

# Faith in the Future

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CELEBRATING 200 YEARS

*Faith in the future*





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# Bicentenary of Catholic education launched nationally across Australia

On 18 February 2021, a virtual launch was streamed for Catholic school communities across Australia to mark the commencement of the bicentenary celebrations of Catholic education.

The event offered an opportunity for educators, leaders, students and their families in Catholic schools, education offices and universities to join together to mark this significant occasion.

The virtual launch included students and teachers from St Patrick's Primary and Parramatta Marist schools in the Diocese of Parramatta.

These schools have linkages to the first official Catholic school opened on Hunter Street, Parramatta in October 1820.

St Patrick's Primary, Parramatta parent representative Michelle Tamaro and Sr Loreto O'Connor RSJ, from the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Penola, South Australia also took part in the launch.

Their participation celebrated those who have served in Catholic education since its earliest days, in particular the contribution of families, religious orders and clergy in the foundation of schools across Australia.

National Catholic education executive director Jacinta Collins said the bicentennial celebrations recognise the enormous contribution of Catholic schools in Australia.

"Over 200 years Catholic schools have educated millions of Australian

students," Jacinta said. "Australian Catholic schools have a long and proud tradition of delivering high-quality, faith-based education.

"The bicentenary is an opportunity to celebrate those who have served in Catholic education since its earliest days; the contribution of religious institutes, clergy and lay people in the foundation of schools in cities, rural and remote parts of Australia; and the continuity of this mission with the leaders, staff, families and the wider Church community today.

"We look forward with great hope and faith in the future of Catholic schools by continuing to respond to our mission of meeting the educational and spiritual needs of young people and our communities," she said.



NCEC chair Nicholas Moore, executive director Jacinta Collins and chair of the Bishops Commission for Catholic Education, Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP. Source: Peter Rosengren.



St Patrick's Primary Parramatta students, Amariah Tamaro and Emmanuel Missak delivered the Acknowledgement of Country.

National Catholic Education Commission chair Nicholas Moore said Catholic education has grown over two centuries into the largest school sector outside of government.

"It's a remarkable achievement that Catholic education has successfully responded to meet the needs of Australia's changing population, and economic and social circumstances over 200 years," he said.

"As we celebrate this significant milestone, it's timely to take stock of all that has been achieved and to look ahead to identify how we can better deliver an excellent standard of

Catholic schooling for generations of young people to come," Nicholas said.

Chair of the Bishops Commission for Catholic Education Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP said that Catholic families, teachers and students should be very proud of the 200 years of Catholic education.

"It is an extraordinary achievement and gives us great hope for the future, that we will continue to make this major contribution to the social capital of this country and to the individual development of every child that is entrusted to us," Archbishop Anthony said. ●



### Kate Rigby

YEAR 8, ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE, LAUNCESTON TAS

Catholic education has impacted my life in many positive ways. The things I have learned, and the experiences I have learned from, have allowed me to become a kind and compassionate human, develop my own understanding of Catholicism, and expand my overall cultural understanding of the world. I hope students continue to be exposed to the fact that the basis of almost all religions is being a good person and doing good for others, and that they should strive to do this their whole life. ●



Students from Clare's Primary, Officer.

Watch the full National Launch via our [YouTube channel @NatCathEd](#)



# 200 Years Young: Australian Catholic bishops release pastoral letter on Catholic education

The Australian Catholic Bishops released a pastoral letter for school leaders, staff, students and families to mark the 200th anniversary of Catholic education in Australia.

The letter, *200 Years Young*, details the development and expansion of Catholic schools over the past two centuries, and recognises the contribution of religious, clergy and lay people to the foundation of Catholic education. It also acknowledges the distinctive role Catholic schools play in educating and forming young people of faith and service in their communities.

Chair of the Bishops Commission for Catholic Education Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP called on all those involved in Catholic education to acknowledge this significant milestone in the life of the Church.

"From very humble beginnings with the opening of the first official Catholic school educating just 31 students located on Hunter Street in Parramatta, Catholic schools have grown to educate more than one in five Australian students, with many

others attending Catholic preschools, colleges and universities," said Archbishop Anthony.

