



**Media release
3 October 2023**

2025 Australian Catholic Education Conference to be held in Cairns

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) announced today that the Diocese of Cairns will host the next Australian Catholic Education Conference at the Cairns Convention Centre from 20-22 August, 2025.

National Catholic Education Executive Director Jacinta Collins said Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns will partner with the NCEC to deliver the conference for 1,500 delegates.

"Following on from our very successful conference in Melbourne last year, the majority of delegates expressed a desire to hold the conference every three years, rather than four," Jacinta said.

"Cairns generously offered to co-host the conference in 2025 which will be held in the newly-refurbished Cairns Convention Centre. We are grateful for the support of the Cairns Diocese and the Queensland Government who have generously approved a tourism grant of up to \$100,000 to support our event.

"The conference will focus on the strategic vision and mission of Catholic education in Australia with a broad range of speakers, presentations and workshops in Catholic identity and mission, learning and teaching, leadership and governance, parent engagement and more.

Under the theme, 'hope, anchored in faith', which is connected to the 2025 Jubilee Year theme, 'Pilgrims of Hope', the conference branding features the artwork of local First Nations artist Susan Reys, and reflects the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in far north Queensland.

Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns Executive Director Bill Dixon said the local Catholic education community was excited by the opportunity to welcome educational leaders from across the nation.

"Our diocesan family of schools is growing each year; in 2023 for the first time we reached enrolments of more than 12,000 students in our 30 schools," he said.

"They stretch from Tully in the south to Waiben (Thursday Island) in the north and to Weipa and Dimbulah in the west. And we are aiming to open another two schools in coming years to cater for the growing demand for a quality Catholic education.

"We're thrilled that principals and school and system leaders from all states and territories will be able to join us in Cairns to discuss important issues and to enable us to showcase some of the great work being done by our students and staff in Far North Queensland."

Partnership opportunities are now available by contacting events@ncec.catholic.edu.au.

To receive all the latest conference information and notice of early bird registration subscribe via www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/2025ACEC

Nationally, there are 1,759 Catholic schools educating more than 794,000 students, or one in five Australian students, employing over 104,500 staff.

About the Diocese of Cairns

The Diocese of Cairns is 377,000 km² spanning from Cardwell in the south, west to the Northern Territory Border including the Atherton Tablelands, and north to the Torres Strait Islands and Gulf of Carpentaria.

The Diocese's 30 Catholic schools and colleges provide a quality education to more than 12,000 students and almost 2,000 staff. The schools extend from Tully in the South, west to Dimbulah on the Atherton Tablelands and Weipa on Cape York peninsula, and north to Waiben (Thursday Island) in the Torres Strait.

About the Artwork



Susan Reys' artwork, *Tenacious Dreaming*, represents the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – the land on which the Catholic education conference will be hosted. The Southern Cross is featured around a central Cross representing Catholic education across Australia. The Southern Cross, also known as the Seven Sisters, is also an important directional tool for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The boomerang shape represents the Seven Sister mountain on the tablelands, and their spirit is now the constellation. The three message sticks represent the three lore of the Yidinji people and the ten dots represents the ten commandments of the old testament. The eight diamond shapes represent the shields of the eight Yidinji clan groups of the Cairns region.

The underlying message of *Tenacious Dreaming* is, "Don't be scared to dream big. Dream big things for yourself and others and never give up on yourself. I don't give up, I look within. I am cocooned in my fearless and undeniable sense of knowingness. My faith entwined in my cultural beliefs. Comfort me and guide me. Give me joy and purpose."