

# Faith in the Future

Commemorative Magazine • Edition 3, September 2021



**MEMORIES FROM YESTERDAY**

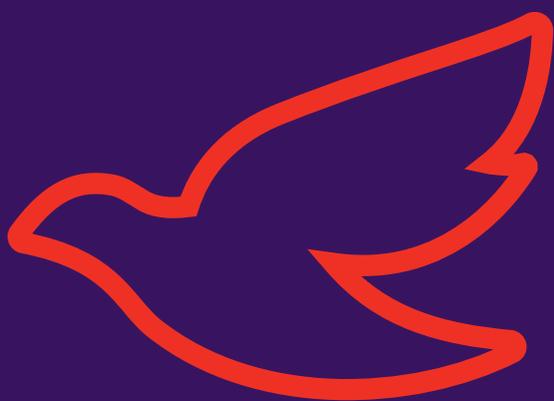
Lourdes Hill College, Hawthorne students c1919.

**MOMENTS FROM TODAY**



Lourdes Hill College, Hawthorne students today.

# Celebrating 200 years of Catholic education in Australia



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CELEBRATING 200 YEARS  
*Faith in the future*



# Role of families celebrated during the bicentenary of Catholic education

Catholic schools across Australia celebrated Family Week from 8-14 August, recognising the significant contribution parents, carers and families have made to the foundation, growth and continuity of Catholic schools in Australia over 200 years.

Family Week coincided with the Feast Day of Australia's first Saint, Mary MacKillop, who was a passionate educator and advocate for children and families, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Despite a large number of Catholic school communities currently conducting remote learning, their families were still celebrated with students taking part in virtual activities including completing colouring sheets and prayer.

National Catholic education executive director Jacinta Collins said the bicentenary is an opportunity to acknowledge the families of the 777,000 students, and their essential role across our 1,755 Catholic school communities.

"With the tremendous support of parents and carers, including those who were lay teachers in our early

schools, Catholic education has grown to serve one in five students and provide faith, excellence and access to Catholic education for millions of students," Jacinta said.

"Catholic education's history of strong family values and connection through faith, are at the heart of the work we do, supporting the learning, growth and well-being of the whole child."

Dr Debra Sayce, CEWA

"For nearly 75 per cent of that period families, alongside parishes and religious congregations, sustained and built schools across Australia, in large part without any government financial support," she said. "Today, with greater government support, our families continue to contribute through school fees and building levies to maintain and build new schools."

"Our families work in partnership with their schools in formation and learning support, volunteering, parents and friends groups, fundraising and a host of other activities that contribute to the growth and success of their children and their schools.

"The past two years have made further demands on parents and carers with long periods of home learning for many communities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and as we continue to face an unpredictable future, our families will be at the forefront with teachers in ensuring continuity of learning and formation for their children.

"On this milestone occasion, we acknowledge our First Nations families who were the first educators in Australia and recognise the contribution they have made over two centuries to the spirituality and cultural heritage of our schools.

"Catholic education also recognises parents as the first educators of their children, and the critical role they play in fostering their child's successful learning and development," Jacinta said.

Catholic education's peak parent body Catholic School Parents Australia (CSPA) supports Catholic school families through resources, consultation, advocacy and representation.

Father of five children and CSPA chair Karl Rodrigues said the Family Week celebrations are an important opportunity to recognise the contribution of families and demonstrates the confidence and faith parents have in Catholic schools.

"Over the past 200 years in Australia parents have chosen a Catholic education to complement the important role of families in supporting



Year 5 and 12 students shared the Family Week Prayer at Mandurah Catholic College, Dudley Park WA.

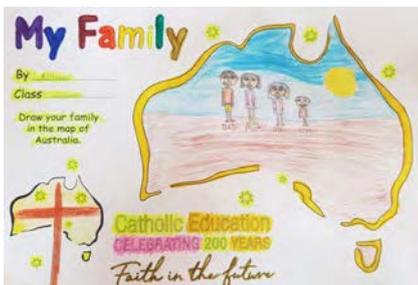
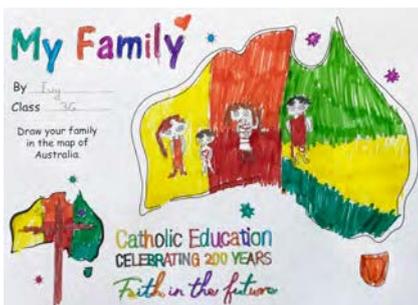


Hansen Family. Source: Padua College Mornington VIC.

their children to grow to their fullest potential."

"Catholic education provides a holistic education for children, one that is balanced across academic, spiritual, physical, cultural and motivational dimensions, as well as being based on respect and values," Karl said.

Schools celebrated locally in a variety of ways including liturgies and gatherings, by distributing the national prayer for families and hosting student



Students from Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Primary School, Kingsgrove NSW drew pictures of their families for Family Week.

activities such as interviewing their family members, drawing a picture of their family, and learning about Mary MacKillop.

"Catholic education's history of strong family values and connection through faith, are at the heart of the work we do, supporting the learning, growth and well-being of the whole child," CEWA executive director Dr Debra Sayce told *The Record*.

Western Australia's oldest Catholic school, Mercedes College in Perth, shared the story of a family where the traditions and values of a Catholic education have been passed down through four generations of students.

Third generation student Sonya Roberts said Mercedes College had been instrumental in their family's strong sense of integrity.

