



MediaRelease



EMBARGOED TO 1230pm on Monday August 28 2023

Top marks: Southern Cross University and Diocese of Lismore sign bold 3-year research agreement

The Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools is excited to partner with Southern Cross University to reimagine and co-design teacher education and training that will revolutionise and redefine how teachers are prepared for their career.

“The Mission of our Catholic Schools is to deliver education in such a way that every student can achieve the fullness of life. We are committed to doing this through diverse and innovative learning opportunities, which put our students at the centre,” said Adam Spencer, Director of Catholic Schools.

“The expertise at Southern Cross University, its commitment to co-designing with us and a bold outlook to what can be achieved in our classrooms makes it a natural partner in supporting our endeavour.”

The \$1.2 million three-year research program will deliver positive outcomes and impact for students, teachers and the Diocese of Lismore’s wider school communities, from Tweed Heads at the Queensland border, south to Laurieton on the mid north coast and west to Dorrigo on the Northern Tablelands.

The agreement is being signed amidst a broader national conversation about the practice of teaching and the preparedness of teacher graduates for an increasingly complex classroom landscape.

Professor David Lynch, the Research Director for the University’s TeachLab, said there were substantial bodies of research which supported different approaches in teacher education and classroom practice.

However, change was difficult at a national and state level because reform was typically delivered in a ‘top down’ way which did not involve teachers and school leaders in the process.

“The research agreement with Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools will allow us to flip that model, working with teachers and school leaders on those things the evidence tells us will improve outcomes for students, support the development of teachers in their practice and create a school environment which is highly individual and targets the needs of each student,” said Professor Lynch.

Pre-service teachers will have the opportunity to combine learning and practice in the teaching school classrooms from day one of their studies, Mr Spencer explained.

“They will have the opportunity to learn while they teach in schools across the Diocese, spending more time in the classroom before they graduate. We anticipate many pre-service teachers will embrace the opportunity to remain teaching in the Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools after graduation,” Mr Spencer said.

“The power of this partnership is that it harnesses the collective capacity of both the school and Southern Cross University, working together to create the best possible learning environment for teachers and students.”

University Executive Dean of Education, Professor Amy Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, said the research would take place on the cutting edge of a national conversation about university teacher education, national assessment programs and teacher retention.

“We won’t be working in isolation to this broader discussion,” Professor Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles said. “Rather, we will draw it into the way we are working together to create models which lead the country in supporting teachers and students in extraordinary classroom environments throughout the Diocese.”

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