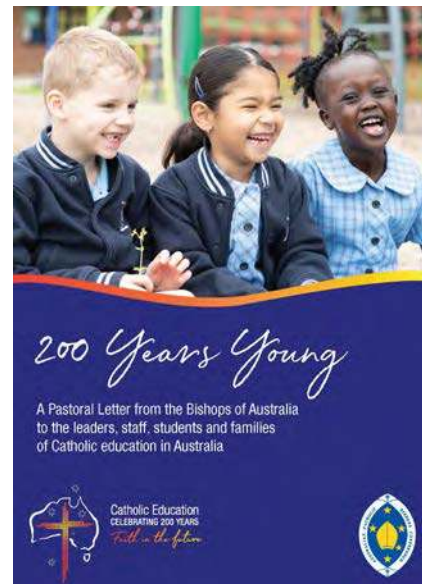
"We are fortunate to have Catholic schools in most towns and suburbs, and university campuses in most capital cities, serving students from diverse backgrounds and beliefs. While they are no longer all from poorer families, as so many were in the first century-and-a-half of Catholic education, we continue to welcome and ensure our schools are accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, refugees, those with disabilities and students who are financially disadvantaged.

**"Catholic schools have educated a significant proportion of the nation's young people, offering a distinctive vision and values, complementing the state systems, and enabling choice and diversity in education."**

— *200 Years Young* p. 4

"Alongside families and parishes, Catholic schools are the Church's principal meeting point with young people, and are integral to the Church's mission of transmitting the faith to the next generation and forming young people as future contributors to Australian society.

"I commend this pastoral letter to you and congratulate all those involved in Catholic education on this historic milestone in the life of the Church in Australia," Archbishop Anthony said.



National Catholic education executive director Jacinta Collins welcomed the pastoral letter and the ongoing commitment of the Bishops to provide a faith-based education for Australian families.

"We are in a unique position in Australia that we have the support of successive governments to the funding of Catholic and non-government schools. This support has enabled our schools to be accessible to families that seek a faith-based education for their children and ensures diversity in school choice," Jacinta said.

"But it also relies on the commitment of Church leadership to actively support and foster the mission of Catholic schools and the work of many other Church agencies such as Catholic hospitals, social services and charities that contribute enormously to the social fabric of Australian society." ●



Students from Good Shepherd Catholic School Rasmussen, Townsville.

The pastoral letter is available to download from [www.ncec.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au)

# The first official Catholic school in Australia started in Parramatta

On 16 May 1935, *The Catholic Press* newspaper declared that "Parramatta deserves the title of The Cradle of Catholicism in Australia".

It was in Parramatta that the first Irish Catholic convicts settled and where the first Catholic priest, Fr John Therry, founded the first official Catholic school in October 1820.

The school was established on Hunter Street, Parramatta where historians believe 31 students were taught, seven of them Protestant. George Marley (also identified as George Morley), an Irish convict, ran the school and provided rudimentary learning in reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic and bookkeeping.

The weekday program of learning was practical and secular, with the permission of Fr Therry. On Sundays Marley taught his Catholic students separately on matters of faith.

In 1838, when the first St Patrick's Church was built, the teachers in Parramatta were James and Eliza Hayes, there were 90 pupils and the



Old Marist School in Parramatta.

grant from the government for the school was 80 pounds.

Lay teachers for both boys and girls conducted Catholic schools in the Parish until the 1870s, when the Marist Brothers came and Catholic denominated schools ceased to receive government subsidies.

St Patrick's Primary, Parramatta and Parramatta Marist High in

Westmead both trace their origins back to this first school. It seems at least two other 'Catholic' schools were established in New South Wales before the school established by Fr John Terry. One school is thought to have opened between 1803 and 1806, the second early in 1817. However, both schools were closed by 1818. ●



Old Marist School House in Parramatta.

Source: Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta.



# Bicentenary celebrations across Australia

Around the country, local celebrations and events have been held in state, territory, diocesan and school communities for the launch of 200 Years of Catholic education in Australia.

## Armidale

On 19 February a Mass was celebrated by Bishop of Armidale Michael Kennedy at Our Lady of the Angels Chapel Armidale, attended by school principals, Catholic Schools Office (CSO) and diocesan staff for the bicentenary of Catholic education.

CSO director Chris Smyth delivered an address on the history of Catholic schooling in the Armidale Diocese.

"There was no local diocese when a Catholic school was opened in the small town of Armidale in 1848, in fact there was not even a parish of Armidale," he said. "It is my hope that we in Catholic schools and in the Catholic Schools Office are seen to be and continue to be seen to be a vital part of that nurturing of the people of God in our part of Australia." ●



Armidale's 200 Years Celebration Mass at Our Lady of the Angels Chapel. *Source: Catholic Schools Office Diocese of Armidale.*



Students from Good Counsel Primary School, Innisfail and Bishop of Cairns James Foley at St Monica's Cathedral.