"So much has changed at the college but the values that would have been here when grandma and mum were students are still very much here today," she shared in a video message.

Mandurah Catholic College, Dudley Park in WA celebrated Family Week with prayer, as Year 12 students lead the Year 5 students through the family prayer. The college also marked their Patron's Day, which is the Holy Family, with a school Mass.

Throughout 2021, Padua College in Mornington VIC has been focused on re-energising their 'Parents Of Padua' (POP) group to encourage a sustainable and effective partnership between members of the school community.

Padua College principal Anthony Banks said the school sees the relationship between the student, family and the college as a partnership.

"All the research tells us that when this partnership is positive and healthy, then the child stands the best chance of success.

"We are incredibly grateful for the families of Padua College choosing to send their children here and for the sacrifices they make to enable this education possible," Anthony said.

Padua College parent Sarah Hansen said her children have been challenged to be "the best person they can be and inspired to use their God-given talents to be outward-looking and social justice minded".

"As our last child, Bridget, enters Year 12 in 2022, we feel enormously grateful for the opportunities our family have been afforded as members of a positive, creative and hope-filled learning environment," she said.

# Goulburn schools strike and the impact on Catholic school funding

During the period of the 1860s to 1880s, Public Instruction Acts were introduced by governments across the colonies offering free, secular and compulsory education. This meant government funding was no longer available to Catholic schools which had to be run solely with the support of the clergy, local parish communities and families.

By the 1950s and early 1960s, due to post-war population growth, many Catholic schools were experiencing significant increases in student enrolments that exceeded their capacity and resources. There was a lack of quality facilities in many schools, and as many as 70 students in a class.



The Canberra Times, 17 July 1962.  
Source: National Museum Australia.

The situation came to a tipping point in 1962 when the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn was financially unable to comply with government directions to improve the facilities in its schools. Under new school regulations, a Goulburn Catholic primary school, St Brigid's, was required to build additional toilet blocks to accommodate the large student population, which the parish advised they could not afford.

The school closed its doors to students in protest and on 13 July

1962 the Auxiliary Bishop of Canberra-Goulburn John Cullinane authorised the closure of all local Catholic primary and secondary schools for six weeks until the conclusion of the term.

The 2,000 Goulburn Catholic school students were instructed to attend their local government schools for enrolment on 16 July, in protest over the lack of state government funding. The government schools were unable to accommodate the additional students and the strike generated national attention and debate.

The 'Goulburn Strike' only lasted one week, but it inspired a renewed campaign by Catholic families to advocate to the government for funding. The school strike was seen as the catalyst for the re-establishment of government funding to non-government schools in Australia.

Then Prime Minister Robert Menzies committed to funding non-government schools through some 'state-aid', initially offering federally funded science blocks to all schools. In 1968 government funding was secured for Catholic schools for \$12 - \$18 per student.

In the Pastoral Letter from Bishops of Australia, *200 Years Young*, the Goulburn school strike was noted as correcting an historic injustice towards Catholic families in Australia.

"It allowed for Catholic schools to aspire to first-rate facilities, teacher training, pedagogies and curricula for all students" (p 4).

Today, students in non-government schools receive up to 80 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard of \$12,099 per primary student and \$15,204 per secondary student,

## SCHOOL FUNDING TODAY

Today funding for all schools in all sectors is calculated using the same needs-based measure, The Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) benchmark.

In 2021, the SRS benchmark for a primary student is \$12,099, and a secondary student is \$15,204, with additional funding attracted for disadvantaged students.

**\$12,099**  
Primary student

**\$15,204**  
Secondary student

In non-government schools a school's public funding entitlement is calculated using the Direct Measure of Income. The SRS base funding is reduced by the Capacity to Contribute which is based on the actual financial data of parents/guardians of the students at a school.

For more information visit [www.ncec.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au)

depending on the rate of the Capacity to Contribute level of families at the school.

Even with greater government support, Catholic families continue to contribute through school fees and building levies to maintain and build new schools.

National Catholic Education executive director Jacinta Collins said today we are blessed to have greater government support and our families continue to contribute to ensure we can make a Catholic education accessible to families.

"There are 1,755 Catholic schools, educating over 777,000 students in every major town and city, and in

many regional, rural and remote parts of Australia," Jacinta said.

"We acknowledge the contribution of the Catholic community, particularly our parents, who have contributed to their children's education through school fees and fundraising."

Trinity Catholic College, Goulburn principal Gaye McManus said the amazing campus facilities they have today have been provided through the generosity and hard work of generations of families associated with previous Catholic schools of Goulburn and its region.

"The school strike of 1962, built on this foundation, and through the courage and foresight of education and community leaders at the time, helped state and commonwealth governments become part of the great Australian story of Catholic education through the provision of funding," Gaye said. "Trinity Catholic College has as one of its student



Left: The Goulburn Catholic School Strike of 1962. Source: *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

houses, Keating House, named in honour of Dr Brian Keating, the organiser of the Goulburn strike. His servant leadership and love of community continues to be a focus for students in 2021 encouraging them to look beyond themselves.

