

Media Release: Toowoomba Catholic Schools Excellence Awards celebrate inspirational leadership and service

The outstanding efforts and expertise of the staff of Toowoomba Catholic Schools were recognised at the annual Excellence Awards on 30 July.

The prestigious event celebrates individuals who demonstrate exceptional commitment, leadership and service in Catholic education.

This year, almost 100 nominations were received from across the Toowoomba Diocese, highlighting the dedication and impact of staff working in schools and offices throughout the system.

Executive Director of Toowoomba Catholic Schools, Dr Pat Coughlan, said the awards recognise those who make a lasting difference in the lives of students, families and colleagues each day.

"The passionate and committed staff are our greatest strength and a big part of what makes our invitation to families so appealing and distinctive," Dr Coughlan said.

"The Excellence Awards provide an opportunity to celebrate those who lead with integrity, serve their communities with generosity and contribute to a culture of continuous educational renewal and reform."

Dr Coughlan said this year's recipients exemplified the values and mission of Catholic education.

"Across our schools, we see people creating environments where students feel supported, inspired and empowered to reach their full potential," he said.

"Their commitment helps shape thriving school communities and ensures our students receive outstanding educational experiences."

One of the recipients recognised on the evening was Sam Hannant, Principal of St Saviour's Primary School, Toowoomba, who received the School Leadership Award in the Excellence in Leadership category.

Mr Hannant was recognised for his decisive leadership and commitment to enhancing student outcomes and school culture.

Under his leadership, St Saviour's has strengthened classroom practices, embedded a whole-school approach to learning support and fostered a collaborative culture focused on student learning, pastoral care and belonging.

His authentic leadership of Catholic identity, grounded in Mercy values, has helped create a school community where every student feels safe, valued and supported to flourish.

Mr Hannant said he was honoured to receive the award and acknowledged the collective efforts of the St Saviour's community.

"This recognition reflects the dedication of our staff, students and families who work together every day to create a positive and inclusive school culture," Mr Hannant said.

"I am privileged to work alongside a team of educators who are committed to providing the best possible outcomes for every student."

"One of the greatest rewards of school leadership is seeing young people grow in confidence and work hard to achieve their full potential."

Dr Coughlan congratulated Mr Hannant and all Excellence Award finalists and recipients.

"Each recipient and finalist represents the best of Toowoomba Catholic Schools through their professionalism, care and commitment to others," he said.

"We thank them for their service and congratulate them on this well-deserved recognition."

The awards covered eight categories, and the award recipients are listed below.

Excellence in education support

Teaching and learning support

Elizabeth Smith - St Monica's School, Oakey

Administration, finance, and facilities support

Sarah Raftery - St Saviour's College, Toowoomba

Excellence in teaching and learning

Early career teacher

Brook Marquart - St John's School, Roma

Primary/kindergarten expert teacher

Sandra Rosentreter - Holy Name Primary School, Toowoomba

Secondary expert teacher

Mandy Goodman - St Joseph's College, Toowoomba

Excellence in leadership

Emerging leadership

Nicole Southee - St John's School, Roma

Middle leadership

Joseph Shorter - St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe

School/kindergarten leadership

Sam Hannant - St Saviour's Primary School, Toowoomba

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