St John's principal Megan Richardson, Sr Margaret Henderson RSM, Archbishop Julian Porteous DD, Dr Gerard Gaskin, Peter Douglas and Fr Terry Rush PP, Year 6 students Kate, Noah, Zoe and Archie. *Source: Mark Franklin, Archdiocese of Hobart.*

## Tasmania

On Friday 12 February, Archbishop of Hobart Julian Porteous DD, executive director of Catholic Education Tasmania Dr Gerard Gaskin and guests joined St John's Catholic School community to celebrate 200 years of Catholic education. St John's in Richmond is the oldest Catholic school in Tasmania providing 178 years of Catholic schooling.

During his reflection, Archbishop Julian shared the story of the beginnings and growth of Catholic education in Australia and the establishment, by Fr Philip Conolly, of Hobart's pioneer Catholic school in 1822. He also spoke about the history of Tasmania's oldest continuing school, St John's Catholic School at Richmond. ●

## Cairns

Within the Diocese of Cairns, Catholic Education Services launched the 200 years celebration with a Mass held on 11 February. The Mass was celebrated by Bishop of Cairns James Foley at St Monica's Cathedral, with student representatives attending from a number of schools in the Diocese. ●

## Toowoomba

A commencement Mass was held to launch the celebration of 200 years of Catholic education on 5 February in the Diocese of Toowoomba.

Bishop of Toowoomba Robert McGuckin reiterated the importance of the ongoing work for all involved in Catholic education in forming students



Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic Schools commencement Mass.

in their faith and enabling them to make a meaningful contribution to the world.

Toowoomba Catholic Schools executive director Dr Pat Coughlan spoke about how the theme for 200 years of Catholic education, 'Faith in the Future' links seamlessly with Toowoomba Catholic Schools' focus for 2021, 'Being distinctively Catholic'.

"Toowoomba Catholic Schools are committed to ensuring all students experience academic success within a distinctively Catholic environment," Pat said.

"We are called to provide students with advice, experiences and perspectives so that they might come to a positive individual identity that reflects our Catholic values and beliefs," he said. ●



CEWA executive director Dr Debra Sayce.

Source: Matt Biocich.

## Western Australia

On 21 February, Catholic Education Western Australia's (CEWA) held a cocktail reception in Perth to launch 200 years of Catholic education in Australia and their 50 Years Together celebrations.

As part of the commemorative reception, students from Sacred Heart College, Sorrento played their rendition of the national song for the bicentenary, 'Faith in the Future'.

CEWA executive director Dr Debra Sayce said many of the qualities and characteristics that are most admirable in our Catholic education system are inherent in the values of our faith tradition.

"While others were born of necessity in the early days of Catholic education, the commitment to faith formation, the resourcefulness, the partnership with parents, families and parish, and the care for those at the margins of society," she said.



Students and staff with Auxiliary Bishop of Brisbane Ken Howell at St Mary's Church in Ipswich.  
Source: Brisbane Catholic Education.

## Queensland

Bishop of Toowoomba Robert McGuckin celebrated Mass at St Stephen's Chapel in Brisbane for Queensland Catholic Education Commission's (QCEC) first meeting in 2021.

Commission members each received commemorative pins in celebration of the Bicentenary of Australian Catholic education.

QCEC has also produced a celebratory video for the 200 years of Catholic education, to further commemorate the occasion and honour Queensland's contribution and place in Catholic education history.

On 24 February, Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) held their launch for the 200 years of Catholic education with a liturgy led by Auxiliary Bishop of Brisbane Ken Howell at St Mary's Church in Ipswich. The liturgy was

attended by Ipswich Parish Priest Franciscan Fr Stephen Bliss and school communities from across the Archdiocese.

St Mary's Church was selected as the venue for the launch as the neighbouring St Mary's College, which opened in 1863, is the oldest BCE Catholic school.

BCE's executive director Pam Betts reflected on the impact Catholic schools had made to the lives of thousands of students.

"As I participated in the liturgy, I couldn't help but reflect on the thousands of students who attended our Catholic schools over those two centuries," said Pam. "What a difference we have made in the world. We stand on the shoulders of all who have gone before us. We owe them a great debt of gratitude." ●

Archbishop of Perth Timothy Costelloe SDB DD reflected on the future of Catholic education.