"The toilet block at the centre of the Goulburn strike still stands today in the St Peter and Paul's Cathedral precinct and just nine years ago,

through government funding, another new toilet block was built on the Trinity campus," she said. ●

**SOURCES:**

*Goulburn Post*, 2012, "A 'strike' changed it all", accessed July 2021.  
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Henderson G, *Sydney Morning Herald*, Post, 2012, "The lessons of Goulburn resonate in schools 50 years later", accessed July 2021.  
Macdonald, E. *The Canberra Times*, "The genesis of state aid", accessed July 2021.  
National Library of Australia, "Australia's Defining Moments: Digital Classroom", accessed July 2021.  
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## ●●●● BICENTENARY PARTNER FEATURE

# CCI insuring the Catholic community for over 100 years

For those unfortunate enough to have suffered a devastating loss, like a bushfire, cyclone or a flood, insurance may be the only thing that gives them hope.

Fortunately for the Catholic community in Australia, the Catholic Church had the foresight to set up its own insurance company in 1911. Catholic Church Insurance, better known as CCI within the Catholic community, is now one of the oldest insurance companies in Australia.

Since paying their very first claim for a fire at the Singleton Convent School in the Hunter Valley in 1912, to responding to more recent catastrophic weather events, CCI has provided hope and peace of mind to Catholic schools across Australia.

A paper entitled, "The Social and Economic Value of Insurance", published by The Geneva Association in September 2012 said,

"Insurance should be perceived not only as a protection mechanism, but more importantly as a partnership that allows individuals and businesses to spread their wings and go where they might not have otherwise dared to go".

CCI has protected the Catholic community from risk for more than 100 years, partnering with the Church to support the evolution and growth of Catholic education as it spread its wings over 200 years to become the largest non-government provider of schooling in Australia.

Throughout this time, CCI has also grown to be the largest insurer of schools in Australia, and looks forward to continuing to partner with the Catholic education community to protect it from risk for the next 100 years as it dares to lead with new ways of teaching, in ever-changing physical and social environments. ●





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To mark World Teachers Day and the Bicentenary of Catholic Education in Australia the National Catholic Education Commission presents the:

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**PRESENTED BY DR LYN SHARRATT**

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**Dr Lyn Sharratt**

Dr Sharratt is a highly accomplished author, researcher and practitioner working in remote and urban settings worldwide. She is an advisor for International School Leadership with the Ontario Principals' Council; is an author consultant for Corwin Press; and consults internationally, working with system, school, and teacher leaders at all levels in Australia, Canada, Chile, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States.



**Geraldine Doogue AO**

Geraldine Doogue is one of Australia's most accomplished and versatile journalists, excelling in print, radio and television. She presented and reported for national news and current affairs television programs, as host of Life Matters, and Compass for 30 years in the challenging subjects of faith, spirituality, religion and ethics.

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# 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.

## Sisters of the Good Samaritan

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict was founded in Sydney by John Bede Polding OSB, Australia's first Catholic Archbishop, on 2 February 1857. This new Congregation, the first to be founded on Australian soil, was formed to care for disadvantaged and abused women. Polding, however, gave the congregation a broad and flexible scope in its mission and by giving the name, "Sisters of the Good Samaritan", he indicated the Sisters were to have a Christ-like attitude of compassion and care for those they served. From



Students from St Scholastica's College, Glebe circa early 1900s.

the very beginning, commitment to women and the education of young people - girls in particular - has been at the heart of the Institute's mission.

Responding to a request from the government in 1859, three Sisters were sent to take over the management of the Parramatta orphanage and school. In 1861 the Sisters were assigned to take charge of the Catholic denominational school in Sussex Street, Sydney. A year later they moved to new premises in Pitt

Street following an appeal for new buildings. The school consisted of two teachers and 325 students who gathered for classes in one single large area beneath the chapel.

In subsequent decades the ministry of Good Samaritan education spread to other Australian States and to Japan. The Sisters established their own schools and also taught in many parish and diocesan primary and secondary schools, in cities and small towns across rural Australia. They ensured that the parable of the Good Samaritan and the Rule of St Benedict were key influences in the Catholicity of the schools.

Today the 10 Good Samaritan schools educate over 10,000 students and are located in the eastern states of Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria. These schools are Lourdes Hill College, Hawthorn QLD, St Scholastica's College, Glebe NSW, Stella Maris, Manly NSW, Mount St Benedict College, Pennant Hills NSW, Rosebank College, Five Dock NSW, St Patrick's College, Campbelltown NSW, St Mary Star of the Sea College,



Students from Lourdes Hill College, Hawthorne c1919.

Wollongong NSW, Santa Maria College, Northcote VIC, Mater Christi College, Belgrave VIC and, the "jewel in the crown", Mater Dei School, Camden NSW, which is a community based school that provides education, therapy services and post school training for students with an intellectual disability or developmental delay.

On 22 July 2011, after a long period of discernment as to how the colleges could continue their specific mission in Catholic education into the future, the Good Samaritan Congregation established Good Samaritan Education (GSE) which was formally constituted as an ecclesial entity within the Catholic Church. On 1 June 2012 Good Samaritan Education assumed full governance of the 10 schools.

Enriched and inspired by the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the Rule of Benedict and the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, the mission of Good Samaritan Education is to sustain and nurture communities of learning in the Catholic tradition. Catholic education in the Good Samaritan Benedictine tradition is committed to developing students who will engage with today's world as grounded, hope-filled young people who are equipped to lead wisely, to listen deeply and to treat their neighbour and their environment with justice, love and the compassion of Christ. ●

#### SOURCES:

Sisters of the Good Samaritan [website](#), accessed 2021.  
 Good Samaritan Education [website](#), accessed 2021.  
 Mary McDonald sgs. "Journey to Good Samaritan Education", 2019. Standardised Constitution Preamble, Good Samaritan Education, 2021.  
 Terry Creagh, "Beneath the Southern Cross" Keynote, BENet Conference 2019.  
 Images courtesy of the Good Samaritan Congregational Archives.

