

Media Release

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\$14.5 million Catholic school and services village for northern suburbs

The Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide and Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) will establish a new education and community services village for disadvantaged young people in the northern suburbs of Adelaide.

The \$14.5 million investment has been endorsed by the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) following two years of planning and consultation by the Archdiocese and CESA.

The bold initiative will support the wellbeing, needs and aspirations of vulnerable youth and their families in the Playford area by providing new opportunities for learning, work and community participation.

After extensive exploration of potential sites in Playford, CESA has secured a 4ha precinct at Davoren Park which will be developed as the location for the village.

“We are expanding special assistance schooling options for young people in the northern suburbs requiring an alternative approach to mainstream schooling”, said Professor Denis Ralph, Chair, SACCS.

“In partnership with Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), an outreach program will open in 2021 catering for students aged 12-17. The venture will expand on the existing northern outreach program that already engages approximately 70 young people”, said Professor Ralph.

“Planned to open in 2022, the new fee-free school will support young people aged 17-24 who are experiencing social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, with special programs to support their learning and development.”

It is estimated that 65 students will be enrolled when the school opens in 2022. This number is expected to grow to 195 students by 2027.

Future plans for the village include a primary school that will focus on giving children the best possible start to life.

“There are more than 2000 young people currently disengaged from formal learning in Adelaide’s northern suburbs,” said Father Philip Marshall, Vicar General, Archdiocese of Adelaide.

“We believe there is a significant opportunity to break cycles of disadvantage by adopting new approaches to education. We will provide a range of services that will include early intervention and family support in a welcoming and inclusive setting.

“This is about meeting young people where they are at and supporting them as they build healthy and fulfilling lives.”

“Young people in the Playford community will benefit from new opportunities to continue or re-enter schooling”, said Dr Neil McGoran, Director, CESA.

“Special assistance schooling is about adopting teaching and learning approaches that differ from mainstream school environments.

“It’s about trying to make school relevant and engaging to each individual, so they have the choices they should have as a fully flourishing young person.”

In addition to ‘learning with a difference’, the hub will include services and supports for young people and their families.

“We are working closely with community service providers, drawing on their perspectives and collective experience,” said Dr McGoran.

“Underpinning this community-based approach is CESA’s belief in the potential of all young people to become inspired to learn, strive for excellence and achieve positive outcomes for themselves, their families and the community, to bring about real change.”

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