at Herberton.

"We are very confident we will have these facilities in place in time for the 800 Year 7s making the transition in 2015," he said.

## ENROLMENTS WELCOME

### Semester 2, 2013 Enrolments

Limited positions are available in Years 3, 9, 10, 11 and 12. We welcome discussing your child's mid-year entry to the College.

### 2014 Enrolments

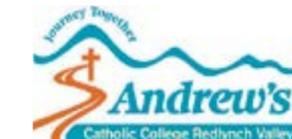
Limited positions are available to join our dynamic Senior Years (years 10-12) in 2014. We welcome enrolment applications in all other year levels as additional positions do become available throughout the year.

### International Students

St Andrew's Catholic College welcomes full fee paying overseas students to study at the College full time. International students are warmly embraced by our community and are encouraged to participate fully in school life. Please contact the College for further information.



The Roman Catholic Trust Corporation of the Diocese of Cairns trading as St Andrew's Catholic College, Redlynch Valley.



Contact the College for more information on 07 4039 5204  
www.standrewscc.qld.edu.au  
enrolments@standrewscc.qld.edu.au  
CRICOS Provider Code: 02256D

## The Catholic school difference

THE true essence of Catholic schools can be found in the smallest of things – a pat on the back, a smile, a word of encouragement, a hug.

It's that caring and nurturing environment, enhanced by the wisdom and teachings of the Catholic faith that ensures all schools are centres of complete learning.

"It's about holistic education," said Lea Martin, Principal of St Michael's Gordonvale.

"We care about kids academically, and we care about kids spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically.

"So I would like to think a child who comes out of a Catholic school at the end of 12 years is a very well-rounded, well-adjusted, all-round nice person.

"And I've seen that happen so many times."

The engine room of all schools is their faith and belief in God and his presence in their daily lives.

Celebrating and participating in Mass, liturgies, religious holidays and spiritual events is enhanced by encouraging students to find ways to help others, to fundraise for social justice causes and to genuinely lend a hand to their school members and their community.

"The faith life of a Catholic school is designed to have within it prayer, liturgy and learning about the Catholic and Christian tradition and also witnessing social justice in action and all those things as well," said Lucas Felstead, APRE Middle Years at St Andrew's.

"They're the major parts of what the faith life of the school is about."

A high-standard of education, a warm and welcoming atmosphere and social emotional learning helps students foster and grow into community-orientated Christians.

"Supporting students to thrive and flourish and develop lives that have meaning is what Catholic schools are all about," said Janet Zaccour, Assistant Principal Religious Education at St Joseph's Parramatta Park.

"It's about delivering the essence of what Jesus told us when he was here on earth; if you want a full life then you follow God's teaching about love, care, compassion and forgiveness. Modelling this and giving students opportunities to act out the Gospel values in a purposeful way builds strong foundations for a meaningful and happy life.

"It's about being the best person you can and doing those things that will make a difference in the life of someone else."

Securing a solid education, being actively involved in helping the community and spreading the word of Jesus are life-long skills students in all schools are learning.

"If our families and kids can leave through our school gates to go out into the world carrying a desire to change lives for the better, a compassion for those in need and an awareness that God is in all people and in all things, then I think Catholic schools are gifting our students with something that state schools can't," said Josh Mullane, APRE at St Augustine's School Mossman.

### Our students say...

We asked students to tell us what they believe to be the defining features of a Catholic School.

"Honesty and trust are two of many defining features of a Catholic school, which encourage us to grow in faith and as a unified community."

Rowena Yeung,  
St Monica's College, Cairns

"I think it is developing compassionate, whole people who have an awareness of God's presence."

Brett Letcher,  
St Stephen's Catholic College, Mareeba

"One of the main features at St Stephen's is the caring and supportive environment that creates a sense of family."

Kai Priestly,  
St Stephen's Catholic College, Mareeba

"At Good Counsel College, the students are educated to understand and appreciate the Catholic faith, but more so to use it as a basis for living a moral life."

Georgia Barnes,  
Good Counsel College, Innisfail

"In a Catholic school I think community spirit proves to be a dominant feature, with efforts such as Caritas fundraising working to successfully bring the school community closer together."

Rebecca Havill,  
St Monica's College, Cairns

"The close relationships students have with teachers and staff members, and being surrounded by others who also respect and celebrate Christian values, principles and significant events in the Christian calendar."

Daniella Aceto,  
St Monica's College, Cairns

## FUNDING

# \$taying affordable, doing more with less

ONE of the 'talking points' arising from the Gonski review of school funding and the My School Website is that the Catholic sector is achieving great results with significantly less funding than government or independent schools.

For example Catholic schools in Australia received an average of \$10,340 in 2012 per student in recurrent funding (all sources) compared to \$11,520 for State schools and \$14,460 for independent schools. In 2012 Catholic schools received \$8,286 in state and federal recurrent funding per student compared to \$10,868 for government schools.

These figures are strong evidence of the efficiency of Catholic schools in making the best possible use of the available funds.

"The figures demonstrate that every child enrolled in a Catholic school represents a considerable saving for state and federal governments compared to the funding that would have been required if that child was enrolled in a government school," said Cairns Catholic Education Executive Director Br Paul Hough. "For all the ongoing talk of public funding for education we need to simply point out that the Catholic school sector is actually saving taxpayer funds."

He said the Gonski review and the cutback in state recurrent funding of \$2.7m this year by the new State Government

highlighted the need for the Catholic education sector to be active and vigilant in policy and funding discussions. There were encouraging signs of additional funding for 2014 in the new State Budget, he said.

"We need to ensure that Catholic schools remain affordable, viable and able to deliver strong educational

outcomes. And we may need to be a bit more forceful to ensure that message is heard during the public debate."

The Gonski/My School figures also demonstrate the affordability of Catholic schools compared to independent schools.

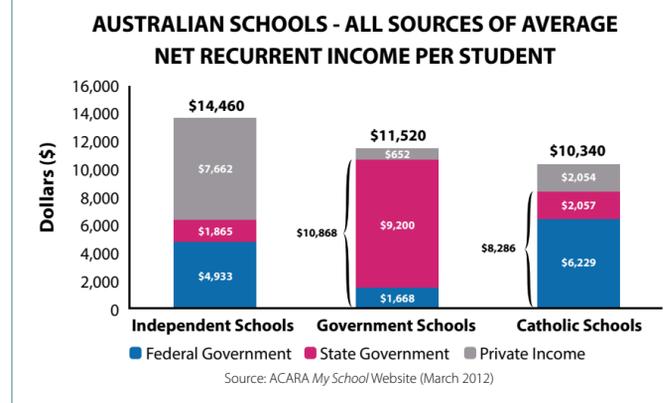
"We have always worked to ensure that our school fees and charges do not present a barrier to enrolment," said Br Paul.

"And for poorer families or those who find themselves in necessitous circumstances we have opportunities for discounts and in some cases the capacity to waive fees altogether. One of our core values is the preferential treatment of the poor," he said.

The fee structure also provides a family discount, in some cases of up to 80% for large families, and additional discounts for school fees in rural areas.

Br Paul said the dedication of staff and the involvement of families were reasons why Catholic schools were able to do 'more with less'.

"Visit any Catholic school and you will find parents helping out with literacy programs, accompanying excursions, making repairs and tending gardens during working bees. That's a good thing – when you enroll in a Catholic school you become part of a community – when we enroll the child, we engage the family."



Catholic schools operate with less recurrent funding than schools in the government sector and the independent sector. Even after parent contributions are taken into account, Catholic schools are resourced at around 10% less than government schools.

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## Taking it to the streets

**Y**OU'VE seen them in shopping centres, in parks, on street corners – small groups of kids, plenty of attitude. Shouldn't they be in school?

And in remote communities on the Cape other young people have missed the plane that was to take them back to the new term at boarding school. Shouldn't they also be in school?

The official term for these young people is 'disengaged' – disengaged from education certainly, but disengaged from a lot more in terms of what their lives might be.