## Presentation Sisters

The Presentation Sisters' contribution to Catholic education began in Australia in 1866. Bishop of Hobart (later Archbishop) Daniel Murphy had arranged with the Mother Superior of the Presentation Order, who also happened to be his sister, for the Sisters to travel from the Presentation Convent in Fermoy, Ireland to establish a school in the Diocese.

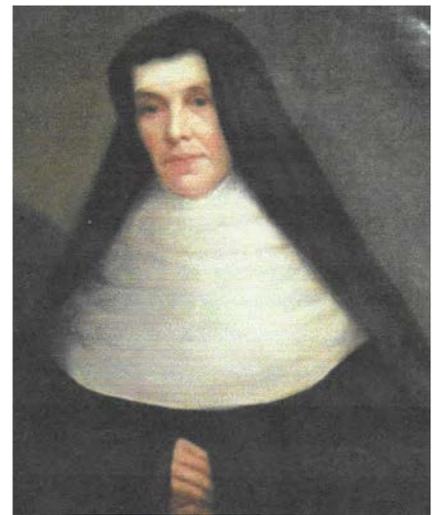


*St Mary's College Hobart First Presentation School in Australia.*

Four Presentation Sisters and five postulants arrived in Hobart after a three month journey where they first established and taught at a small local school in Richmond. On 3 February 1868 the Sisters opened Mount St Mary's convent and school next to the Cathedral in Harrington Street in Hobart. In 1873 four additional Sisters and two postulants arrived from Limerick Ireland to establish a convent and school in St Kilda, Victoria.

Presentation Sisters from Ireland continued to travel to areas across Australia to establish convents and schools. The Sisters travelled to regional towns in New South Wales, first from Kildare Ireland to Wagga Wagga in 1874 where days after arriving they founded a school with 130 children; Sisters from Lucan travelled to Lismore in 1884 and built and opened a parish school for 200 students within a month of their arrival. Four Sisters and five postulants from Sneem Ireland travelled to Geraldton in Western Australia in 1891. The Sisters from Wagga Wagga also established new foundations in Elsternwick Victoria in 1882, and Hay in regional New South Wales in 1883.

In 1899 the newly appointed Bishop of Rockhampton Joseph Higgins, also requested the Wagga Wagga Sisters staff a parish school and open a high school in the rural



*Mother Xavier Murphy, Foundress Hobart.*

town of Longreach in Queensland. In 1900, a number of Hay Presentation Sisters travelled from NSW to Southern Cross in the goldfields of Western Australia.

As well as serving the Presentation primary and secondary schools in the country, Sisters have also been engaged in teachers' colleges, universities and in Catholic Education Offices.

The Nagle Education Alliance of Australia Inc (NEAA) was established in 2013, which is an organisation of schools committed to the Presentation charism. NEAA has far reaching membership of schools that were started by the Presentation Sisters across Australia.

The Presentation Sisters mission and values remain alive in the attitudes and actions of the many students and educators, in over 200 schools and other agencies across the country, who continue to be inspired by the Presentation charism. ●

**SOURCES:**

St Mary's College, [History](#), accessed 2021.  
 Presentation Society 2016, "[Celebrating 150 years Presentation Sisters in Tasmania](#)", access 2021.  
 Mercy Partners, "[Presentation Sisters](#)", accessed 2021.

## Dominican Sisters

The history of Dominican education in Australia is a story with a number of unique foundation stories. It began on the east coast of Australia in 1867 when eight Dominican Sisters from Dun Laoghaire in Ireland willingly accepted a request from Dr James Murray to bring Catholic education to the newly created Diocese of Maitland in New South Wales.

From Maitland, the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia spread throughout NSW to the ACT, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the Solomon Islands. In these regions between 1867 and 1971 the Congregation opened 22 primary schools. Between 1867 and 1962 eight secondary schools were opened across NSW, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania. From 1876 four schools/



St Lucy's Wahroonga when it was originally located at Homebush c1940s.



Students from Santa Sabina College, Strathfield in a music class, c1910.

services were established for children with special needs, including those with hearing and vision impairment.

A community of Dominican sisters arrived in Adelaide from Ireland at the invitation of Bishop Sheil in 1868. They established a religious community and school on Franklin Street, Adelaide. In the mid 1880s a larger boarding school was needed, and land was acquired at Goodwood (now Cumberland Park). This site became the home of the Holy Cross Dominican Sisters.

In 1883, a group of six Dominican Sisters from Stone, England settled in North Adelaide to undertake nursing work. After many challenges and unexpected circumstances their commitment to their faith, prayer and service led them to move into education with the Dominican Sisters of North Adelaide opening St Dominic's Priory College in North Adelaide in February 1884.

In 1899 another community of Dominican Sisters arrived in Western Australia from Dunedin in New Zealand at the invitation of newly appointed Bishop of Geraldton William Kelly. The group of five Sisters established a mission in the gold-mining town of Cue and two years later opened a convent and school in Dongara, later known as the Dominican Ladies College which operated for 70 years. The Sisters

continued to establish a number of convents and schools across the Diocese and later opened and staffed a number of schools in Perth.

