

MEDIA RELEASE

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CLOSURE OF BOARDING FACILITY AT ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE IN DARWIN

Catholic Education Northern Territory (CENT) has today announced plans to close the boarding facility at St John's Catholic College in Darwin, at the end of the 2025 school year. This follows the Bishop of Darwin, Most Reverend Charles Gauci's endorsement of a recommendation made by the Council of Catholic Education Northern Territory.

The difficult decision comes after years of careful consideration and consultation, including an extensive review into the improvement of educational outcomes and financial sustainability of the Catholic Education system in the Territory.

St John's Catholic College will remain fully operational as a day school and will continue to be an important part of the provision of Catholic education in the Northern Territory into the future. There are no anticipated changes or impacts to day students.

The St John's boarding facility has operated at a significant financial loss for more than 20 years. Bishop Gauci said the strain of the boarding facility's ongoing operating deficit, the need for significant infrastructure upgrades and declining boarding enrolments means it is no longer financially viable without compromising the broader mission of Catholic education in the Northern Territory.

"It deeply saddens me that today we announce the closure of the boarding facility at St John's Catholic College," Bishop Gauci said.

"The college has been a pillar of education in the Northern Territory for remote and regional Aboriginal Territorians for more than 60 years and this decision is not one we have taken lightly. However, there is no feasible way to continue operating the boarding facility."

"The Catholic Church is now focused on supporting ongoing spiritual and educational enrichment for our Aboriginal sisters and brothers throughout this transition."

CENT, the school and the Catholic Diocese of Darwin are supporting boarding students, their families and boarding facility staff to develop individual transition plans and identify suitable alternative options.

Many of the boarding students are based on the Tiwi Islands and this week Bishop Gauci and Principal Cameron Hughes travelled to speak face to face with as many of these families as possible before students return to school next week.

Over the next 6 months CENT will work closely with the St John's Catholic College Board, Principal Hughes and staff to provide an opportunity to honour the school's history in student boarding and acknowledge the dedication and commitment of all to the safety and wellbeing of so many boarders over the years.

About St John's Catholic College

St John's Catholic College was established in 1960 and is a co-educational day, boarding and international college for students from years 7 to 12. The school provides a safe, connected, learning community while striving for excellence and ensuring the holistic development of each student through a balanced approach to faith, academic, sporting and cultural activities.

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