

## Media Release: Toowoomba Catholic Schools light the way

Religious education is the key point of distinction of Catholic schools and is a flagship subject for Toowoomba Catholic Schools.

In 2021, the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (TCSO) launched the Illuminate Religious Education (RE) project to empower the teacher as a witness, specialist, and moderator in teaching Religion and fostering the religious life of the school.

Fifteen of the thirty-one schools in the Toowoomba Dioceses have adopted Illuminate RE as the strategy for the school to have expert teachers in RE. The intent is that students experience academic success whilst they come to know and encounter Christ in their everyday life.

Through the teaching and learning of sacred Scripture, Catholic tradition, Catholic social teachings and prayer, students engage in authentic dialogue on contemporary issues from a Catholic worldview.

Angela Travers, Senior Leader: Mission and Identity at TCSO says that the Illuminate RE project is shining a spotlight on the teaching of RE in classrooms, accentuating the Catholic faith experience for students of all ages.

“The Illuminate project assists our Catholic schools across the Toowoomba Diocese in enhancing the Catholic identity and religious education in the school or colleges. We offer support to enable our teachers to become the best they can be at teaching religion in their classroom,” said Angela.

“It allows teachers to develop their practice so that they can bring the Catholic identity to life for their students. The goal of the project is to help teachers become more confident in their delivery and understanding of RE so that their students develop the capacity to live a faith-filled life and are more confident to live in a way that brings to life the values of the Gospel.”

This year there are four schools participating in the Illuminate project including Mary MacKillop Catholic College in Highfields, St Patrick's School in Mitchell, St Maria Goretti School in Inglewood and St Joseph's School in Tara.

Principal of Mary MacKillop Catholic College, Chris Gabbett said, “The Illuminate project provides absolutely essential professional development for the effective running, leadership and success of an authentic Catholic College.”

“In leading Mary MacKillop there are three things that I prioritise. One is outstanding teaching and learning, the second is caring, holistic and loving wellbeing and the third priority is a passionate commitment to authentic formation in a Catholic tradition. The Illuminate project supports all of these priorities,” said Chris.

“It's really important that our teachers are able to access genuine formation and a vital sense of spirituality because our teachers reflect the current spiritual profile of the world.”

“We have teachers who come from various backgrounds so it's vital that our teachers have a chance to come to the table together to receive essential instruction on the centrality of scripture, on the

importance of the Catholic tradition in promoting outstanding education and on their role as spiritual leaders in a complex community.”

“This allows us to offer a unique point of difference for the people of Highfields who can see that Mary MacKillop Catholic College takes faith seriously and provides a place for faith to express itself in this world. Our students benefit from the Illuminate project as it enables them to engage with faith in the world, gives them the tools to answer the big questions and it enables them to be better people,” said Chris.

For more information on Toowoomba Catholic Schools visit: [www.twb.catholic.edu.au](http://www.twb.catholic.edu.au)