

## ACU launches ground-breaking faith formation partnership with the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

A newly launched partnership between Australian Catholic University (ACU) and the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle will work to build a faith-inspired community and the next generation of Catholic leaders.

Known as the 'Tenison Woods Education Community' this innovative partnership model between ACU and the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is an Australian first and is part of a long-term mission formation program that is designed to respond to the multiple and competing challenges that confront faith-based organisations and their personnel, at the community level.

Anchored in ACU's Graduate Certificate in Mission and Culture, the program is designed specifically to provide participants with the capabilities required to think critically, creatively, and theologically around their participation in and support for the Catholic character and ethos of their diocese.

ACU's Graduate Certificate in Mission and Culture is a two-year part-time program comprised of four academic units that progressively build towards defined learning outcomes through a series of readings, resources, reflective learning activities, and practically focused assessments.

Participants will be invited to explore and reflect upon their sense of purpose and meaning and how this connects with the mission and culture of the Catholic Church and their organisation.

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Vicar General Father Andrew Doohan said, "The new partnership with Australian Catholic University allows the Diocese the opportunity to explore the 'why' behind all the activities the Church – parishes, schools, social agencies, early education services, and so much more – undertake across the expanse of the diocese. Having a common understanding of 'why' allows all those members of the Diocese to work together with a common purpose, a common mission that is God's, not ours."

ACU Faculty of Theology and Philosophy Executive Dean Professor Dermot Nestor said, "This partnership and the course that anchors it signals the *real* purpose of a University, and the *distinctive* purpose of a Catholic University: supporting the creation of knowledge and skills which are of direct and immediate benefit to the community which it serves."

Commencing in June 2020, the program is open to staff and church workers at all levels, from parishes, schools, social services, early education, health and aged care organisations that are engaged in supporting the mission of the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. The program will be delivered in face-to-face intensive mode and across a specified and agreed timeframe.

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