

## Strategies for developing Catholic school leaders into the future shared at ACU event

**Developing the future leadership of Catholic schools and celebrating 200 years of the Catholic school sector in Australia was the dual focus of a major event held in Sydney recently.**

The Morley Review Leadership Symposium was named in memory of the school principal of Australia's first formal Catholic school.

Led by Australian Catholic University's (ACU) La Salle Academy, the event celebrated the achievements of Catholic education and explored the future of school leadership throughout the nation.

Vice-Chancellor and President at ACU Professor Zlatko Skrbis attended saying, "ACU and Catholic education authorities have a long history of working together to support and enhance Catholic schools."

"Our desire is to continue to strengthen our cooperative efforts to ensure strong and effective leadership into the future."

Attendees developed workable strategies to ensure a supply of faith and mission-based Catholic education leaders for the future. ACU's role in support of this aspiration was discussed and affirmed.

Dean of ACU's La Salle Academy Professor Br David Hall FMS added, "The large number of participants was testament to the interest in the future of leadership in Catholic education and the day proved to be highly beneficial for everyone in attendance."

"A clear agenda for the future was set, including more strategic, collaborative efforts in forming and supporting Catholic school leaders into the future.

“Participants acclaimed the day as a significant moment which harnessed interest and energy and they are keen for ACU to continue with similar collaborative efforts.

“A new book, *Leadership in a Synodal Church*, was launched and its authors, ACU Honorary Professors, Anne Benjamin and Charles Burford, addressed the gathering, setting the tone for day.

“This is both a visionary and highly practical book that will shape the future of Catholic Church leadership.”

The Morley Review Leadership Symposium was attended by diocesan directors of education, as well as directors of education from religious institutes and public juridic persons.

Executive Director of Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta, Greg Whitby said, “The event was an invaluable opportunity for a collective exploration of the future of leadership in Catholic education. I hope the feedback leads to a great outcome for our sector.”

Education Consultant Hilary Johnstone-Croke agreed, “The day certainly elicited the needs for leadership development of the Catholic sector, it was insightful to hear the views in the room. I would consider it a visionary event.”

Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons, Phil Billington added, “The day was a terrific success, there was a great commitment by all present to continue to work together, a cohesion stronger than I have witnessed in the past.”

Dean of ACU’s La Salle Academy Professor Br David Hall FMS concluded, “The Morley Review Leadership Symposium was one of ACU’s efforts to celebrate 200 years of Catholic education in Australia and to do so by looking to the future to ensure that the visionary, generous and effective leadership of the past has an equally ambitious future.”

A discussion paper helped guide decision-making and a final recommendations report will be published.

## **Background**

Today Australia has 1,755 Catholic schools serving more than 777,000 students. One in five school students are enrolled in the Catholic education system, which employs over 100,000 teachers and staff. Nearly 40 per cent of Catholic schools are located outside metropolitan cities in regional, rural, and remote communities.

**Professor David Hall is available for interview.**

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## **Photo caption:**

**(Left to right) Ms Christina Trimble, Executive Director of Schools, Catholic Education Bathurst, Prof. Br David Hall, Dean, ACU’s La Salle Academy, Dr Sally Downs, Director,**

**Catholic Schools Lismore, Mr Chris Smyth, Director of Schools, Catholic Education Office  
Armidale, Ms Pam Betts, Executive Director, Brisbane Catholic Education Office.**