"We don't need to worry about Catholic education in the future, and if you want to know why just have a look at each other," Archbishop Timothy said. ●

## Melbourne

Across the Archdiocese of Melbourne school-based events have been held to mark the beginning of the bicentenary of Catholic education celebrations.

"In what is MACS' foundation year, we are grateful to the generations of dedicated Catholic educators who used their 'present' to enthusiastically build a schooling system with only their faith in the future for what might lie ahead," said executive director of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Jim Miles.

As part of Catholic Education Week, held from 14–21 March, hundreds of students from Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne exhibited their artwork in the annual Creative Arts Exhibition.



Catholic education alumni from the Archdiocese also talked about their work and motivation for making a difference during the Young Speakers Colloquium. ●

## Darwin

On 1 March, Catholic Education Northern Territory hosted an official launch to start the 200 year celebrations at St Mary's Cathedral, which also shares the same site as the first Catholic school, St Mary's Catholic Primary School established in 1908.

The Mass was celebrated by the Bishop of Darwin Charles Gauci, with director of Catholic Education Northern Territory director Greg O'Mullane and other guests attending.

Students from O'Loughlin Catholic College Karama, MacKillop Catholic College Darwin, St John's Catholic College Darwin, St Mary's Catholic Primary School Darwin and Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School Wanguri, participated in the Mass.

Bishop Charles said Catholic education has been extremely important for Catholic people, and beyond, over the last 200 years.

"It has provided holistic education based on our Catholic principles for thousands upon thousands of young people," he said. "As a young man, I personally benefited from Catholic schooling in South Australia during the 1960s. Education is forever evolving, and Catholic schools too are evolving." ●



MacKillop Catholic College student at St Mary's Cathedral.

## Wollongong

Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong (CEDoW) commenced their celebrations for the bicentenary during their annual Catholic Schools Week from 1-7 March with the theme, 'Faith in the Future'.

Catholic schools across the Diocese participated in a range of activities including Masses, liturgies, open days, as well as historic games to celebrate.

CEDoW Director of schools Peter Hill reflected on the important work of Catholic education.

"Since the very first Catholic school was established in New South Wales in 1820, countless children and young people have benefited from the



Holy Cross Primary, Helensburgh, unveiled their history timeline for bicentenary celebrations. Source: CEDoW.

dedication and commitment of faith-filled staff in our Catholic schools," Peter said.

"When future students and educators stop to celebrate 400 years of Catholic education in Australia, I'm confident they will remember our contribution as one full of passion, faith and tireless dedication to the mission of Catholic education," he said. ●



## Canberra & Goulburn

On 24 February, Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn Christopher Prowse celebrated Mass at St Christopher's Cathedral to mark 200 years of Catholic education. The Mass was attended by Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn director Ross Fox, National Catholic Education executive director Jacinta Collins and representatives from school communities and the education office.

Ross said it is now almost 60 years since Catholic school parents and students highlighted the inequity of government support



for Catholic Schools through the Goulburn school strike.

"The 56 Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn serving 21,000 students share a wonderful heritage and tradition built up over 200 years in Australia," he said.

The Mass was live streamed to schools across the Archdiocese for those unable to attend. ●

Above: Ross Fox, St Joseph's Primary, Bombala principal Susan Tighe, REC Alice Shannon and students Miller Stewart and Connor Reed with Archbishop Christopher Prowse. Right: Ross Fox, Sr Kate McMahon, Jacinta Collins, Archbishop Christopher Prowse and Sr Kathleen Keenan.





## Sydney

Individual schools across the Archdiocese of Sydney commenced their celebrations for the 200 years of Catholic education in Australia.

Holy Spirit Catholic Primary, Carnes Hill students celebrated with a special outdoor assembly and liturgy, with prayer and song. Students from Mary MacKillop Catholic College Wakeley were presented with prayer cards and the Year 12 Student executive leaders led the College in prayer and singing of the 'Faith in the Future' national song. St Fiacre's Catholic Primary, Leichhardt students participated in a range of activities including historical playing games and joined in a special prayer liturgy.

Sydney Catholic Schools executive director Tony Farley visited Marist Catholic College, North Shore, one of Sydney's oldest schools, to sit down



St Patrick's Catholic Primary, Summer Hill students with the 200 years prayer card and pin.



with his former St Mary's classmate George Germanos and teachers, Sr Kathleen and Sr Margaret, to talk to them about their lives and work.

Tony said for much of Catholic education's 200-year history, religious sisters and brothers ran and staffed Catholic schools.

