

MEDIA RELEASE

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New Cairns College Taking Shape While Enrolments Grow

Excitement is building and enrolments are growing as construction continues at Cairns' newest secondary school.

Main building works are starting at Newman Catholic College following a month of demolition and preparation at the school's site on the grounds of James Cook University.

Newly-appointed construction company Bryant Building Contractors met with members of Cairns Catholic Education's Building and Planning Department and the College's architect, TPG Architects, at the site this week.

Lloyd Matheson, Cairns Catholic Education Services Building and Planning Project Manager, said it was "full steam ahead" for the \$26 million project.

"We met with Bryant Building Contractors for a formal site handover this week and they are ready to hit the ground running," he said.

The first development phase will include construction of a four-level building of approximately 7,000m² containing five design technology classrooms, four science lab classrooms, a library and the administration area, as well as an indoor PE court.

The vertical design of the school also means construction of other facilities, including the multi-purpose indoor hall, breakout areas and undercover open areas, will be fast-tracked and available from opening.

Foundation Principal Laretta Graham will begin in her role in mid-February and a school office will open at Smithfield Shopping Centre, across from Kmart, on February 17. Enrolment interviews will commence at the end of the month.

Dr Andrea O'Brien, Cairns Catholic Education Services Director of School Effectiveness P-12 and Secondary, said work on the ground was progressing well and enrolment numbers were strong.

"We have taken more than 100 applications so far for Year 7, 2022 and inquiries continue to flow," she said.

"We had projected a total of about 750 students by 2027, but expressions of interest suggest we will exceed those figures.



“People are excited about the innovative facilities and the emphasis being placed on design, digital and inquiry-based learning, in conjunction with the Australian Curriculum. The co-location with JCU is a major point of interest, given the potential to share facilities and resources.”

Newman Catholic College will open with a Year 7 cohort in 2022 initially and add a year level each year to be a full Year 7-12 secondary college by 2027. Construction of Stage 1 is due for completion in December this year.

It is the first Catholic school in Australia to be located within a university precinct, offering unprecedented opportunity for collaboration.

“A taskforce is currently working to explore and develop these opportunities. Possibilities include sharing of facilities and teaching staff, education students mentoring Newman Catholic College students, and students having the opportunity to study university subjects while still at school,” Dr O’Brien said.

She said the partnership between Cairns Catholic Education and JCU would benefit all Catholic colleges, however Newman Catholic College’s physical co-location would further enable the benefits of that relationship.

Newman Catholic College is accepting enrolment applications through its website newman.qld.edu.au, which also offers detailed information about its design and development.

Academic excellence and pathway options will be a major focus, however equal emphasis will be placed on student wellbeing and fostering a nurturing atmosphere. The buildings will feature abundant natural light, access to landscape views and quiet nooks for down time.

Dr O’Brien said there was a “massive amount” of work taking place behind the scenes to ensure a smooth opening next year.

“Throughout this year, work will continue on policy, processes and guideline development, enrolments, curriculum, and pastoral and wellbeing design as well as the ordering of furniture and resources, recruitment and appointment of staff,” she said.

“Consultation has already begun around the uniform, and this will continue once the new principal begins.”

Mrs Graham was previously Foundation Principal at St Andrew’s Catholic College in Redlynch, guiding the school from 2001 to 2011. For the last nine years, she was Foundation Principal at Mackillop Catholic College in the Northern Territory.

Newman Catholic College will be the 30th school in the Cairns Diocese. A development application has been lodged for a separate Prep-Year 6 school at a site at Kewarra Beach, which would be another feeder school for the College.

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