



18 May 2021

## Media Statement

### **The Cathedral Restoration Project wins National Trust (NSW) Heritage Award**

The restoration project of the Cathedral of St Michael and St John, Bathurst has won a National Trust Heritage Award in the category of Conservation: Built Heritage at the National Trust (NSW) annual awards held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021

This is a wonderful recognition of the restoration project that aimed to extend the life of the 159-year-old Cathedral by at least an additional 100 years. Completed in March 2021, it is the most significant renovation in the lifetime of the building, taking eight years to complete at a cost of \$8.2million.

The Most Reverend Michael McKenna, Bishop of Bathurst attended the award ceremony and was delighted with the announcement.

Bishop McKenna expressed his gratitude to the National Trust for the award and their support. He was also grateful for everyone who had worked on and donated to the project, which has enhanced the beauty and heritage of the historic city of Bathurst. He was grateful to God for a safe working environment which gave meaningful employment to many and trained up a new generation of artisans.

The significant phases of the project included the restoration of the bell tower, including the removal and repair of the two bells; the restoration of the Keppel and George Street façades; the school car park side and William Street façade; the restoration of the interior of the Cathedral and redesign of the Cathedral precinct landscape, aiming to prevent future water damage to the building and creating an inviting landscape to share with the Bathurst community.

“The initial focus of the project was to renew the life of Edward Gell’s Cathedral by rebuilding its foundations and restoring damaged stone and brickwork. This has already contributed to preserving and enhancing an important part of Bathurst’s heritage; as well as providing jobs and training for many and contributing to the local economy,” said Bishop McKenna.

“The final phase of the project extended these benefits, and we made the decision to take the once in a generation opportunity to make the oldest Catholic Cathedral in NSW and its grounds more beautiful and more functional for our parishioners and for Bathurst residents and visitors,” he said.

The ceremony was held at heritage-listed Dolton House in Pymont, featuring special guest speakers: President of the National Trust of Australia (NSW), Neil Wykes OAM; the National Trust’s Director of Conservation, David Burdon; Chair of the Heritage Council of NSW, Frank Howarth and the Chair of the National Trust Heritage Awards Judging Committee, Matt Devine.

The National Trust Heritage Awards is in its 27<sup>th</sup> year and awards projects, initiatives and individuals that demonstrate excellence in the conservation, protection, and interpretation of Aboriginal, built, natural and cultural heritage. The awards are the signature event of the Australian Heritage Festival in New South Wales and are proudly supported by the NSW Government through the Heritage Council of NSW.

**Ends**

Media Contact: For further information, contact Kimbalee Clews, Catholic Diocese of Bathurst on 0407 888 407 or email [comms@bathurst.catholic.org.au](mailto:comms@bathurst.catholic.org.au)