"The story of Catholic education is inextricably linked to their commitment and personal sacrifice." ●

## Wilcannia-Forbes

Catholic Education Wilcannia-Forbes (CEWF) held a Mass at Red Bend Catholic College, celebrated by Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes Columba Macbeth-Green OSPPE DD on St Patrick's Feast Day (17 March), with schools representatives attending.

Director Anthony Gordon said the history of Catholic education in the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes is rich and colourful.

"The first Catholic school in our Diocese was founded in Forbes in 1862," he said.

"It is inspiring to reflect that we carry on the great personal sacrifices and gave devoted service to our parish schools."

During his homily, Bishop Columba reflected on the difficulties faced by the religious orders that first arrived in the Diocese in the late 1800s and the challenges of teachers working in the Diocese today.

Bishop Columba said it is a time to thank our teachers and collaborators in Catholic education, parents and students.

Top: Students from Galilee Catholic Primary, Bondi. Above: Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green, students, staff, clergy and other guests from Wilcannia-Forbes. Source: CEWF.

How is your school community celebrating the Bicentenary of Catholic Education in Australia? Send us your stories via [ncec@ncec.catholic.edu.au](mailto:ncec@ncec.catholic.edu.au)

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Students from St John's Catholic College, Darwin at St Mary's Cathedral.



Launch Mass for Catholic Education Services Cairns held at St Monica's Cathedral.



Archie, Noah, Kate and Zoe Year 6 students from St John's Richmond, Tasmania.



Students from at McAuley Catholic Primary School, Rose Bay.



Sacred Heart College students performing at Catholic Education Western Australia's launch event. *Source: Matt Biocich.*



St Benedict College, Pennant Hills students, Juliana Azzi, Georgia Platts, Georgiana Dumapit attending the opening Liturgy.



A student from St Mary's Primary School, Ipswich at Brisbane Catholic Education's liturgy for 200 years of Catholic education.



Students with their prayer cards at Holy Spirit Catholic Primary, Carnes Hill.



# Reaching out to the world in song



Fr Rob Galea and students from Notre Dame College, Shepparton sing the national song, 'Faith in the Future'.

To commemorate the bicentenary of Catholic education in Australia a national song, 'Faith in the Future', was composed by Fr Rob Galea, who currently serves in Sandhurst Diocese.

The song is being played at Masses, special liturgies, school assemblies and 200 years events across the country.

Fr Rob is a singer/songwriter with an international fan base, founder of the not-for-profit Catholic organisation FRG Ministry and also works in Catholic education as a Chaplain.

Fr Rob said it was a great responsibility and honour to write the theme song for the 200th anniversary of Catholic Education in Australia.

Along with his friend and music producer, Luke Batterbury, Fr Rob prayed and brainstormed prior to writing and recording of the song.

He said they wanted the song to encapsulate the importance of the 200 years of history, influencing and forming the culture of Australia.

"200 Years of education is an incredible milestone and blessing,"

Fr Rob said. "We both have been influenced by Catholic education and know its power to change and form, together with the Church."

Fr Rob said the heart of the song is the line, 'We will live, love and reach out to the world'.

"We journey together: educators, students and staff; all together learning to love and serve God," he said. "This is how we bring faith in the future."

Students from Notre Dame College, Shepparton joined Fr Rob and his band to record a music video of the song used in the national launch of the bicentenary celebrations in February.

Fr Rob said the students enjoyed the filming process and the opportunity to impact people across Australia through the music video.

A video is currently in production with student groups singing, 'Faith in the Future' at iconic and significant Catholic education sites across Australia. The video will be released ahead of the national Mass on 24 May 2021. ●



**Br Nicholas Harsas, FSP OAM**  
PRINCIPAL, HOLY SPIRIT PRIMARY  
SCHOOL CARNES HILL, NSW

I have been immersed in Catholic education for a quarter of a century! As the last remaining Religious Principal in Sydney Catholic Schools I feel privileged and inspired to be part of the current generation of school leaders and staff who are as committed to the mission of Catholic education as those of the past. ●

The national song recording, lyrics and chord sheets are available via the [200 years website](https://www.200years.catholic.edu.au).

# The first religious orders to establish Catholic schools in Australia

In their pastoral letter to mark the 200th anniversary of Catholic education in Australia, the Catholic Bishops of Australia recorded their gratitude for the extraordinary contribution of the religious institutes to education in Australia. This contribution will be highlighted over the four editions of this commemorative magazine.

## Benedictine Monks

The Benedictine Monks were the first religious order to serve in Australia

and were involved in the early days of the establishment of Catholic schools.