The Dominican Sisters also established their own teachers' training colleges, first in Maitland in 1926 which moved in 1955 to Wahroonga Sydney, and separate sites were also founded in Adelaide and Perth. In 1963 the first central Dominican teachers' training college known as Signadou was opened in Watson, Canberra. It provided training initially to both Sisters and lay women and from 1973 opened its training to young men. In 1978 Signadou was awarded status as a College of Advanced Education. In 1990 the Signadou Dominican College of Education operations was formally handed to Australian Catholic University for their Canberra campus.

From these humble beginnings Dominican Sisters across Australia taught and formed countless generations of young people.

In 2015 three Dominican Congregations (NSW and the two in Adelaide) collaborated to establish a new Ministerial Public Juridic Person (MPJP), Dominican Education Australia Ltd (DEA) to oversee six Dominican colleges/schools across NSW, Victoria and South Australia. The company was formed to continue their collective legacy into the

future with four lay people and two Dominican Sisters appointed to the Board of DEA.

Current board chair of DEA Eileen Young said, "In 2021, the bicentenary of Catholic education in Australia, DEA has chosen as its theme for the year 'A Rich Inheritance'. In addition to acknowledging the work of those who have come before, this theme encourages DEA to look ahead to Catholic education for future generations of students in a world that, because of its incremental rapid change, presents new visioning for Catholic school communities. How we name and face those challenges and continue to build on and strengthen the mission of Catholic and Dominican education lies before us in DEA." ●

SOURCES:

Australian Catholic University, [ACU's History](#), accessed 2021.  
Australian National Museum of Education, 2011, "A Tribute to ACU (Signadou Campus)", accessed 2021.  
Dominican Education Australia [website](#), accessed 2021.  
Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia, [The Solomon Islands](#), accessed 2021.  
Dominican Sisters of Western Australia, [History](#), accessed 2021.  
Images courtesy of the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia & The Solomon Islands.

## Marist Brothers

Although Marist Brothers had been active in the Oceania region since the 1830s, the first four Brothers designated to start a school in Australia arrived in Sydney on 26 February 1872. Br Ludovic (Pierre



Br Joachim and students from Marcellin College, Randwick.



*The first class at Marist Brothers, Forbes c1926.*

Laboureyas), a Frenchman, was the leader; Br Jarlath (Thomas Finand) was sub-director and Br Peter (Patrick Tennyson) had the dual role of cook and teacher (both were aged 25 years and were Irish). The team was completed by Br Augustine (Donald McDonald), a 21-year-old from Scotland who had only taken his vows a few days before departure.

Without delay they established the first Marist Brothers' school in Australia at St Patrick's, Church Hill which eventually included a high school class conducted by Br Augustine. With the arrival of the first Provincial of Australia Br John Dullea in 1876, the growth of Marist Education proceeded rapidly. In 1875 the Brothers had assumed control of the schools in Parramatta and Broadway (St Benedict's). St Joseph's College at Hunters Hill was established in 1881, and the North Sydney school in 1888. By 1893 schools at St Mary's Cathedral, Haymarket and Darlinghurst had been opened.

In 1893 the first school in Victoria was opened at Assumption College, Kilmore. Establishments in other States followed: South Australia, Port Adelaide in 1897; New Norcia, Western Australia in 1913 (St Ildephonsus); Queensland at Rosalie in Brisbane in 1929 and 1930 in Cairns; Canberra in 1968 and in the Northern Territory at Alice Springs in 1984. As well, schools had been established in regional areas including Bendigo, Forbes, Maitland, Newcastle, Lismore, Sale and Campbelltown.

At present there are 56 schools in the Marist Schools Australia network across all states and territories except Tasmania.

Marist Schools Australia draws together Catholic schools that shape their identity and mission through the spirituality and educational approach of St Marcellin Champagnat, which has continued to be developed by the Marist Brothers and Lay Marists. MSA provides its member schools with leadership, support and, where applicable, governance, in order that they can continue to be authentic Marist educational communities. The priority of MSA is to nurture the faith and spirituality of today's Marists, which include not only Brothers but thousands of Lay Marists and students.

The Marist Brothers educational mission has never been concentrated in schools alone. In Australia other associated endeavours have included St Vincent's Boys Home Westmead in Sydney, staffing teacher's colleges and universities (especially the Australian Catholic University), directing and working in Catholic Education Offices throughout the nation, operating special schools particularly for children with behavioural and emotional problems, extensive staff formation; Aboriginal Education and providing retreat and conference centres for staff and students of Catholic schools. ●

SOURCES:

Marist Brothers Australia, [Province Archives](#), accessed 2021.  
Marist Schools Australia [website](#), accessed 2021.  
Images courtesy of the Marist Brothers Australia Archives.



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# Contribute to the Catholic education timeline

On the 200 years website there are a number of ways your school community can help build a shared history of Catholic education in Australia including:

- Adding your school's founding date or other important milestones to the [timeline](#)
- Sharing your [personal story](#) of Catholic education
- Contributing to the photo/video [galleries](#) to share your school's memories from yesterday and moments from today.

There are a number of [resources](#) on the website to support school and diocesan communities to celebrate the bicentenary of Catholic education including:

- National Prayer
- 'Faith in the Future' National Song
- 'Faith in the Future' Australian Student Version video
- Suggested events and activities
- Templates, branding materials and much more...