There is a definition for disengaged – a young person likely to leave the education system without any form of qualification to equip them for the next phase of their life – no VET course completed, no senior certificate, no OP, no school-based traineeship or apprenticeship. No references or report cards. And for some, no record of even having attended school.

Their prognosis is not good – they are more than likely going to be unemployed, rely on social benefits, live in poverty, have some form of substance addiction, have some serious long term health issues, become a young single parent, and come in contact with the police and probably spend time in prison. A recipe for a troubled life, and for too many, a short life.

There are no official figures but there are probably several hundred young people in the Far North who meet the definition of 'disengaged', possibly a lot more.

The causes of disengagement are both simple in that they are readily recognised but also incredibly complex in the sense that they seem to defy even the most determined efforts to fix things.

Disengagement is often cross generational. Young people can look to their parents and uncles and aunts and grandparents and find no history of having a secure job or a positive experience with a school.

It can start young, even as early as Year 1. Start missing school and fall behind your mates and the 'shame' kicks in. Avoid school, avoid shame – but it just gets worse. Try making the transition to Year 8 at a distant boarding school when your real schooling achievement level is Year 3. It's easier to miss the plane at the beginning of term than to close that gap.

There are often some dark corners in the heart, mind and soul – trusts broken, relationships damaged, abuse, violence, isolation.

Some of these kids snatch our handbags, steal our cars. We write Letters to the Editor – something must be done, get tough on crime, bring on the boot camp.

Over the last three years Catholic Education has been planning a new school for these young people and hopefully construction will commence this year at its two sites, in Cairns and Cooktown.



“...a place where the young people feel safe and respected and valued



Cooktown Flexible Learning Centre - artist's impression

The school will enroll up to 90 students aged between Year 7 and Year 12 – 52 in Cairns and 38 in Cooktown which will also be a residential facility with weekly dormitory accommodation for up to 32 young people.

Suitable land for both campuses has been generously provided by the Cairns and Cook councils in support of the project and in recognition of the likely benefit that will flow from the school. Funding to build at both sites is being sourced from the State Government which has earmarked funds for special assistance schools. The school has been approved by the Non State Schools Accreditation Board.

The two sites won't look or feel like a 'traditional school'. Students will have an individual learning plan that will recognise their current level of learning and build on that.

There will be an emphasis on numeracy and literacy, lifeskills and wellbeing, music, sport and where possible VET programs that build skills. It will be a place where the young people feel safe and respected and valued.

The aim is to assist these young people on their journey and help them in their transition to more positive outcomes – perhaps back to mainstream schooling, to further training, a job, an apprenticeship.

This isn't going to be easy for the young people concerned or for the Catholic Education staff employed to teach, support and mentor them. Like the support already shown by the Cairns and Cooktown councils it will require a lot of extra

support and community goodwill for this school to succeed. The school will probably need additional financial support, donations of food and other goods, and volunteers who might help make breakfasts or become reading coaches and maybe just go fishing and have a yarn.

Why should Catholic Education take on such a project? Pope Francis expressed a wish for a “poor church for the poor” – this is a school at the very edge of our community where ‘poor’ can be defined any number of ways. Perhaps we are reminded too that the very origins of public schooling lay with religious orders providing instruction for the street kids of Rome, London, Rio, Dublin – and now Cairns and Cooktown!

For progress and updates on our new school please check our website [www.cns.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cns.catholic.edu.au)

## Who can go to a Catholic School?

**“D**O you have to be Catholic to enrol in a Catholic school?” and “Don't Catholic schools have to take a certain quota of non-Catholics?” are questions that regularly come up in parent conversations when discussing school options for their children.

Though baptism, Catholic children have a right to an education in the Catholic faith and historically, Catholic schools existed predominantly to educate children from Catholic families.

In recent years though, Church documents including ‘The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium’ (1998) have advocated a more inclusive approach to Catholic education, and specifically, a more welcoming attitude toward those with special educational needs, those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, from Indigenous or multicultural backgrounds, and those who have faiths other than Catholic.

This growing ecumenical and inclusive outlook has prompted Catholic schools to be more open in their enrolment policies and practices.

“Contemporary Catholic schools are places which welcome all who genuinely seek to be part of the life of the school and wish to share in a vibrant, well-resourced learning environment, based on Catholic faith and values, Executive Director of Catholic Education Services,” Br Paul Hough says.

“Enrolment policy strives to ensure schools engage in the essence of what it is to be Catholic, whilst, at the same time, are inclusive in nature and develop an evangelising role in addition to the catechetical role they have traditionally played as educators of Catholic children.”

Enrolment priority is given, in order, to those who participate regularly in the celebration of the Eucharist, Catholics who commit to the values of the Catholic church, siblings of existing students, participating members of other Christian churches, Christians who commit to the values of the Catholic church and those not affiliated with any Christian church, who commit to the values of the Catholic church.

Catholic schools have always maintained an outreach focus, with a traditional and often expressed “preferential option for the poor”.

“In keeping with Gospel values, no child will be refused a Catholic education due to genuine financial hardship. New or existing parents who find themselves in this situation are encouraged to discuss fee concessions with the school principal who will treat the situation with understanding and sensitivity that respects the dignity and privacy of families,” Br Paul says.

This inclusivity extends to responding to the educational needs of students, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds and aspirations.

“Our school communities are places where the uniqueness and individuality of students and families is recognised and welcomed and the human dignity of each student is promoted.”

Although Catholic schools are open to all who seek a quality education based on Catholic values, schools are not always able to take every child who applies. Schools may have waiting lists and will also have their own expectations in terms of behaviour, education requirements consistent with positive and

supportive partnership between families and the school, and participation in school activities, curriculum and community.

If a quota of non-Catholics ever did exist, it is certainly a thing of the distant past. In Far North Queensland, almost one in every four students is educated in a Catholic school. Just over half of those are Catholic and three quarters are of a Christian religion. Some don't identify with any religion.

Research shows that families in Catholic schools place importance on the broad range of values associated with Catholic schools – social and emotional development, value frameworks, safety and discipline, partnerships and a sense of belonging. Parents and guardians choose to entrust their children's future to Catholic schools because of their explicit goals and acknowledged educational quality.

Catholic Education is continuing to thrive, with enrolments in the Cairns Diocese increasing every year.

“Such growth is an indication of our strong commitment to providing for the needs of ALL students in an inclusive, life-giving and supportive school community environment,” Br Paul said.

Each school has its own enrolment procedure. Parents considering a Catholic education for their child are encouraged to make contact with the school of their choice to find out about the enrolment procedures and what information is required to complete the enrolment application eg: birth certificate, baptism certificate, immunisation records, school reports and academic records.

The enrolment period is generally April-May each year; however applications are accepted at any time of the year.



Pictured: Prep students at St Rita's South Johnstone - Back: Evita Piccola. Front, from left, Rylee Leonardi, Jared Spinella, Kayden Plumb and Kayla Lodge.



### Is a Catholic school right for your child and your family?

- ✓ Faith and values based learning environment
- ✓ A holistic education - academic, spiritual, social, emotional and physical development
- ✓ Welcoming, inclusive and family-oriented environment
- ✓ High standards of behaviour and respect for self and others
- ✓ Safe and caring environment
- ✓ Sense of belonging and community
- ✓ Nurturing and development of individuals and their abilities
- ✓ Quality learning and teaching
- ✓ Strong academic reputation
- ✓ Broad curriculum and co-curricular options
- ✓ Academic, vocational and employment pathways
- ✓ Well-resourced and equipped classrooms with full ICT integration
- ✓ Development of life-long skills and a love of learning
- ✓ Strong links with parents and community
- ✓ Commitment to social justice
- ✓ Preparation for a life of work, not simply a life of work

## New schools planned for Mt Peter and Weipa

**P**LANNING is well advanced for two new Catholic schools – at Mt Peter on the southern outskirts of Cairns, and Weipa on Cape York.