In 1833, Fr William B Ullalthe was the first Benedictine to arrive in Sydney and was also the first Vicar General. He later became Parish Priest of Parramatta (1835). He gained approval from Governor Richard Bourke in 1833 to build a Catholic school house on Kent St in Millers Point, known as St Bridget's.

St Bridget's single story building was completed in April 1835, a partition of folding doors provided

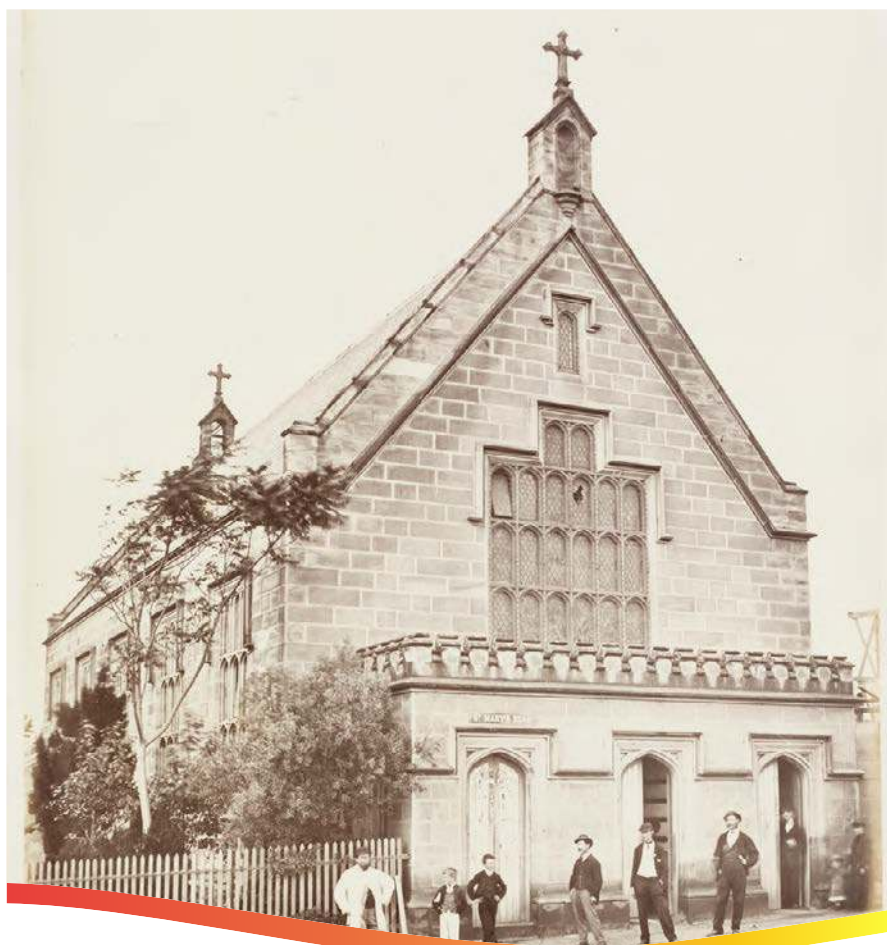
separate classrooms for the boys and girls, and the building was also used on Sundays as a Chapel. By 1839, at St Bridget's Millers Point, 76 boys were taught by Edward Hawkely and 45 girls were taught by Mary O'Brien. St Bridget's school, Millers Point remained open on the site until 1992, and today remains the oldest surviving place of Catholic worship in Australia, now known as St Brigid's Catholic Church.

Benedictine priest, John Bede Polding, was consecrated as a Bishop in London and in 1834 was appointed Vicar Apostolic with jurisdiction over what is now the Commonwealth of Australia. In 1835, Bishop Polding travelled to Australia with Fr Gregory Corcoran and three Benedictine students. The group arrived first in Hobart and a month later sailed to Sydney.

In 1836 Bishop Polding took control of the 13 primary schools in operation, seven were for boys, six for girls and all had government support. In the same year, Bishop Polding also started a secondary school for boys at the Bishop's Woolloomooloo house, which was transferred in 1838 to the St Mary's site under the name of St Mary's Seminary.

Schooling first commenced at the St Mary's site in 1824 when Fr John Therry, the first Australian chaplain, arranged for a lay teacher to open an elementary school, but it is not known how long this school continued.

In 1838, a small chapel on Parramatta St (now Broadway) in Sydney opened and was used as a school on weekdays, it later became St Benedict's Church. By 1862, St Benedict's also became a training



St. Mary's Catholic School 1872.