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



**October 1820 – First Catholic School in Australia**  
The first Catholic school in Australia was founded in October 1820 by Irish Catholic priest John Therry. The school, which Catholic historians believe was in Hunter Street, Parramatta, taught 31 students – sixteen of whom were Indigenous. An Irish Catholic convict, sent to the colony being convicted of embezzlement, named George Marley opened the school for Fr Therry and ran it for three years. This school was transferred to the site of the current Parramatta Marist School Junior in 1837, Parramatta Marist High School, now located in Westwood NSW traces its origin back to this first school. It seems at least two other Catholic schools were established in New South Wales before the school opened by George Marley. One school is thought to have opened between 1818 and 1820, the second early in 1817. However, both schools were closed by 1818. Photo: Old Parramatta School, Canberra, Circa 1960.

**1824 – St Mary's Cathedral College**  
In 1824, St Mary's Cathedral College in Sydney was founded.

**1833 – Early Colony schools**  
By 1833, 19 Catholic schools in Australian Colonies, their early schools were opened and run by lay people.

**1836 – Bishop Polding**  
Bishop John Bede Polding arrived in Sydney in 1835 and took control of Catholic schools. By 1836, there were 13 primary schools in operation, seven are for boys, six for girls and all have government support. Photo: Bishop John Bede Polding public domain.

**1838 – Sisters of Charity arrive**  
In 1838, five Irish Sisters of Charity arrive in Sydney in response to a request from Archbishop John Bede Polding. In the early years the Sisters conducted visits to various schools and taught catechism.

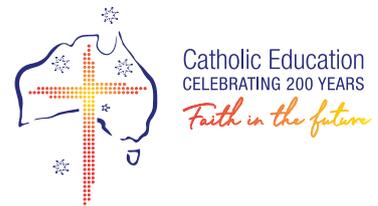
**1843 – Christian Brothers arrive**  
In 1843 the Christian Brothers arrive in Australia.

**1843 – First Catholic school in WA founded**  
In 1843, the first Catholic school opened in Western Australia by Fr John Joubert. In December 1843, building commenced on a small church, St John the Evangelist, that became Perth's first cathedral and contained a school in the building.

**1846 – Sisters of Mercy arrive**  
In 1846, the Sisters of Mercy arrive in Australia.

**1847 – Sisters of Charity arrive in Hobart**

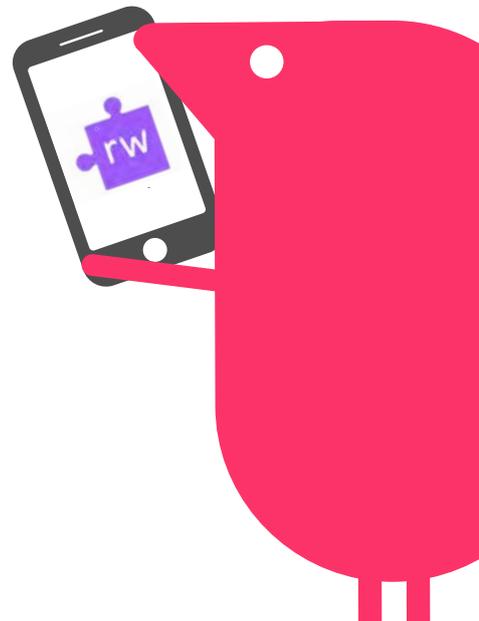
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# Bicentenary highlights across Australia



From top, left to right: 1. Infant Jesus School, Morley WA. 2. St Xavier's Primary, Gunnedah NSW students wearing the 200 years lapel pins. 3. Students from St Raphael's Catholic School, Cowra NSW. 4. Students craft 200 years glasses at St Francis of Assisi Regional Catholic Primary, Paddington NSW. 5. St Agnes' Catholic Primary, Matraville NSW students taken prior to the current lockdowns. 6. Students from St Kieran's Primary, Brighton QLD.



From top, left to right: 1. Students and staff from St Rita's Primary Schools, Babinda and South Johnstone in the Diocese of Cairns QLD. 2. St Raphael's School, Parkside SA display their handmade hearts where they shared what they value about their school. 4. Students from Warlawurru Catholic School in the Lunja Community, Red Hill WA. 5. Tasmanian Catholic schools gather to celebrate Mass for the bicentenary and Catholic Education Week. *Photo by Katrina Allen*. 6. St Mary's Parish School, Goondiwindi QLD marks the 200 Years of Catholic Education with a celebration cake.

# *From Humble Beginnings* shares the story of the oldest Catholic school in each Australian diocese

**A**t the heart of the Catholic faith is the telling of our story. A new book, *From Humble Beginnings: Commemorating 200 years of Catholic education in Australia* shares the stories of the oldest continuing Catholic schools in each existing diocese in Australia.

The stories include the first official Catholic school established in Hunter Street Parramatta in October 1820 by Fr John Therry, and its connections to Parramatta Marist High School and St Patrick's Primary, Parramatta.

The story of St Mary's School in the Melbourne suburb of Williamstown which has been educating local children since 1842, making it the oldest continuously operating Catholic school in Victoria.

The story of the schoolhouse built next to the oldest stone span bridge in Australia. St John's in Richmond Tasmania was established in 1843 by Fr Thomas Butler who appointed Irish settler Michael O'Keefe as the first teacher for 20 students at the school.

The story of Mercedes College, Perth which traces its origins back to 1846, the early days of the Swan River Colony, when a community of six Sisters of Mercy arrived from Ireland and established a school for girls.