Both schools could open in 2015 if capital funding for construction is approved. Apart from the Special Assistance School (see story above) they will be the first new schools in the Diocese since St Andrew's Catholic College opened in Redlynch in 2001.

Mt Peter will eventually be a Prep to Year 12 college, similar to St Andrew's, but will open as a Year 7 secondary school, and build additional year levels from there. It will be at Mt Peter Rd and will service Cairns' major southern growth corridor between Edmonton and Gordonvale. It is expected it will eventually rival St Andrew's for enrolments – this could see more than 1500 students at the school.

Weipa will be a smaller Prep to Year 6 primary school servicing the mining and services community of Weipa and the nearby Napranum Aboriginal community. It will open as a Prep to Year 3 on a site adjoining St Joseph's Catholic Church in Boundary Road. It is expected the school will attract between 180 and 200 enrolments. Apart from Thursday Island it will be the most remote school in the Diocese of Cairns.

Catholic Education Services Executive Director Br Paul Hough said plans for both schools reflected strong community support for Catholic school options in both communities and the Diocese' confidence in the future of Cairns and Weipa.

“All of our schools represent a long term commitment to the communities they serve,” he said.



Mt Peter school

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Harry Nalpin and Millie McIntosh enjoy some reading time with Harry's mum Noelle, who is also on the P & F.

## Good on ya Mum

**S**IX-YEAR-OLD Harry Nalpin's eyes sparkle, his face lights up and he breaks into a big smile when his Mum, Noelle walks into this classroom at St Joseph's School at Parramatta Park.

While Harry is thrilled to have Mum join in his class, even when she's helping other students with their reading or writing, it is often the parents who get the most pleasure out of being involved in their child's education.

"I like seeing Harry's smile when I come into the classroom and he knows that I'm helping out," said Noelle, who volunteers at the school one hour a week and who is also on the school's Parents & Friends Committee.

"But you also see the other kids learning; you can see them improving from the start of the year."

Parents are fundamental to Catholic schools and their input to all aspects of school life is welcomed. Grandparents play a big role too.

They help out in the classrooms, volunteer at tuckshop, get involved with fundraising groups, join excursions and

pitch in on sports day. Some also become part of their school's P&F committee or School Board.

"I tell parents to do whatever they can do, just be involved," said Lea Martin, Principal of St Michael's at Gordonvale.

"In this day and age where both parents are working there are still things they can do, like bringing home books from the library and covering them.

"Helping benefits their child and it benefits the whole community, but it definitely benefits their child."

Trisha Nucifora has been volunteering once a week at St Michael's Gordonvale, since her son Christian started Prep three years ago.

"I think helping at the school is majorly beneficial, even if it's just one hour now and then," she said.

"You get to meet other teachers and staff, see all aspects of the school; you feel part of the community.

"And, best of all, your own child loves it."

## Getting involved pays off

**I**t usually starts with an interest in what goes on at your child's school. Then it can grow to spending time helping out in the classroom, the tuckshop or at the fete. The next thing you know, you have hands-on involvement in making decisions that help shape your child's school.

This is the way it is for many parents who join one of Catholic Education's 26 Parents and Friends Associations and want to help make a positive difference in their children's schools.

"Families are the first educators of their children, and when parents are involved in their child's education at home and at school, their child achieves at school and goes further in school," said Therese Howard, Chair of the Cairns Diocesan P & F Council and St Augustine's College P & F member.

"This has certainly been my experience with my children."

The Parents & Friends Association is an integral part of Catholic schools in the Cairns Diocese and provides a formal structure for parents and others interested in the welfare of the

students to plan and organise activities for the benefit of the school while promoting the principles of Catholic education.

The Diocesan P & F Council consists of members from each P&F association and each Diocese has two representatives on the State Committee of the Queensland parent organisation for Catholic schools, the Federation of Parents and Friends Associations.

"The Cairns Diocesan P & F develops policy for the Diocese with input from local P & F associations, lobbies on behalf of parents in the Cairns Diocese, and we collaborate and co-operate with the Bishop, Catholic Education authorities and schools," Ms Howard added.

"We provide support, information, guidance and encouragement to local P & F associations and education authorities, plan and organise family based activities, seminars and conferences."

Kirsten Brooks, a parent at St John's Silkwood, has been involved in P & F associations for 14 years in different positions including stints as President and Diocesan Delegate.

"Active involvement in P & F

increases the potential for your child to achieve not just academically but in many different extra curricula areas including social emotional wellbeing," she said.

"It has been my experience that my children have benefited from my active involvement in all aspects of school life at St John's."



Trisha Nucifora, with son Christian, volunteers once a week at St Michael's Gordonvale.

## Eight great tips for parents

School counsellor Tauba Naftal says education researchers agree that better outcomes are achieved for both primary and secondary students when parents and schools have a healthy relationship.

She offers some tips on how to establish and maintain a healthy and supportive relationship with your child's school:

1. If you have a concern about something that's happening at school, the teacher is the first person to speak to – every time. The teacher/s spends more time with your child than anyone else at the school and will know most about the situation, or will most want to know what you have to share.
2. Always make an appointment to see the teacher rather than dropping in. Even if you notice the teacher is alone in the room, they're working – preparing, marking or planning lessons.
3. Be aware that classroom behaviour management strategies don't always look the same as the ones you use at home. This is because your family of four or five is much smaller than the teacher's one of up to 30!
4. Before the meeting make notes of everything you want to cover and let the teacher know earlier so they can prepare.
5. Make notes of outcomes so you can accurately share the information with others if needed.
6. If, after meeting with the teacher, you believe your concerns haven't been addressed, make an appointment to see the principal or deputy - and take your notes.
7. It is your right as well as your responsibility to support your child at school.
8. It is the school's responsibility that the rights of every child are met within the school. There are policies and procedures in place to ensure this.

## Small school charm

**F**RESH air wafts through the windows while the sounds of chirping birds outside blend in naturally with the chatter of the children inside.

While some have lush rainforest mountains as their backdrops and others are surrounded by sugarcane fields and wide open spaces, the students inside don't really notice. They're too busy working and helping each other, especially the older students who happily give the younger ones a hand.



Sister and brother Molly and Darragh Stager have no problem with being in a composite class together. They love the small-school atmosphere at St Rita's Babinda and are the fourth generation in their family to attend the school.

Such is the life in the Diocese's smallest schools, where small enrolments actually enhance the school environment.

St Rita's, Babinda, is the Diocese's smallest school with 46 students. With a small staff, the environment is a closely knit one, and everyone knows each other.

Principal Judy Billiau is new to the small school environment this year, having been at Holy Cross in Cairns for 17 years.

"The big difference of a small school is being able to develop personal relationships with the whole school community very quickly," she said.

"It's just like one big family, students enjoy a camaraderie across all age groups."

"Our senior and junior students interact with each other in the playground and the classroom with buddies," said Vicki Conomo, Principal of St Rita's Primary

## Caring philosophy encourages all

**F**AMILY is family. You don't think too much about why one is taller than the other, why one is more athletic than the other, why one may be slower at reading or writing than another. It's just the way it is, and you help each other out when you can. It's that family type of atmosphere towards students with disabilities that is found in Catholic schools.

"We have almost 200 students with disabilities in our schools," said Lorraine Carroll, Catholic Education Services Therapy & Disability Co-ordinator.

The support team includes Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Specialist Advisory Teachers and Psychologists, and all schools have counselling services and a Learning Support Teacher to help plan and coordinate the support that an individual student may need.

Equally important, the school community

itself embraces a caring, Christian philosophy of encouraging and helping every child to achieve their best.

"We have four students with disabilities," said Katrina Miller, Principal of St Anthony's School in Dimbulah.

"These students are well accepted into our school community and are looked after by other students," she said. "They are part of the family."

"Whether they have a disability or not, every child is encouraged to become the best they can be," said Brendon Alexander, Principal of St Francis Xavier School at Manunda.