By Charles Percy Pickering, from the collections of the State Library of New South Wales.





St Mary's Cathedral students 2020.  
Source Sydney Catholic Schools.

of Sydney on 5 April, 1842 and then the Archbishop of Sydney on 10 April, 1842.

In the early 1860s, Archbishop Polding moved the St Mary's secondary school to Lyndhurst House in Glebe. From then until 1882 the St Mary's Cathedral school was an elementary school for boys and girls. Staffed by lay teachers paid from government funds, it also became a Model School for the training of Catholic teachers. St Mary's Cathedral College is the oldest continuing school in the Archdiocese of Sydney and today operates as a systemic school for boys from Years 3 to 12 still on its original site.

In 1857, Archbishop Polding founded an Australian order of nuns in the Benedictine tradition, the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, to work in education and social work. Archbishop Polding also helped establish the University College of St John's in Sydney, founded on 2 July, 1858.

school for Catholic teachers, and by 1873, 500 students were enrolled at the school, with one lay teacher. While St Benedict's school closed in 1981, the parish church and buildings were restored by the University of Notre Dame Australia. UNDA's Sydney campus was opened by then Prime Minister John Howard in 2006 and

the St Benedict's site continues to serve the parish and the university community today.

Fr Ullathorne returned to England and recruited teachers and priests, and arrived back in Sydney in 1838 with three priests, four students and five religious sisters.

Bishop Polding became the Bishop



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## Sisters of Charity

On 31 December 1838, five Sisters of Charity arrived in Sydney from Ireland, the first women Religious in Australia.

Mary Aikenhead, the foundress of the Sisters of Charity sent the Sisters at the request of Bishop Polding who desired a community of Sisters to work with the convict women.

The first five Sisters were Sr M John Cahill, Sr M John Baptist de Lacy, Sr M Francis de Sales O'Brien, Sr M Lawrence Cater and Sr M Francis Xavier Williams.

Before moving to Parramatta to commence their work at the Female Factory, the Sisters visited schools in the city and ministered to the sick and poor.

On 26 November 1839, Sr M John Cahill and Sr M John Baptist de Lacy left Parramatta and moved into a small cottage at Waverley where they visited the nearby Roman Catholic Orphan School and assisted in the education of the children.

They also visited several schools in the city, instructing children in singing, sewing and lacemaking as well as conducting a Sunday School, where they provided religious instruction.

In 1847, three of the Pioneer Sisters established a community in Hobart at the invitation of Bishop Robert Willson. Along with their work at the Cascades Female Factory, the Sisters visited the sick and poor, and provided religious



St Vincent's College, Potts Point c 1952. *Courtesy of the Congregational Archives of the Sisters of Charity of Australia.*

instruction to the girls of St Joseph's School on the corner of Macquarie and Harrington Street.

The Sisters exercised general supervision of the girls section of the school, before assuming responsibility of it at the beginning of 1848.

In 1856, Tarmons, (the home of Sir Charles Nicholson) was purchased with the assistance of Catholic benefactors.

Renamed St Vincent's Convent, it provided the Sisters with a permanent residence, and in the following year St Vincent's Hospital was established on the same site.

In 1858, the Sisters opened their first school at the Convent; St Vincent's School had both an infants and primary section.

In 1871, St Vincent's High School was opened in a separate room of the

Convent after the hospital moved to its present site at Darlinghurst.

The growth of the congregation allowed it to take responsibility of several parochial schools in Sydney following the removal of state aid in 1883.

Over the next 36 years more than 20 schools were staffed or established by the Sisters across Sydney and as far away as Bega and Bombala.

This growth later allowed the congregation to establish further foundations in Victoria and Queensland where the Sisters staffed and managed many parochial schools as well as those that they themselves established.

Many of these schools continued to be staffed by the Sisters of Charity well into the 20th century.

In 2009, Mary Aikenhead Ministries was officially constituted to carry on the work of the Sisters of Charity, ensuring the continuation of their significant contribution to Catholic education in Australia. ●

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St Joseph's School, Hobart c 1923.  
*Courtesy of the Congregational Archives of the Sisters of Charity of Australia.*



# Remembering Australian Catholic educators

A new book published by Coventry Press and features 30 biographies of Catholic educators spanning the 200 year history of Catholic education.