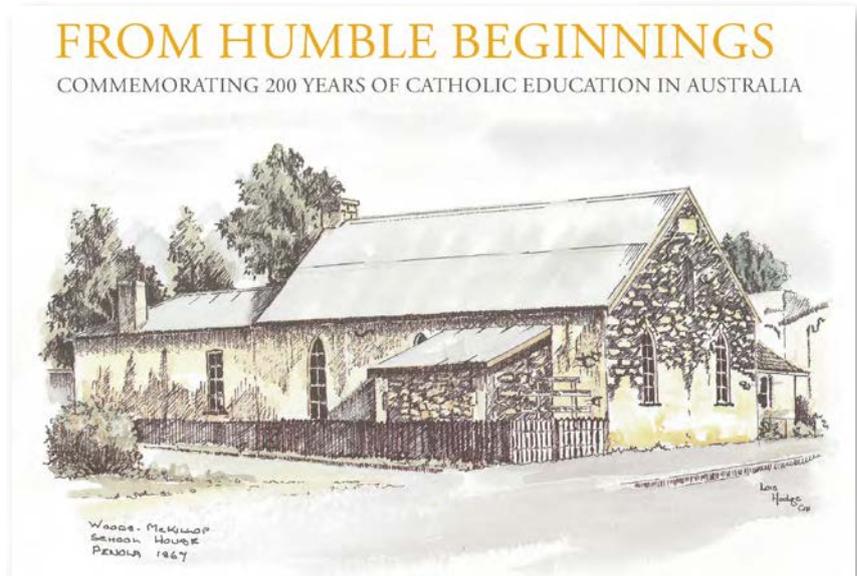


Illustration of Penola schoolhouse by Lois Hodge. Source: Mary MacKillop Penola Centre.

The story of Australia's first saint, Mary MacKillop, who established a Catholic school at Penola (Diocese of Adelaide) in 1866. Mary founded the Sisters of St Joseph and went on to impact the stories of the oldest continuing schools in Wallaroo (Port Pirie - 1868), North Ward (Townsville - 1871), Bundaberg (Rockhampton - 1876) and Manly (Broken Bay - 1881). Mary also started her teaching career as a lay person at the oldest continuing school in the Diocese of Ballarat at All Saints Primary, Portland (1949).

Among the stories are Catholic education's connection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, such as the early bilingual teaching of students at Beagle Bay in Western Australia. Across the continent, Sr Margaret Mary's first classroom was a verandah overlooking the blue waters of the Torres Strait on Thursday Island (Waiben).

The stories of our school communities are stories of diversity and inclusion, of resilience and persistence, of commitment to improvement and innovation, of great hope and faith in God, and in the human spirit.

These characteristics are reflected in each of the stories of the schools featured in this collection. They stand as a tribute to the many hundreds of stories that are shared and continue to be written in Catholic school communities across Australia.



St Joseph's Primary School, Bundaberg c1915.

Order *From Humble Beginnings* via  
[www.200years.catholic.edu.au](http://www.200years.catholic.edu.au)

# Bicentenary partners reflect on the role of Catholic education



**Greg Cantor**

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SUPERANNUATION AND RETIREMENT FUND CEO

As an alumnus of Marcellin College Randwick, I believe that the values and opportunities offered by the Catholic education system are invaluable. My 10 years there certainly played a big part in my formation and the person I am today. I was privileged to be the Finance Manager at the Catholic Education Office Sydney for four years from 1990. I also spent 30 years as honorary Secretary for the Religious Retirement Fund, designed for those religious men and women that served Catholic education in Sydney, Broken Bay and

Parramatta. I am proud to lead a Fund that has been helping members of the Catholic teaching community manage their retirement savings since 1981. Australian Catholic Superannuation celebrates the significant role that Catholic educators continue to play in nurturing young minds and importantly, shaping students' ethics and values. Congratulations to Catholic education on its first 200 years in Australia! ●



**Ross Castle**

GENERAL MANAGER, CLIENT, SALES & DISTRIBUTION CATHOLIC CHURCH INSURANCE

It was a privilege to have had a wonderful 12 years of Catholic education, through both primary and secondary school. Well beyond the learning experiences and the enduring connections and relationships that were formed, this provided an amazing foundation to be bold, pursue opportunities and lead an intentional life. These lifelong Catholic education experiences and values have now come full circle through giving back



**Professor Zlatko Skrbis**

VICE CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT OF AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

The celebration of 200 years of Catholic education in Australia is a time for us to pause and remember that from humble beginnings, Catholic schools and universities have gone on to play a significant role in the story of education in Australia. While we celebrate the past, we also look to the future. As vice chancellor, I am delighted that ACU is, and will continue to be, a proud contributor to Catholic education in Australia. As we enter the next century of Catholic education in Australia let us continue to work together to build on this legacy for future generations of Australians. ●

to our Catholic community in my work with Catholic Church Insurance and CatholicCare Victoria. To my many wonderful Catholic teachers all those years ago, thank you for your inspiration that still lives on today. ●



**Professor Francis Campbell**

VICE CHANCELLOR UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

It is a privilege, honour and a great joy for our university to be a Principal Partner as we celebrate 200 years of Catholic education in Australia with the NCEC. Many of the wonderful characteristics most commendable in our Catholic education system are inherent in the values of our faith and tradition which I am sure will continue to result in students around the country having a positive and wholistic impact on society. ●



**Greg O'Connor**

TEXTHELP ASIAPACIFIC HEAD OF EDUCATION

Over the last 15 years I've experienced first hand the sense of community and devotion that's been rooted within Catholic education in Australia for the last 200 years. Both in my role as an assistive technology consultant and now here at Texthelp. That's why I'm delighted to be able to join the bicentenary celebrations to mark the legacy of Catholic schools. Including their commitment to inclusive education and their unwavering belief in all students. From the Northern Territory to Tasmania, from far North Queensland down to Victoria, my connection with Catholic educators continues to enrich me both professionally and personally. ●

For more stories or to submit your own visit the [200 Years website](http://www.200years.catholic.edu.au).