One of the students, Sidney Whipp enjoys school even though he has no vision in his right eye and limited vision in his left eye. The Year 3 student's school life has been greatly assisted by the school's caring support and help that incorporates today's modern

School, South Johnstone.

"The younger students look to the seniors as role models."

Catholic values and a strong Christian faith are the underlying foundations of these schools, which provide a caring, honest and loving atmosphere. Parents are actively involved in the school community.

Composite classes are a fact of life in small schools, which follow government-accredited curriculums for each grade.

"What I like about the composite setting is the older kids in the class help the younger children," said Debbie Daly, a teacher at St John's Silkwood, with 62 students.

"Because you're teaching two grades, the younger ones, if they're able, can pick up the concepts you're teaching the older children because they're exposed to it.

"And they're with you for two years, so you really know each child very well by the time they leave your classroom."

Brother and sister Darragh and Molly Stager, who attend St Rita's Babinda, said they have no problem being in the same class with 15 Year 4 to Year 7 students. Darragh, Student Council President, is in Year 7 while Molly is in Year 5.

"We've been in the same class for two years now," said Darragh.

technology.

"Sidney has an iPad on his desk to mirror what is on the interactive whiteboard so he can be a part of classroom life.

"He uses Acrobat to enlarge text during time on the carpet and a magnification dome to assist with enlargements at his desk. Using a slope board and darker pencils makes reading and writing easier."

St Michael's at Gordonvale has ensured that Year 2 student Corey De Gregorio, who has Cerebral Palsy, can move around freely in his wheelchair and participate in activities with his friends.

A Wheelie Mad Day at St Michael's, where students highlighted the use of everyday wheels, was another way the school supported Corey. Proceeds were donated to the FNQ Cerebral Palsy Support Group,

"We get along. Everyone gets along together."

Olivia Dickinson, Year 4, moved to the school this year after attending a larger city school in Cairns.

"In my old school I didn't know hardly anyone apart from in my class and the other class," she said.

"Here, it's better because I know everybody and I have lots of friends."

Smaller schools face their own unique challenges with less access to outside resources, activities and sports, but Catholic schools work collaboratively to address these challenges.

"Staffing and budgets are dependant on our predicted numbers and losing one family can be the difference between having three or four classes," said Katrina Miller, Principal at St Anthony's Dimbulah.

"I have worked in two larger schools and, although I loved my time at these schools, there is certainly something special about small schools.

"You get to know all students well and there are many more opportunities to build relationships and work alongside parents."

St Anthony's school motto sums up the small school culture best: "We may be small but we love them all."



Sidney Whipp

which Corey's father Mark founded.

"We started organising with St Michael's well in advance of Corey starting school," said Corey's Mum Rosanna.

"He has been very well supported physically, emotionally and academically, and he is keeping up with the curriculum.

"He loves school; he's a very enthusiastic student, and he loves the social aspect, loves his friends."

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## Learning to live a *Christian life*

FORMAL religious education is the foundation of all Catholic schools, where children are taught about the valuable teachings and aspects of religion and Catholic tradition. But there is also a “hidden” curriculum of religious lessons that all schools include every day in their own way.

“Teaching religion is essential,” said Trish Nash, Principal of St Joseph’s Atherton. “But it’s not just the teaching, it’s in all the actions, the way we treat one another, all of that.”

“It’s that hidden curriculum of religion that I think is essential.”

There are more than 10,250 students who look to the Diocese’s 26 schools and colleges for spiritual direction, from developing a greater awareness of religious identity and culture to living the lifestyle of a caring Christian, during and after their school years.

As well as learning about the Old Testament, the New Testament, Sacraments and Christian writings and wisdom, students are also taught how to live a caring and nurturing life through their behaviour.

“There are two main elements to religious education today,” explained Paul Rayner, Assistant Principal of Religious Education at St Mary’s Catholic College Woree.

“There’s the formal curriculum level, and there’s also the education through the tone of the school, the ethos of the school.”

“We might study the scripture and the historical facts of the church, but the way we act and the way we behave underpins this.”

From daily prayers and classes in Social Emotional Learning to genuine acts of kindness through the schools’ Social Justice groups, students in the Diocese are developing Christian life skills that they will carry with them throughout adulthood.

And with the world literally at students’ fingertips

these days, being guided by a religious and spiritual faith is considered by some to be more important than ever.

“In a secular world where parents and students have more access to information and digital technology than ever before, and which we’re told are tools that are making life ‘easier’ and keeping us ‘connected’, I think the role of religious education and a school’s Catholic identity for our students and families is more important than ever because, at the core, it’s about relationships,” said Josh Mullane, APRE of St Augustine’s School in Mossman.

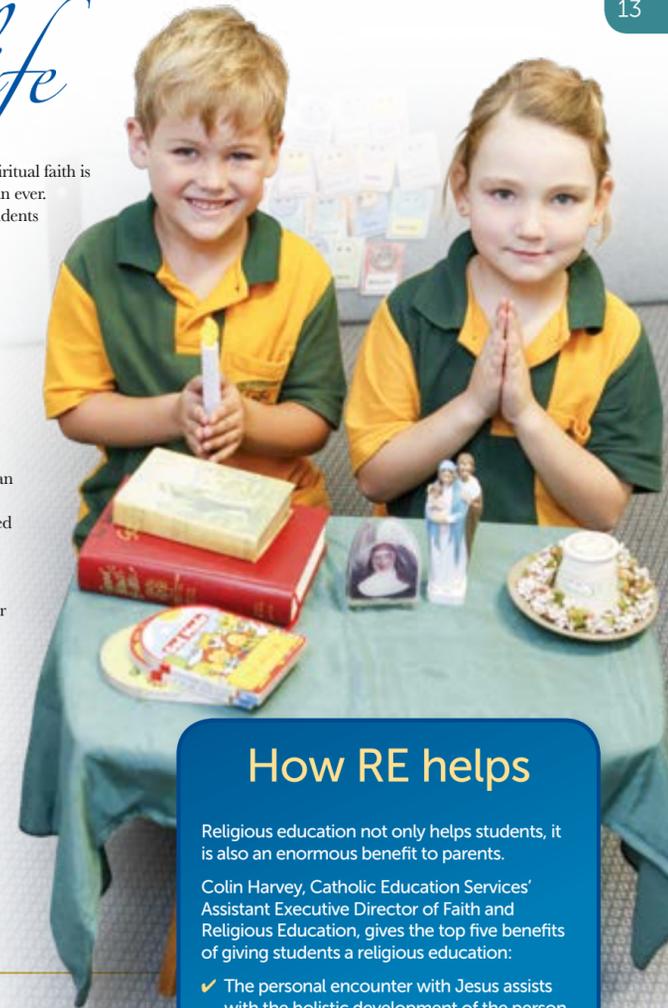
The goal of those who teach Religious Education is to ensure students have a foundation for a future that embraces Christian values and teachings.

“You’re really just sowing seeds,” explained Lucas Felstead, APRE (Middle Years) at St Andrew’s Catholic College, Redlynch.

“Not only is church attendance on the weekend very important, but my goodness our kids are out there doing so many wonderful things in their families and the community.”

“You just hope that you’ve sowed that seed that will grow with them throughout their lives.”

Religious Education is not just about learning the Catholic religion, but how we live and treat one another, as St Francis Xavier’s Prep students Kristian Turner and Katie Oliver will discover throughout their Catholic education.



### How RE helps

Religious education not only helps students, it is also an enormous benefit to parents.

Colin Harvey, Catholic Education Services’ Assistant Executive Director of Faith and Religious Education, gives the top five benefits of giving students a religious education:

- ✓ The personal encounter with Jesus assists with the holistic development of the person, which leads to children living happy and fulfilled lives in harmony with others and their environment.
- ✓ It supports the traditional values being lived in the home.
- ✓ It helps students make some sense out of what is happening in the world today, especially the challenges we face.
- ✓ It gives students a solid base for being critical, reflective and people of action (eg Social Justice).
- ✓ It is a counter to the secularisation of society as students live out the Gospel values.