*Not Forgotten, Australian Catholic Educators 1820-2020* is edited by Seamus O'Grady and Anne Benjamin, and features biographies grouped in four periods. Educators were chosen for their noteworthy contribution, or are considered representative of certain groups of Catholic educators.

Each section is prefaced with an essay providing the historical context for that period, while a more reflective essay on the relevance of the chosen biographies for current educators rounds off each section.

Essays have been carefully commissioned from historians such as Charles McGee and Janice Garaty and commentators, such as Graham

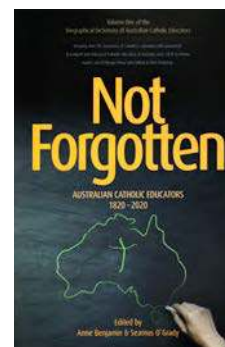
English, Bishop of Parramatta Vincent Long OFM Conv, Br Kelvin Canavan FMS AM, Dr Brian Croke and Dr Lee-Anne Perry AM.

It is the first hard-copy publication for a much larger project, the Biographical Dictionary of Australian Catholic Educators (BDACE) which was created to keep alive the stories of the people of Catholic education in Australia, to inspire current and future teachers and leaders in Catholic schools. It is hoped the dictionary will become an invaluable research tool and online resource for education and formation within Australian Catholic University.

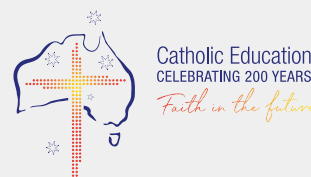
*Not Forgotten* coincides with the bicentenary of Catholic education. The brief stories of a handful of the many women and men, who since the early days of European settlement

in Australia, have made a commitment, in the name of the gospel, to conduct schools for children – Catholic and otherwise – offer glimpses into Catholic education in this country.

This book ensures that the story of those who forged Catholic education in Australia are not only not forgotten, but are honoured appropriately, in a way which can inform and influence new generations of Catholic educators. ●



Not Forgotten is available via  
[Coventry Press](#)



We're celebrating  
200 years of  
Catholic Education  
in Australia

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# What's happening around Australia

**A**cross the country, local events are being held in state, territory, diocesan and school communities to celebrate the 200 Years of Catholic education in Australia.

## 3 - 9 May 2021 Catholic Schools Week Maitland-Newcastle

The Diocese Maitland-Newcastle will hold Catholic Schools Week celebrations from 3 to 9 May 2021. ●



Students from Holy Name Primary Forster, Catholic Education Diocese Maitland-Newcastle.

## 3 - 9 May 2021 Catholic Education Week South Australia

Catholic Education South Australia is celebrating Catholic Education Week from 3 to 9 May 2021. ●

## 24 MAY 2021 National Mass

A National Mass will be celebrated simultaneously across Australia on the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians to commemorate 200 years of Catholic education in Australia.

Masses will also be celebrated in some local parishes and school communities. Some Masses will be live streamed for communities to join in the celebration. ●

## 25 - 31 JULY 2021 Queensland Catholic Education Week

Catholic schools across Queensland will be celebrating Catholic Education

Week from 3 to 9 May with the theme, A Spirited Tomorrow. ●

## 8 - 15 AUGUST 2021 Family Week

To recognise the partnership and important contribution of families in Catholic education, school communities will be invited to host a range of activities and events. More details to come. ●

## 27 OCTOBER 2021 Virtual Symposium

The National Catholic Education Commission will host its second virtual symposium to mark World Teachers Day (29 October).

The symposium will focus on some of the themes presented in the Australian Catholic Bishops pastoral letter, *200 Years Young*. ●

Access the full events calendar via the [www.200years.catholic.edu.au](http://www.200years.catholic.edu.au)

# Explore the resources on the 200 years website

**T**here are a number of resources available via the 200 years website to support school and diocesan communities celebrate the bicentenary of Catholic education including:

- National Prayer
- 'Faith in the Future' National Song
- Suggested events and activities
- Promotional video
- Bicentennial Games Quiz
- Templates, branding materials and so much more...

Add your own story of Catholic education to the growing collection of personal reflections from educators, leaders, students and alumni. Contributions to the photo/video gallery and timeline on the website are also welcome. Add your school's historical or modern-day photos.

The website will be updated with new resources regularly, so school communities are encouraged to revisit the site often to support their local celebrations and activities.



St Ignatius Junior School Norwood, South Australia.

For more resources visit [www.200years.catholic.edu.au](http://www.200years.catholic.edu.au)



# Celebrating 200 years of Catholic education in Australia



# No. 1

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