

MEDIA RELEASE

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Leading Educator Begins Nurturing New Cairns School

The leading educator appointed to grow Cairns' newest school is looking forward to building a "whole community" as she starts to meet future students and their families at a brand-new office.

Newman Catholic College Foundation Principal Laretta Graham will today open the doors of the school's temporary office, located across from Kmart in Smithfield Shopping Centre.

She encouraged families to visit for a chat or to grab some more information, with enrolment interviews due to commence at the end of the month.

"Parents enrolling their children at Newman will have a voice and be part of the partnership that makes up education for their child," Dr Graham said.

"Families and staff will work together to build a curriculum that meets students' needs and instills confidence in them as lifelong excited learners. This is student leadership at its best. An opportunity not to be missed."

Newman Catholic College, located on the grounds of James Cook University, 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. It is the first Catholic school in Australia to be co-located with a university.

Dr 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.

"The development of Newman is much more than building a school; it is building a whole community to surround and support 21st century learners," Dr Graham said.

"The appointment of the foundation staff will be a vital phase. Teachers at Newman will need to be 100 per cent committed and supportive of our Catholic ethos without reserve; watching out for and respecting each other and building the best Catholic school for Smithfield."

Newman Catholic College will offer "a place where students dare to be exceptional", Dr Graham said.

"Newman offers an opportunity to let go of outdated ways of learning and teaching while remaining true to core values, beliefs and purpose," she said.

“My desire is to build a College where students and staff belong and are excited and eager to learn every day; a place where students have an active role in choosing their learning journey and develop a zest for life.

“I see a place where students can step out of their busy lives, appreciate the gifts and the magnificent beauty around them, and with strong clear minds devote their time to learning and discovering their strengths; giving them courage, strength, hope and a future.

“I am so thrilled and excited to meet our first Newman students and their families, and I am looking forward to working with James Cook University.”

Bryant Building Contractors are starting to lay conduits, pipes and sewer lines at the College’s site and have erected four demountable buildings to be used as offices and amenities. The first section of the ground floor concrete slab is due to be poured late in March.

Construction of Stage 1 is due for completion in December. 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.

Expressions of interest suggest enrolment numbers will exceed the previously projected figure of 750 students by 2027.

Newman Catholic College is also accepting enrolment applications through its website newman.qld.edu.au.

It 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.

ENDS

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