## Being thankful – the role of prayer

PRAYER is essential to our Catholic school identity,” said Colin Harvey, Assistant Executive Director Faith and Religious Education.

“It unites and draws the community closer together and supports students and staff in their daily lives.”

Whether it is a group prayer or a silent one, it has the same outcome – students build a personal relationship with God. And they learn to develop their own spontaneous prayers, to pray for others and to stop and be thankful and grateful.

“God calls us into relationship,” said St Augustine’s Lionel Williamson, who helps run Reflections at the school. “If we can get young people to see that connection from the fact that we have this beautiful gift called life and God gives it to us, and he just wants us to develop it and form a relationship with him.”

“Daily prayer benefits a school community as it is a tangible expression of who we are as a faith community,” added Mr Harvey.

“Our schools are praying communities.”

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# Enrolment Guide to Catholic Schools and Colleges in the Cairns Diocese

Schools & Colleges	Type	Contact	Principal	Enrolment Information	Specialties
<b>Cairns city region</b>					
<b>St Therese's School</b> Bentley Park	Prep - Year 7 OSHCare	135/167 Robert Rd, Bentley Park 4869 Ph 4055 4514 secretary.bentleypk@cns.catholic.edu.au www.stthereses.qld.edu.au	Kevin Browning 	Prep enrolments from March 1 for following year. All other applications taken at any time of year. No current vacancies in Prep for 2014 (waiting list). Some vacancies across other year levels. Contact Vera Skinner or Colleen Will.	LOTE - Japanese, Performing Arts, Music Program (private tuition), Sporting Program.
<b>St Augustine's College</b> Parramatta Park	Years 8 - 12 All Boys Also Boarding	251 Draper St, Cairns 4870 Ph 4051 5555 admin@sac.qld.edu.au www.sac.qld.edu.au	David Harris (Acting) 	Y7/8 applications close Term 1 previous year, but taken any time. Enrolment offers early Term 2 year prior. All other year levels at any time and dependent upon available positions. Contact Lesley Willis.	Excellent academic results, strong arts and sporting programs, day schooling and boarding for boys, also boarding for St Monica's girls.
<b>St Monica's College</b> Cairns City	Years 8 - 12 All girls Also Boarding	177 Abbott St, Cairns 4870 Ph 4042 4800 office@stmonicas.qld.edu.au www.stmonicas.qld.edu.au	Kristen Sharpe 	Applications close March of previous year for entry year. Y9-12 applications considered throughout the year. Waiting lists in Years 8-12. Contact Jenny Flood.	Tradition of academic excellence, broad tailored curriculum, VET and traineeships, comprehensive instrumental music program, caring small homeroom groups, sports success, boarding at St Augustine's with daily bus transport.
<b>Our Lady Help of Christians School</b> Earlville	Prep - Year 7 OSHCare	18 Balaclava Rd, Earlville 4870. Ph 4054 2566 secretary.earlville@cns.catholic.edu.au www.olhoc.qld.edu.au	Luke Brown (from July 8) 	Applications taken at any time of the year, subject to vacancy and interview. Contact secretary.	SEL mentoring, Sporting School of Excellence, Instrumental Music program - string & wind, Italian.
<b>St Michael's School</b> Gordonvale	Prep - Year 7 OSHCare	58 Mill St, PO Box 64 Gordonvale 4865. Ph 4056 1614 secretary.gordonvale@cns.catholic.edu.au www.stmichael.qld.edu.au	Lea Martin 	Prep Terms 1 & 2 for following year, anytime for other year levels. Vacancies in all year levels for 2013 and 2014. Contact Justine Hind or Dorina Gawley.	Specialist Music & Japanese - Prep - Y7, school football and netball teams - Y5-7, instrumental teachers for private tuition, strong social emotional learning focus.
<b>St Francis Xavier's School</b> Manunda	Prep - Year 7 OSHCare	5 Atkinson St, PO Box 95 Manunda 4870. Ph 4037 9900 secretary.manunda@cns.catholic.edu.au www.xaviercairns.qld.edu.au	Brendon Alexander 	Term 2 for following year. Some vacancies across year levels, enquiries welcome. Contact Julie Storrs.	Specialist programs in Music, Japanese, strong sporting tradition, Homestay program, Cultural Exchange program, technology focus.
<b>Mother of Good Counsel School</b> North Cairns	Prep - Year 7 OSHCare	394 Sheridan St, PO Box 22 Cairns 4870 Ph 4053 6133 secretary.mthcairns@cns.catholic.edu.au www.mogc.qld.edu.au	Ruth Mallon (from July 8) 	Prep Term 1 and early Term 2 for following year. Applications for other year levels accepted throughout the year. Some vacancies across year levels. Contact Evelyn Connors.	Small community minded, strong social & emotional learning focus. Playground Guardians, Peer Support, Better Buddies programs. Specialist Japanese, Music & PE programs. Instrumental music & school choir, ukulele club. Strong ICT focus with knowledgeable team of teachers supporting.
<b>St Joseph's School</b> Parramatta Park	Prep - Year 7	11 Loeven St, Parramatta Pk 4870 Ph 4051 4041 secretary.parramatta@cns.catholic.edu.au www.stjosephscairns.qld.edu.au	Gavin Rick 	Prep late Term 1 & early Term 2 for following year. All other year levels welcome at any time. Contact Michelle Zaeh. Enrolment numbers set for smaller-sized, personal school community.	Multi-cultural, strong focus on healthy spirits, minds & bodies, social emotional and spiritual, strong academic achievement, specialist areas Health & Physical Education, Music, Japanese. Convenient inner-city location, international students, high parent engagement.
<b>St Andrew's Catholic College</b> Redlynch	Prep - Year 12 OSHCare	Intake Rd, PO Box 150 Redlynch Ph 4039 5204 enrolments@standrewscc.qld.edu.au www.standrewscc.qld.edu.au	Lee MacMaster 	Prep, Y8 interviews Terms 1 & 2 of previous year, followed by Y6 (Middle Years entry). Applications up to 3y in advance & welcome at any time (all year levels). Can be waitlists particularly in Junior Years to Y8. Contact Kieran Casey.	Stimulating co-ed environment. Broad, flexible curriculum, proven academic results, centre of Musical Excellence & Performing Arts, community sports facility, extensive extra-curricular program, Trade Training Centre, near Catholic Childcare & Kindy, tropical setting on 25ha.
<b>Holy Cross School</b> Trinity Park	Prep - Year 7	Reed Rd, Trinity Park 4879 PO Box 1026, Smithfield 4878 Ph 4057 6920 secretary.trinitypk@cns.catholic.edu.au www.holycross.qld.edu.au	Wendy Manners 	Enrolments accepted any time. Prep up to and including Term 1 for following year. Prep interviews Term 2. Some existing vacancies across year levels, waiting lists in most. Contact Margie Thorpe.	Instrumental Music, Tennis, Peer Support, Playground Guardians programs. Italian, sporting clinics, Netball, Futsal & NRL, Mandarin Club. Social & emotional learning emphasis.
<b>St Gerard Majella School</b> Woree	Prep - Year 7	63 Anderson Rd, PO Box 12131 Woree 4870 Ph 4054 4805 secretary.woree@cns.catholic.edu.au www.sgmcairns.qld.edu.au	Terry Grant 	Term 2 for following year. Some vacancies across year levels, enquiries welcome. Contact Sarah Rankine.	Specialist Arts, LOTE and PE teachers as well as choir, writing, chess and science clubs. Our students are also able to access instrumental music programs from Yr 2 onwards.
<b>St Mary's Catholic College</b> Woree	Years 8 - 12	53 Anderson Rd, Woree 4870 PO Box 259E Earlville 4870 Ph 4054 6144 office@smcc.qld.edu.au www.smcc.qld.edu.au	Pat Jones 	As early as possible in the year prior. Vacancies in all year levels. Contact Candice Devey	Instrumental Music program, Performing Arts, Trade Training Centre, Gifted & Talented, leader in Curriculum development, high academic standards.
<b>Northern region</b>					
<b>Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School</b> (Hammond Island campus P-3) Thursday Island	Prep - Year 7	Douglas St, PO Box 544 Thursday Island 4875 Ph 4069 2203 secretary.ti@cns.catholic.edu.au www.olsh.qld.edu.au	Helen Kett 	Term 3 for the following year. Vacancies in Kindy, Prep, Y3, Y5, limited in Y4. Waiting list Y1/2. Contact Helen Kett or Marsha Loban.	Choir, Music, Physical Education.
<b>St Augustine's School</b> Mossman	Prep - Year 7 OSHCare	Grogan St, PO Box 327 Mossman 4873 Ph 4098 1631 secretary.mossman@cns.catholic.edu.au www.staugus.qld.edu.au	Yvonne Devlin 	Prep enrolments end of Term 2 for following year, although applications welcome anytime, subject to vacancy and interview. Vacancies all year levels except Y4, 2013 (waiting list). Contact Yvonne Devlin or Tanya Santarossa.	Specialist Phys Ed and Information Literacy Skills (Library) program, instrumental music program, emphasis on values ed and social & emotional learning, Peer Support program, Buddy program Preps & Y7, Life Long Learning Awards evenings, small school supportive community.
<b>Western region</b>					
<b>St Joseph's School</b> Atherton	Prep - Year 7	Cnr Alice & Jack Sts, PO Box 829 Atherton 4883 Ph 4091 4211 secretary.atherton@cns.catholic.edu.au www.stjoey.qld.edu.au	Trish Nash 	Prep enrolments Term 1, 2 and 3 for following year. Applications taken at any time of year subject to vacancy and interview. Vacancies in most year levels. Contact Annette Born or Leona Lane.	Instrumental Music specialist. Specialist HPE and LOTE teachers Prep-Y7. Strong community & parish links and emphasis on social & emotional learning - student & parent programs.

