

St Francis Catholic College Foundation Principal commences role

Mr Chris Oakes has officially commenced his role as the foundation Principal of St Francis Catholic College, Westbrook, marking an exciting milestone in the establishment of Toowoomba Catholic Schools' newest college.

Previously Deputy Principal at Downlands College, Chris brings extensive leadership experience and a proven ability to create thriving, faith-filled learning communities. His career includes senior roles at St Michael's College, Gold Coast, and St Laurence's College, Brisbane, where he demonstrated a strong commitment to excellence in education and community engagement.

In his new role, Chris will lead the development and future growth of St Francis Catholic College from the ground up. He is widely recognised as an outstanding educator and visionary leader, passionate about shaping a college that is distinctively Catholic and deeply connected to its community.

“Opportunities to build a school community from the ground up are rare and incredibly special,” Chris said. “I look forward to working alongside families and the wider community to create a place of wonder - a college where every student is known, valued and challenged to reach their full potential.”

Chris's leadership will ensure the Franciscan charism is embedded at the heart of the College, using it as a powerful way to teach and model the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. This distinctive approach will make St Francis Catholic College a beacon for Catholic education in the region.

Dr Pat Coughlan, Executive Director: Toowoomba Catholic Schools, said the appointment signals an exciting chapter for Westbrook.

“St Francis Catholic College will be a contemporary Catholic learning community for Westbrook. We are delighted to welcome Chris Oakes, whose faith, experience and vision will guide the College as it serves families for generations to come.”

Located on the corner of Shoemsmith Road and Boundary Street South, St Francis Catholic College will open its first stage in January 2027, catering for students in Prep to Year 3 and Year 7.

The College will grow to become a co-educational K–12 school, offering state-of-the-art facilities and a vibrant community hub designed to meet the needs of the rapidly growing Westbrook region.

Enrolments for the foundation year are now open. For more information, visit www.sfccwestbrook.catholic.edu.au.

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