

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **ACU pays tribute to Irish teaching nun at 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brisbane Campus**

Australian Catholic University (ACU) is celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its McAuley campus in Brisbane's north this week.

The week-long celebrations will pay tribute to the Sisters of Mercy, whose commitment to preparing women to teach in Catholic schools helped establish the Banyo campus as a leading provider of graduate teachers in Queensland.

In 1955, the Sisters of Mercy formed McAuley College, a teacher training college for fellow Sisters of Mercy. The Sisters' training was first-class, eventually drawing members from other religious orders to the College. By 1973, the Sisters' mission to improve opportunities for Catholic teachers was extended to lay-students.

For the next 20 years, the McAuley College established itself as a leading non-government teachers' college.

In 1991 McAuley College formally handed responsibility for the college to ACU, and in 2003, relocated to its current site in Banyo, previously home to the Pius XII Provincial Seminary. The original halls of the Seminary, made of locally acquired Benedict Stone, are a significant feature of ACU Banyo.

After relocating to Banyo, the campus was renamed McAuley at Banyo, as a tribute to the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, Irish-born Catherine McAuley.

At the 2003 opening of McAuley at Banyo, then Premier of Queensland, Peter Beattie, enthusiastically predicted that student numbers at ACU's Brisbane Campus would reach 5,000 by 2020.

Today, there are more than 5,500 students enrolled in over 65 courses.

ACU Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Zlatko Skrbis, said the proudest achievement for ACU in Brisbane was the continuity of spiritual nourishment on the campus, in the footsteps of generations of religious and lay graduate teachers.

"As we look forward to the future, we remain committed to honouring that legacy, building on our strong connection with the Sisters of Mercy and other close partners and organisations," Professor Skrbis said.

"I would also like to acknowledge our students, both present and past, including the many alumni who have gone on to work here at ACU or in Catholic schools, hospitals and other such organisations, making a positive impact on their communities.

"It was this calling that inspired pioneers like the Venerable Catherine McAuley to rise to the challenge of educating and supporting those in need through the Sisters of Mercy.

"Let us honour them, and our shared history, by continuing and building on that legacy."

ACU Brisbane Interim Campus Dean, Professor Suzanne Kuys, said the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary was an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of McAuley at Banyo and its steadfast impact on Brisbane's north.

“As we celebrate 20 years of ACU in Banyo, we take inspiration from the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley, who dedicated her life to the service of the poor, sick and uneducated, as we strive to ensure our students can make a significant difference in their own local communities,” Professor Kuys said.

“The next 20 years will be marked by exciting opportunities to further commit to shaping the great state of Queensland, including the 2032 Brisbane Olympics. I am confident that Professor Susan Dann will confidently lead the way towards a significant 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration as the new Campus Dean for Queensland.”

**Media Contact: Emilie Ng, 0475 963 606, [emilie.ng@acu.edu.au](mailto:emilie.ng@acu.edu.au)**