Schools & Colleges	Type	Contact	Principal	Enrolment Information	Specialties
<b>St Anthony's School</b> Dimbulah	Prep - Year 7	Hyde St, PO Box 128 Dimbulah 4872 Ph 4093 5319 secretary.dimbulah@cns.catholic.edu.au www.sta.qld.edu.au	Katrina Miller 	Term 3 for following year. Vacancies in all year levels. Contact Katrina Miller.	Specialist PE/HPE program, Literacy Enrichment Teacher, Information Communication Technologies, small class sizes, experienced teachers.
<b>Mount St Bernard College</b> Herberton		15 Broadway, Herberton 4887 Ph 4096 1444 office@msb.qld.edu.au www.msb.qld.edu.au	Br Bill Tynan CFC 	Applications any time, subject to vacancy & interview. Vacancies in Y9 and Y10 only for 2013. In 2014, enrolling 50 only into Y8, limited spaces Y9. Contact school office on 4096 1485 for enrolment.	Curriculum covering all options: OP & wide range of VET subjects including Public Safety, & Indigenous Primary Health. Every Y12 student in last 3 years has received QCE. Small class sizes, Trade Training Centre, modern facilities, new state-of-the-art boarding residences for boys and girls. CRICOS registered for overseas students.
<b>St Stephen's Catholic College</b> Mareeba	Years 8 - 12	Mclver Rd, PO Box 839 Mareeba 4880 Ph 4086 2500 office@sscc.qld.edu.au www.sscc.qld.edu.au	Ida Pinese 	Term 1 for following year. Contact Denise Morrow.	Modern facilities, Trade Training Centre for certificate courses, strong technology focus in all curriculum areas.
<b>St Thomas's School</b> Mareeba	Prep - Year 7	63 Constance St, Mareeba 4880 Ph 4092 1570 secretary.mareeba@cns.catholic.edu.au stthomasmareeba.qld.edu.au	Rita Petersen 	Term 2 for following year. Interviews middle to late Term 2. Induction for new families end of Term 3. Some vacancies across year levels. Enrolment enquiries welcome to Connie Martens.	Performing Arts & Physical Education Prep-Y7, instrumental music lessons, school band, school representative council, active After School programs.
<b>St Teresa's School</b> Ravenshoe	Prep - Year 7	6 Moffatt St, PO Box 249 Ravenshoe 4888 Ph 4097 6173 secretary.ravenshoe@cns.catholic.edu.au www.stteresas.qld.edu.au	Catherine McKechnie 	Term 2 for Prep following year. Vacancies in Prep, Y1 and waiting lists for all other year levels 2014. Contact Catherine McKechnie or Debbie McDonnell.	Strong inter-school sporting program, reading rotations across year levels, AGQTP program, ICT technologies to enhance numeracy teaching, literacy enhancement teacher, community involvement.
<b>Southern region</b>					
<b>St Rita's School</b> Babinda	Prep - Year 7	7-13 Church St, PO Box 363 Babinda 4861 Ph 4067 1467 secretary.babinda@cns.catholic.edu.au www.stritasbabinda.qld.edu.au	Judy Billiau 	Prep enrolments in Term 3 for following year. All other enrolment applications welcome at any time. Vacancies in all year levels. Contact Judy Billiau or Julie Cross	Small class sizes, high teacher to student ratios, individualised learning, friendly family atmosphere. Specialist Japanese and Science lessons, strong school emphasis on social-emotional learning and individual needs of students, peer support program.
<b>Good Counsel College</b> Innisfail	Years 8 - 12	66 Owen St, PO Box 839 Innisfail 4860 Ph 4063 5300 gcounsel@gcc.qld.edu.au www.gcc.qld.edu.au	Paul Keenan 	Term 2 for following year for Catholic primary schools. Term 3 for all other schools. Interviews Term 3. No 2013 vacancies in Y8, 11, 12. Limited vacancies in Y9 & 10. Applications being taken for Y8 and other year levels for 2014-2017. Contact Catherine Mifsud.	2 Asian languages, arranging sister school in China. Specialist Music, Hospitality, Trade training centres. VET & school based traineeship & apprenticeship program. Specialist sporting program, Peninsula & State representation. Recent major building program Trade Training Centre, \$4.5m library, IT and classrooms.
<b>Good Counsel Primary School</b> Innisfail	Prep - Year 7	96 Rankin St, Innisfail 4860 Ph 4061 2994 secretary.innisfail@cns.catholic.edu.au www.gcps.qld.edu.au	Liam Kenny 	Term 3 for following year. Prep Term 2 for following year. Limited vacancies across all year levels. Contact Liam Kenny or Annette Dunne.	Japanese Y6, Chinese Y7, strong sporting program, senior & junior choir, ukelele, recorder and choric speaking groups, optmind.
<b>St John's School</b> Silkwood	Prep - Year 7	Harold St, Silkwood 4856 Ph 4065 2193 secretary.silkwood@cns.catholic.edu.au www.stjohnssilkwood.qld.edu.au	Andrew Maley 	All year, however Prep applications preferred during Term 3 of previous year. Vacancies in all year levels, including Community Kindergarten for 3 1/2 to 5 year olds. Contact Vera Sendra.	Teaching excellence in an information, communication and technologically rich scaffold. Kindergarten on site, specialist music tuition program, Japanese, modern spacious facilities, full size athletics and soccer fields.
<b>St Rita's School</b> South Johnstone	Prep - Year 7	8 Green St, Sth Johnstone 4859 Ph 4064 2153 secretary.johnstone@cns.catholic.edu.au www.stritaspcs.qld.edu.au	Vicki Conomo 	Preferred enrolment time Term 2 onwards for following year. Vacancies in Prep, Y1, Y2 for 2013, Prep 2014. Contact Vicki Conomo.	Instrumental Music Program, camp experience for all grades, attendance at numerous sporting events, small-family feel to school.
<b>St Clare's School</b> Tully	Prep - Year 7	13 Mars St, PO Box 97 Tully 4854 Ph 4068 1527 secretary.tully@cns.catholic.edu.au www.stclares.qld.edu.au	Greg Hoare 	Term 2 for following year. Vacancies in all year levels, contact Rosanna O'Kane.	Specialist Music program, strong sporting program.

