

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Living Mary MacKillop's Legacy Today: New Impact Report Shows Faith in Action Sydney, Australia, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

Mary MacKillop Today has released its 2024–25 Annual Impact Report, revealing the profound and practical ways the legacy of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop continues to be lived out through education, financial inclusion and community partnership - in Australia and across the Pacific and Latin America.

The report highlights how Catholic social teaching is being translated into tangible outcomes for children, families and communities facing poverty, exclusion and inequality in an increasingly uncertain world.

#### **Education: A Living Expression of Mary MacKillop's Mission**

Education, central to Mary MacKillop's life and ministry, remains at the heart of the organisation's work.

In Timor-Leste, one of the world's youngest nations:

- More than 24,000 children benefited from improved education outcomes
- 588 teachers were trained in inclusive, child-centered teaching practices
- 5,708 students now learn in safer, more inclusive classrooms
- Over 67,000 locally developed learning resources were created and distributed

These outcomes reflect the Sisters of St Joseph's enduring belief that education restores dignity, hope and opportunity, especially for the most vulnerable.

#### **Walking with Communities at Home**

In Australia, Mary MacKillop Today continued its commitment to compassion and justice close to home:

- 1,334 people accessed safe, affordable no-interest loans totaling \$1.85 million, helping families meet essential needs without resorting to predatory lending during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis
- First Nations students were supported through tertiary scholarships, enabling study in fields such as Law, Education and Medicine; a practical contribution to reconciliation and self-determination

The organisation also launched its Reconciliation Action Plan, deepening its commitment to walking respectfully alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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In partnership with local Catholic and community organisations in Fiji and Peru, Mary MacKillop Today supported:

- Women’s leadership and economic participation
- Disability inclusion and dignity
- Positive parenting and family wellbeing
- Sustainable livelihoods and environmental care

These programs reflect Pope Francis’ call for integral human development, ensuring communities are empowered to shape their own futures.

### **A Ministry of Trust and Accountability**

During the year, Mary MacKillop Today:

- Successfully achieved re-accreditation with the Australian Government (DFAT), affirming strong governance and stewardship
- Integrated the Highways & Byways program, extending reach into rural and regional Australia
- Continued to work in close relationship with the Sisters of St Joseph, whose spirit of humility, courage and practical love remains the foundation of the organisation’s mission

### **CEO Reflection**

“Saint Mary MacKillop believed in responding to a need with courage, compassion and trust in God,” said Jane Woolford, CEO of Mary MacKillop Today.

“This impact report shows what is possible when faith is lived through action, when we listen deeply, walk humbly with communities, and work together for justice and dignity.”

### **About Mary MacKillop Today**

Mary MacKillop Today is the agency that carries forward the legacy of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Inspired by her faith and the ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph, the organisation partners with communities to advance education, financial inclusion and livelihoods — enabling people to create better futures for themselves and generations to come.

Impact report: <https://www.marymackilloptoday.org.au/who-we-are/publications-and-reports/our-reports/>