# Biographical Dictionary of Catholic Educators

A new book has been published by Coventry Press featuring 30 biographies of Catholic educators spanning the 200 year history of Catholic education.

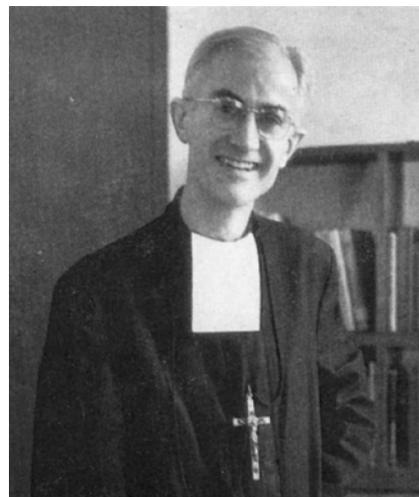
*Not Forgotten, Australian Catholic Educators 1820-2020* is edited by Seamus O’Grady and Anne Benjamin and is part of a larger project, the Biographical Dictionary of Australian Catholic Educators which was created to keep alive the stories of the people of Catholic education in Australia. Following are brief extracts of three educators from the book.



**Kathleen Douglas (Sr Mary Philomena Douglas fcJ) 1897-1958**  
*Scholar, rigorous educator and visionary leader*  
Carol Rosenhain

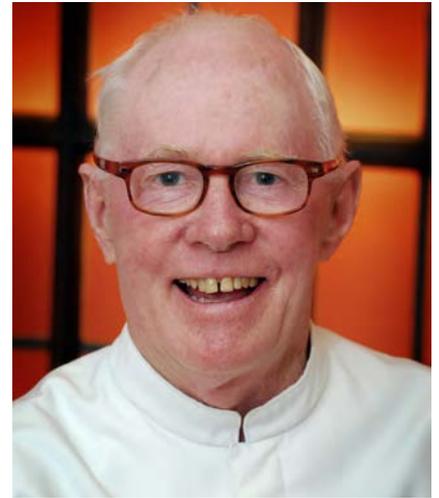
Kathleen Douglas, known in religious life as Mother Mary Philomena Douglas, was born at Richmond, Melbourne on 10 August 1897. She was the youngest of four surviving children of George Douglas and Kathleen Maud Egan. Her father was a Richmond-based jeweller and watchmaker. Although not a Catholic, he agreed to have his children educated at St Ignatius’ Primary School before the three girls attended Vaucluse Convent FCJ. Kathleen Douglas lived within walking

distance of one of her childhood friends, Kathleen King, and that saw them united in their desire to embrace a vocation with the fcJ sisters. While Kathleen King entered religious life with her parents’ blessing, to be known as Mother Euphemia fcJ, George Douglas strongly opposed his gifted daughter’s calling to a life of poverty, chastity and obedience.... ●



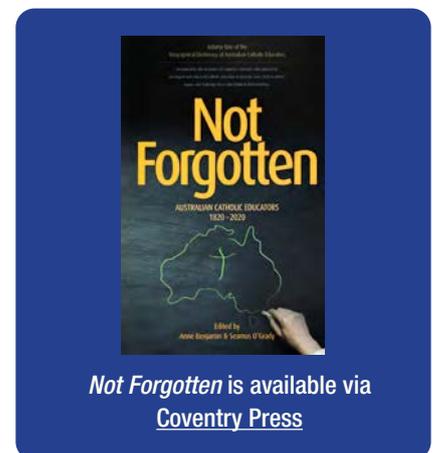
**Thomas Fogarty (Br Ronald Edwin Fogarty fms) 1913-2009**  
*Religious, researcher and teacher-educator*  
Br Julian Casey fms

...Because of his experience in researching education, Br Ronald was convinced of the need to ensure that future Marist teachers were scholars and teachers as well as apostolic religious and he exerted significant but gentle pressure on religious superiors to plan for a four-year university program for secondary teachers and at least an accredited program for primary teachers who were not proceeding to university. It was a courageous act to spell out a coherent and compelling vision of formation at a time when there was a large and somewhat desperate demand for Brothers to be in the classroom... ●



**Bernard Noel Bulfin (Br Bernard Noel Bulfin fsp) 1936—2018**  
*Humble service and commitment*  
Br Aengus Kavanagh fspj

Only a few months before his death, Br Bernard Bulfin fsp was asked what inspired him to become a Patrician Brother. He responded: "It was so as to work my way to Heaven and to help others to get to Heaven as well". Br Bernard’s long religious life provided a sturdy foundation for many young men and their families, as he made an indelible mark on Catholic education in rapidly-growing western Sydney in the second half of the 20th century, and in ‘retirement’ he was a pivotal prison chaplain for more than 15 years. ●



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



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Marketing Graduate

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