

BCE media release

BCE Media Release – BCE boosts 17 educators to school leadership this International Women’s Day

Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) celebrated a remarkable milestone on International Women’s Day (8 March), with 17 female educators stepping up from aspiring leaders to Principalship or Heads of Campus in the past year.

Among these inspiring leaders, eight of the 17 educators have benefitted from Brisbane Catholic Education’s bespoke Women in Leadership program.

The bespoke BCE program aims to empower, inspire, and elevate aspiring female leaders across BCE’s seven offices and 146 schools.

The 17 women are now leading some of South East Queensland’s most established schools, from as far north as Maryborough and Gayndah to Jimboomba and Beenleigh.

Since March 2024, the following educators have been appointed:

- Jo-Anne Boyle, Principal of Holy Spirit School, Bray Park,
- Gabrielle Jansen, Principal of St Mary MacKillop Primary School, Birkdale,
- Cheryl Bell, Principal of Flannan’s Primary School, Zillmere,
- Bianca Murphy, Principal of Holy Spirit School, New Farm.
- Liesl Profke, Principal of St Clare’s Primary School, Yarrabilba,
- Tracey-lee Cheesman, Principal of Our Lady of Fatima Primary School, Acacia Ridge,
- Veronica Wasiak, Principal of St Michael’s College, Merrimac,
- Gemma Lovell, Principal of Mother Teresa Primary School, Ormeau,
- Velma Erskine, Principal of St Joseph’s Primary School, North Ipswich,
- Felicity Pryer, Principal of St Pius X School, Salisbury,
- Lisa Atholwood, Principal Emmaus College, Jimboomba,
- Sharon Collins, Principal Siena Catholic College, Sippy Downs,
- Kate MacArthur, Principal of Our Lady of Assumption School, Enoggera,
- Helen Boyes, Principal of St Paul’s School, Woodridge,
- Megan Pidskalny, Head of Campus FisherONE Online Education,
- Jasmine Brown, Head of College Notre Dame College, Bells Creek,
- Melissa Fallarino, Head of Campus Southern Cross Catholic College, Scarborough.

Participant insights

2022 Women in Leadership participant and now Principal of Our Lady of Fatima Primary School, Acacia Ridge Tracey-Lee Cheesman said, “the program was transformational” for her.

“It gave me the opportunity to explore leadership from a female perspective,” she said.

“A key takeaway for me from the Women in Leadership program was the concept of technical and adaptable leadership—the ability to connect with a community, move it forward, and understand the vital role women play in building communities,” she said.

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"The program helped me see that there are unique ways women operate in society and that we bring distinct strengths to leadership roles.

Tracey-Lee said the program also helped her build a strong support network.

"I now have a group of women I can connect with, whether it's over dinner or before major leadership events," she said.

"They were all very happy for me when I stepped into my first Principalship position at the beginning of this year."

Benefits of diversity in leadership

BCE's Acting People and Culture Executive Colin O'Neil said by investing in leadership pathways for aspiring female leaders, BCE was not just shaping careers—"we're strengthening our entire education community".

"Since its inception in 2021, this program has empowered 107 women to step forward with confidence, equipped with the skills and support to lead," she said.

"BCE continues to see the results—more women embracing leadership roles, greater diversity in decision-making, and a culture that supports growth at every stage.

"We believe in leadership that reflects the rich diversity of our schools and communities."