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## It's a digi-kid age

GIVE a child over three years old a smartphone and chances are they can easily navigate through the applications faster than many adults.

Embracing the growth of information and digital technology, Catholic schools in the Cairns Diocese are using technology to support, enable and engage learners in the contemporary world.

Teachers of the almost 6,500 primary students and 3,800 secondary students in the Diocese already use computers, laptops and Web 2.0 tools in the classroom. But now mobile technologies and interactive devices are being incorporated

as additional teaching tools in Catholic schools.

Mother of Good Counsel North Cairns has a number of mobile devices being used across the classrooms as a learning tool.

"In Prep we use them for a lot of basic reading and writing, learning the letters of the alphabet and sight reading," said Deb McGuinness, one of the school's Prep teachers.

"They know how to orientate themselves around devices."

"Other classes are using them for creating, like making their own books, movies, etc. They're (teachers and students) really starting to become creative in their use of the technology."

An interactive whiteboard is another tool being incorporated in many classrooms across the Diocese. "We have interactive whiteboards in all our classrooms, the library and the meeting room," said St John's Silkwood teacher Debbie Daly.

"They are an ideal resource to support whole class teaching and group activities. Effective use of this tool can assist in

Prep children at Mother of Good Counsel School, North Cairns are digital natives when it comes to using tablets.



## THE ROLE OF SPORT

# Getting physical

THERE'S competition from computer games, Playstation, X-box, digital TV, the internet and social networking sites.

But the Catholic schools' Health and Physical Education curriculum has a game plan in place to help combat those opponents.

Encouraging involvement, fostering

team spirit and introducing more modern physical activities such as zumba, pump aerobics and yoga are all part of Catholic schools' focus on fostering a life of physical education, helping to draw kids away from their computers and encouraging a healthier lifestyle.

"We're always expanding, trying to incorporate more activities, trying to find that one activity that hopefully the kids are going to grab a hold of and stick with,"



says Matt Rattray, St Mary's Catholic College Sports Co-ordinator.

"You can't learn perception and depth perception on a computer screen.

"It's physically seeing it, being there and being able to judge those different game aspects, and there's a lot more unpredictability that occurs."

Sport is a valuable focus in the Diocese's Catholic schools. Encouraging physical activity, attaining personal achievements, building team spirit and enjoying the camaraderie are fundamental and life-enriching advantages of learning sport.

Through passionate teachers and under the direction of the Catholic schools' Christian ethics and spiritual guidance, students are encouraged to remain active all their lives.

"Hopefully there's something that's going to make them become life-long participants in activities," Mr Rattray added.

Every school offers physical education classes and team sport as part of their weekly curriculum. As well, there are avenues of opportunity for students to compete at inter-school, regional, state and national levels in a variety of different sports like rugby, netball, cross country running, swimming and many others.

Even during school hours students have the opportunity to check out and try a new sport in their own time. Some schools, like St Andrew's Catholic

Enjoying tossing around a footy after school are St Augustine's boarders Finn Cameron and Hugo Walker

focusing pupils' attention and increase engagement."

Teachers planning effective multi-media learning experiences using an interactive whiteboard can engage the students in a myriad of ways. Providing drawing tools to write freely on the whiteboard, using sound and movement to help stimulate learning and literacy are just some of the learning experiences that can be enhanced by this technology. The software that operates the board provides the teacher with a way to save lessons and share notes with other teachers in their school and across the Diocese.

Catholic school students are also using flip cameras and video photography to demonstrate their knowledge. "Photography is an art form and students also use photographs and video in all curriculum areas," said Debbie Daly. "For example, they can use digital images to make stories in English or to capture what is happening in science lessons.

"The tablets have some really fantastic apps where students can add text or record sound to add to images. "This is so easy to do on this new technology that even our youngest learners are able to do it."

"The best thing about tablets and flip cameras is that they offer students a way to be creative.

"They are not just memorising and regurgitating facts, they are using and showing what they know and understand by applying their knowledge in a creative and analytical way."

"You can't learn perception and depth perception on a computer screen."

College Redlych, have zumba classes for the junior students during lunch breaks.

"Our zumba instructor comes in and does a lesson with the junior school during lunch hours on Wednesdays, and the kids just love it," said Aaron Hume, Sports Co-ordinator at the College.

"There's about 150 other students watching them and joining in. They all just love it.

"A lot of students are learning that there are other physical activities out there that are good for their health, without them having to run around and kick a ball."

While playing competitive team sport is not for every student, those who do can gain extra life skills.

"To me, it builds character but I think it goes deeper than that," said Lionel Williamson, Athletics and Rugby League Coach at St Augustine's College Cairns.

Lionel should know. He is a former rugby league player of the 1960-70s and was selected to play in Australia's 1968 World Cup squad, where he scored two goals in the final to help Australia win.

"Yes, it is character building but it also builds and develops the spirit, the spirit of being able to become bigger than the situation, to grow into that situation where you're suffering with pain, or you're struggling – your mates are with you and they'll lift you up and you go and walk the extra mile.

"And kids never forget that."

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

# On a mission to help others



Bethany Hogan and Lauren Elliott from St John's Silkwood with their Shoeboxes of Love for Bundaberg flood-affected school families.

It seemed a natural thing to do for the community at St John's School at Silkwood to rally together to produce "shoeboxes of love" for flood-affected school families in Bundaberg earlier this year.

St John's had been the recipient of a similar random act of kindness from an Adelaide school in 2011 after Cyclone Yasi devastated the Cassowary Coast.

The project was developed by the school's Mini-Vinnies committee, a group co-ordinated by the student leaders. Each school family was asked to prepare a shoebox of essential items such as toiletries to be distributed to families at the flood-affected Bundaberg East State School. Some families prepared several boxes.

"But we did something more," said St John's Principal Andrew Maley. "We included a personal letter in each box to tell the Bundaberg families they were very much in our thoughts and prayers at a difficult time, and relating some of our experience with Yasi."

Andrew later spoke to the Bundaberg East Principal who was quite overwhelmed that a school so far away could be thinking of them at such a time of need. He said the project also helped the Silkwood school community as part of their ongoing "debrief" after Yasi.

"For our school it is about being witness to the Catholic ethos of making a contribution and giving assistance to others without necessarily receiving anything in return," he said.

Each Catholic school in the Diocese of Cairns runs similar programs where the gospel teachings about compassion and care for those less fortunate and in need find practical application in school activities.

On most Mondays a mini bus full of St Andrew's Catholic College senior students makes its way to the Red Cross Blood Bank for the students to provide blood donations.

"Our students learn the concept of reciprocity... in giving they receive. It's something they take with them as they enter their adult lives."

Last year the college was the number one school in Queensland and the number one school in Australia for its size for the number of blood donations. Every Friday morning, four Year 12 students on the St Augustine's roster make their way to the North Cairns Red Cross Donation Centre for their blood contribution. St Mary's students do the same and also volunteer at St Vincent De Paul on Saturday mornings.

Meanwhile, on a regular Saturday night St Andrew's, St Augustine's and St Monica's College Year 12 students along with St Gerard Majella staff volunteer for Rosie's Van outreach in Cairns, sharing coffee and companionship in inner city parks with the homeless and destitute.

St Andrew's outreach coordinator Melissa Milton said students are asked in their senior years of schooling to become aware of the importance of community through completing 50 hours of service to others. Many students complete well in excess of these hours through their contribution to the Rosie's outreach, the blood donation challenge and the College's Wednesday afternoon community service activities.

"Our students learn the concept of reciprocity from being involved in our community service program – in giving they receive. It's something they take with them as they enter their adult lives."

