

More than a title - what does it really mean to be a BCE Principal?

For Brisbane Catholic Education's (BCE) 146 Principals, leadership is about much more than running a school.

Every day, BCE Principals are called to lead faith-filled learning communities, support students and families, nurture staff and guide the future direction of their schools and colleges, knowing that at the heart of Catholic education is a responsibility to serve others and lead by example.

For Notre Dame College Principal Dan McShea, Catholic school leadership is never simply about what you say.

"It is about what you do," he said.

"Leading a faith-filled learning community means we have hundreds, sometimes thousands of eyes on us at any time, and it's important we show up and act and serve others as Jesus would."

The Notre Dame College Principal, alongside his College Leadership team, including Head of College Jasmine Brown, Assistant Principal Chris Relf, Assistant Principal Angela Martlew, and Business Manager Ben Meyers, took part in the St Vincent De Paul CEO Sleepout at Noosa Surf Club beach in June.

Alongside the Notre Dame College leadership team was Stella Maris School, Maroochydore Principal Mark Ballam, who has taken part in the fundraiser for the past four years. The Our Lady of the Rosary School, Caloundra, Principal Grant Haigh and Assistant Principal Religious Education Nadine Grant, attended the sleepout as well.

Mark said real leadership required empathy and faith in action.

"When young people see us stepping out in service of others, they learn that faith is something to be lived every day," he said.

Dan adds that the late Pope Francis often reminded Catholic communities that leaders should carry "the smell of the sheep".

"That means as leaders, we should be close to the people we serve, rather than distant from them," he said.

"In many ways, this is the challenge and privilege of Catholic school leadership.

"Students do not need leaders who merely speak about making a difference.

"They need leaders who show them how."

This philosophy is particularly important in a school's foundation years.

BCE media release



Now in its second year of operation, Notre Dame College has a unique opportunity to establish the culture, traditions, and values that will define the College for generations to come.

"New schools do not inherit culture," Dan said.

"They create it, day by day.

"Culture is built through countless decisions, conversations, and actions. It is established by what leaders celebrate, what they prioritise, and what they are prepared to commit themselves to.

"This is why the visible involvement of school leaders in charitable and community initiatives matters so much."

Across BCE, Principals and school leaders help form young people who understand their responsibility to others and recognise that faith is something to be lived, not simply learned.

Through acts of service, compassion and humility, they demonstrate that leadership is not defined by position, but by a willingness to walk alongside others and place the needs of the community first.

In doing so, they help shape a generation of young people who understand that the Gospel is not only something to believe in, but something to live out each day.

The Stella Maris School community raised more than \$5,400 for the CEO Sleepout in 2026.

Notre Dame College raised an additional \$5,014.

Stella Maris School also raised \$5,734 in 2026.

Our Lady of the Rosary School raised \$5,070 in 2026.

For more information about Notre Dame College, Bells Creek, or to enrol [click here](#).

For more information about Stella Maris School, Maroochydore, or to enrol [click here](#).

For more information about Our Lady of the Rosary School, Caloundra, or to enrol [click here](#).

Find a Catholic school on the Sunshine Coast today, [click here](#).

About St Vincent' de Paul's CEO Sleepout

The CEO Sleepout is an annual charity event where business, community, and government leaders sleep outdoors for one night on cardboard.

Held on one of the coldest nights of the year, participants raise money to help the St Vincent de Paul Society provide emergency accommodation, meals, and long-term housing for Australians.

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