

## **New Era Catholic Education – Diocese of Rockhampton**

The first day of the 2023 school year ushered in a new era for Catholic Education - Diocese of Rockhampton (CEDR) in Mackay, as St Patrick's College and Mercy College transitioned to one Catholic secondary school.

The new College catering for Years 7 to 12, is situated on two campuses under the name St Patrick's College.

Students in Years 7 to 10 walked into the pages of history as the first St Patrick's College cohort to attend the newly named *Mercy Campus* in Penn St, South Mackay. Senior students in Years 11 and 12 continued at the historic Gregory Street campus.

St Patrick's College Principal Janelle Agius said the change had been quite seamless for current students and parents.

"Both former College communities enjoyed such a strong connection, and our families were very supportive of the move to one school with one staff and one enrolment experience," Mrs Agius said.

"Our staff and students have commenced the new school year extremely positively and have quickly settled into learning," Mrs Agius said.

"There's a great sense of energy and enthusiasm within the community and an excitement about creating a combined Catholic College identity," Mrs Agius said.

The transition to one secondary school consolidates and strengthens the existing collaboration and partnership between both former College communities, according to CEDR Director Leesa Jeffcoat.

"Building on the strong foundations and existing collaboration at both previous colleges the transition to a single College provides enhanced education opportunities for both students and staff," Miss Jeffcoat said.

"Retaining the unique advantage of two campuses specifically catering to middle school and senior school age students was important to families, whilst further reinforcing continuity in learning,"

"It's very pleasing that Catholic Education is able to be responsive to families as we seek to provide a high quality, faith-based education that meets the needs of the communities we serve," Miss Jeffcoat said.

The transition follows the opening of a new Catholic secondary school, Catherine McAuley College, on Nebo Road at the beginning of 2022.

Miss Jeffcoat said with Holy Spirit College providing a strong and stable presence in North Mackay and Catholic Education's expansion in the city's southside, Mackay families seeking a Catholic secondary education were well catered for.

“This exciting consolidation process is the result of extensive planning and consultation over an extended period to increase our enrolment capacity in response to a sustained demand from families choosing a Catholic secondary education for their children,” Miss Jeffcoat said.

Miss Jeffcoat said the expansion would allow for continued growth in the Mackay region, offering certainty for families and great outcomes for future generations of students.

**ENDS:**

Photo Caption: Students outside St Patrick’s College, Mercy Campus