



Catholic Education  
CELEBRATING 200 YEARS  
*Faith in the future*



**25 May 2021**  
**Media Release**

## **Students raise their voices to celebrate the bicentenary of Catholic education in Australia**

Catholic students from across the country have joined together in a video performance of the national song 'Faith in the Future', to celebrate 200 years of Catholic education in Australia, which marks the anniversary of the first official Catholic school opened in Parramatta in October 1820.

The 'Faith in the Future Australian Catholic Schools Version' features 370 students from 29 Catholic schools across Australia including remote, regional and rural communities such as: Our Lady Sacred Heart School Waiben (Thursday Island), St John's Catholic School Richmond in Tasmania, Sacred Heart College Sorrento in Western Australia, and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic College Alice Springs in the Northern Territory.

"Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thursday Island was delighted to exhibit the rich colour and culture of northern Australia as part of the video," said assistant principal David Graham.

"It was great seeing the wider Catholic community coming together in unity to celebrate 200 years of Catholic education and I was honoured to be a part of such a big event," said Year 12 Parramatta Marist High School student Jimmy Geagea.

"As the oldest Catholic School in Tasmania, St John's Catholic School wanted to share our joy through AUSLAN, knowing that to sing and express words enables students to fully engage," said principal Megan Richardson.

St Patrick's Primary and Parramatta Marist schools in the Diocese of Parramatta, who both have linkages to the first Catholic school opened on Hunter St Parramatta, participated in the video, as well as Mary MacKillop Memorial School Penola in South Australia, situated next to the schoolhouse that Australia's first saint Mary MacKillop founded.

National Catholic Education executive director Jacinta Collins said the bicentenary is an opportunity to celebrate the 1,755 Catholic school communities across the country.

"The students' joyful performance of the national song is a significant contribution to our celebrations," Ms Collins said.

"The video highlights the diversity and breath of Catholic school communities across Australia and is an important opportunity to celebrate our students' gifts and talents.

"The scale of Catholic education in Australia is unique in the world, serving over 777,000 students and employing over 100,000 staff," Ms Collins said.

The national song was composed by Fr Rob Galea, who currently serves in Sandhurst Diocese. He was featured in the video with students from Notre Dame College Shepparton in Victoria.

"The song encapsulates the importance of the 200 years of history, influencing and forming the culture of Australia," Fr Rob said. "200 Years of education is an incredible milestone and blessing."

The 'Faith in the Future Australian Catholic Schools Version' was premiered at the National Mass on 24 May 2021. The Mass was held simultaneously with school representation in most Cathedrals across Australia, as well as a number of individual parishes and schools. Live streaming of some of the Masses was also available to the 1,755 school communities, 777,000+ students and their families, and 100,000+ staff across Australia.

### Background:

The bicentenary commemorates the anniversary of the first official Catholic school in Australia, founded in October 1820 by Irish Catholic priest Fr John Therry. The school, which Catholic historians believe was located on Hunter Street in Parramatta, taught 31 students. This school was transferred to the site of the present St Patrick's Cathedral in 1837 and was entrusted to the care of the Marist Brothers in 1875. Parramatta Marist High School, now located in Westmead and St Patrick's Primary, Parramatta trace their origins back to this first school.

Over 200 years, Catholic schools have educated millions of young people and today educate one in five Australian students.

**View the Faith in the Future Australian Catholic Schools Version via [www.200years.catholic.edu.au](http://www.200years.catholic.edu.au)**

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### List of schools featured:

- Aquinas Catholic College Menai, NSW
- Catherine McAuley Westmead, NSW
- Galilee Catholic Primary School Bondi, NSW
- Marist College Eastwood, NSW
- Our Lady of Mt Carmel Catholic Primary Waterloo, NSW
- Our Lady of The Sacred Heart College Kensington, NSW
- Parramatta Marist High School Westmead, NSW
- St Canice's Katoomba, NSW
- St Columba's Catholic College Springwood, NSW
- St Patrick's Catholic Primary School Sutherland, NSW
- St. Patrick's College Sutherland, NSW
- St Patrick's Primary Parramatta, NSW
- Holy Trinity School Inverell, NSW
- Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic College Traeger Choir Alice Springs, NT
- Holy Cross Primary School Trinity Park, QLD
- Our Lady Sacred Heart Thursday Island, QLD
- Ryan Catholic College Townsville, QLD
- St Stephen's Catholic College Mareeba, QLD
- St Mary's Catholic College Cairns, QLD
- Mary Mackillop Memorial School Penola, SA
- St John's Catholic School Richmond, TAS
- Loyola College Watsonia, VIC
- Notre Dame College Shepparton, VIC
- St Alipius Parish School Ballarat, VIC
- Genazzano FCJ College Kew, VIC
- Thomas Carr College Tarneit, VIC
- Sacred Heart College Sorrento, WA
- Aquinas College Salter Point, WA
- Mercy College Perth Koondoola, WA

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