## Making a difference

A DISTINGUISHED guest will be inspiring students and educators alike when he visits the Diocese during Catholic Education Week activities from July 21-27.

Chief Executive Officer of the Edmund Rice Foundation, Anthony Ryan, who is also the Ambassador for this year's Catholic Education Week will be in Cairns on July 25 to help celebrate the week.

Anthony personifies Catholic Education Week's theme of 'Making a Difference - Inspired by Jesus'.

One of his passions is working with the Christian Brothers Oceania Province to help the poor in other countries.

"When you see dozens of children sifting through dumps in the slums near Nairobi, you know that the world is not as it should be," he said.

Anthony's latest initiative was called Gone Fishing and it involved taking small groups of corporate leaders overseas to see the work of the Edmund Rice Foundation first hand.

"Instead of taking a couple of weeks off to literally go fishing or skiing for example, I'm challenging corporate leaders to get out of their comfort-zone and see some of

the challenges that people are facing around the world and the work being done to help them."

Joining Anthony on that trip was John Lazarous from Brisbane, director of The Coffee Club, one of Australia's largest franchise groups. Mr Lazarous said seeing the slums of Kenya inspired him to help by funding a café to be run by school leavers desperate for a chance at a better life.

Catholic Education Week in Queensland is held in Term 3, Week 3 each year allowing all Catholic education ministries to celebrate their distinctive mission and share the great things they are doing with their school, parish and wider communities.

Anthony believes the theme of this year's Catholic Education Week – Making a Difference Inspired by Jesus – is perfect.

"I think that fits very, very well into the whole concept of what Catholic Education is all about, that holistic approach," he said.

"For me, the message very much is Catholic Education has to be about what we do for life, it's not just about from Prep through to Year 12."



Catholic Education Week ambassador Anthony Ryan, pictured here with students from St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace where he was a past student, will be in Cairns on July 25. Anthony personifies this year's theme of 'Making a Difference – inspired by Jesus' through his work to help the poor. Catholic Education strives to make a difference in the lives of individuals and in the wider community by challenging young people to live out the message of Jesus and to reach their full potential as compassionate, contributing, life-giving members of society.

# Home away from home

It can be a daunting experience living hundreds of kilometres away from home and starting a new school where you know no-one, but the students at Catholic Education's three boarding schools in the Cairns Diocese have discovered advantages to boarding life they didn't expect.

After an initial bout of homesickness, which is a natural experience for most boarders, a change happens and students start loving their home away from home.

"Once they get over that initial change of culture period, which takes them about two or three weeks, they get into it and you reckon they'd been here all their lives," said Lionel Williamson, one of St Augustine's College's Boarding Supervisors and the College's former Head of Boarding.

As well as gaining extra academic focus with daily study time, students living on campus soon discover a range of other benefits not found in regular school curriculums – a new sense of independence, being part of a large family of people who genuinely care and gaining a deeper understanding of the Catholic values of loving, caring and respecting each other.

There are more than 300 students in the three boarding campuses. St Augustine's College has almost 150 male boarders and also houses 52 girls from St Monica's College. Mount St Bernard College Herberton has 109.

Students come from all cultures and backgrounds. Some are from small towns like Dimbulah and Herberton, while others travel from remote areas like the Torres Strait and

Papua New Guinea. All want the same thing - a better academic education in a Catholic environment.

"It's like we're all brothers and sisters here," explained Year 11 student and Mount St Bernard boarder Titus Polorajja, from PNG.

"It's a good Catholic environment; it's really respectable. It's more like you're preparing for real life."

All boarders have one to two-hour study sessions daily, except Saturdays, and all schools have activities and sports organised for after school and weekends. Full-time boarders enjoy organised excursions, camping and outings on the weekends. These activities, as well as sharing daily meals with each other, help bring the groups closer together, fostering Christian principles.

Weekly boarders for whom home is a little closer to the college, enjoy all the benefits of boarding but also get to go home on weekends to spend time with their families.

"The challenges for the kids, particularly the full-time boarders, are being away from home long term, and a lot of time they're a long way from home, so they miss their homes and miss their parents," St Augustine's Head of Boarding Brian Burgess said.

"But boarding here is, I think, a kind of good reflection of what home can be.

"We have very caring staff, who are attentive to the needs of the kids and who genuinely care."

All boarders have their own rooms within a larger dormitory, so all rooms have their own

walls and privacy. Each room has a bed, desk, drawers and is individualised by the student's own personal items, mementos and décor. The dorms themselves have living areas and common rooms, showers, bathrooms and kitchen areas for students to share.

Settling into boarding life is easier for some than others, but each school has plenty of shoulders for students to lean on if needed, both from teachers/staff members and fellow boarders.

"Sometimes, when they first come they find it hard, they get a bit homesick, but the culture here is the kids help each other and the staff are really good," explained Lionel Williamson of St Augustine's.

"And sometimes you've got to talk them through it, be with them, just be with them, and assure them it's going to be okay."

First-time St Monica's College boarder Bridget Kenny, a Year 11 student from Innisfail, admitted to being uncertain about moving away from home and coming to a new school.

"I thought coming to a boarding school was going to be a scary thing, but Geena (a new friend) was really good and the grade 12s lent me a hand whenever I needed it," she said.

"Everyone has been really nice."

Ruth Naawi from the Torres Strait, who is the Year 12 Boarding Captain at Mount St Bernard's Herberton, echoed Bridget's sentiments.

"The first time I came here, they were really open and made me feel really welcome," she said. "It made me feel really good."

As well as leaving boarding schools with strong academic achievements, students take with them genuine Christian life skills such as compassion, understanding and respect.

And they make some great friends along the way.

"I've made friends here that I'll probably keep for a long time," said St Monica's Geena White, a Grade 12 boarder from Weipa.

"The girls are really nice and the teachers are really nice. And I haven't been homesick in three years."



## Choir at work

Having been the champions in their division at the Cairns Eisteddfod for 19 years now, the choir at Our Lady Help of Christian schools are practising hard for the competition.

While the choir, led by Jan O'Donnell, Janelle Catalano and Katie O'Donnell, is working hard in preparation, they are also focussing on giving it their all, regardless of the outcome.



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St Monica's College students Geena White and Bridget Kenny chill out in one of their private rooms at St Augustine's College.

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# Fun-raising

Students in Catholic schools are always opening up their hearts to the less fortunate and lending a hand wherever possible.

Here are some of the ways Catholic schools have been helping to make the world a better place:



**C**AR washes, raffles, bake-offs and cooking the school breakfast were all in a day's work for 22 students from St Stephen's Catholic College who raised funds for Diabetes Australia by competing in The Great Wheelbarrow Race. The students spent three days pushing their barrow 140 kilometres from Mareeba to Chillagoe, competing against more than 450 competitors.

Rachael Stefanutti and Jacqui Green-Lea'uaae from St Stephen's Catholic College take part in The Great Wheelbarrow Race, raising funds for Diabetes Australia.



**A** CRAZY Hair Day and Pancake Day were some of the fun ways students at St Augustine's Mossman raised money for Caritas' Project Compassion. As well, Year 4 students raised extra funds by selling hand-made jewellery, Year 2 students sold muffins in a local café and Year 6/7 students used their printmaking skills learned in Visual Arts to sell Easter cards.

Luke Trezise, Brock Girgenti and Harrison Belcher join in the fun during Crazy Hair Day at St Augustine's at Mossman.



**W**HEN students at St Thomas's Mareeba were asked to put their hands up to celebrate Harmony Day, they didn't realise the teachers actually meant putting their hands up literally.

But that's what they did for Harmony Day, a day to celebrate cultural respect and reinforce the school's mission to respect the individuality and uniqueness of each member of the community.

Students decorated hand templates to represent their family's cultural heritage, which became the features of the school's Hands Up for Harmony garden. Cooking, beading, games and dot painting were other activities to mark the day. Teachers got into the spirit too, with one teacher sharing her Irish dancing skills with students and teachers.