



Our Lady of Mercy College
Parramatta



MEDIA RELEASE

22 March 2022

Historic Change to Governance of OLMC Parramatta

At a special ceremony on Sunday 13 March, 2022, the process of transferring the Canonical Sponsorship Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta from the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta to Mercy Partners was completed. Attended by Sisters of Mercy, current College board members, staff and students, and the Mercy Partners Council, the ceremony followed six months after the official signing of documents on 18 October, 2021.

The event marked a very important milestone in the College's long, rich history. Since establishing the College in 1889, the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta have provided oversight and guidance as Canonical Sponsors. OLMC Board Chair, Kerrie Walshaw said the College was founded by brave sisters who travelled from Callan in Ireland; "Since that time, for 133 years, OLMC has been on its own journey. Now in, 2022, we are reaching another major milestone with the canonical sponsorship of OLMC transferring from our beloved Sisters to Mercy Partners."

In her reflection, Sister Mary-Louise Petro rsm, Congregation Leader of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, said that this day is all about journey; "It is about the whole thread from the journey that began with Catherine McAuley, right through the ages and continuing through to today. We have come to this wonderful place, this new life for OLMC with Mercy Partners and we are delighted! Even though we know we have tears of sadness, and we all recognise those, it is a wonderful space to be, to be so sure that OLMC has found the best home, a home that is welcoming of us."

Principal Lucie Farrugia said this momentous occasion is an historic moment for the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta and our College; "It is a fitting opportunity to reflect on how OLMC is an enduring work of the Sisters of Mercy. The wonderful school community we have here today and our thriving culture of excellence was made possible by the hard work and dedication of the founding Sisters who came here from Callan and every other Sister of Mercy in the Parramatta congregation who came after them. Their legacy will always be interwoven into the fabric of this school, and through this work, they will continue to positively impact the lives of girls and their families into the future. It is

because of them that we thrive today, well into the 21st century, as a Catholic school providing excellence in education in the Mercy Tradition.”

Chairperson of the Mercy Partners Council, Ricki Jeffery, says it is humbling to be stepping onto such a well-worn path of mercy, to be receiving, in trust, this College which has been such an important ministry of the Sisters of Mercy, to be part of the ‘Muru Ba’ – the future pathway: “It has been a privilege to hear the story of this sacred place, of this school and of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy here in Parramatta, enacted through the words, prayers, song and actions of this ritual.” Mercy Partners is a Public Juridic Person (PJP) in the Catholic Church, sponsoring ministries entrusted to their care by their founding religious congregations. Mercy Partners honours the living spirit and legacy of their charisms, and seeks to ensure that each charism is preserved, nurtured and reimagined into the future. Mercy Partners sponsors and governs ministries in education, health, aged care, community, family and disability services and commercial services.

The sacredness of the College site was a key theme of the Transfer of Governance Ceremony. To begin, Aunty Julie Webb welcomed all to Country and blessed the ground painting *The Journey* by Ngemba artist Danny Eastwood which depicts the ongoing connection of the Darug people and the contribution of the women religious who have lived and worked at OLMC. The procession continued through the College site, carrying Parramatta River water and candles to the ‘Come, Sit Awhile’ Sculpture of Catherine McAuley, then through to the Kavanagh Place courtyard. The final element of the ritual was a procession to the Mercy Tree where water, which included water from Brisbane River blended with waters from the Parramatta River and ‘The Rill,’ at Mercy International in Dublin, was poured on the roots of the tree.

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