

# Message Stick

To all members of the Catholic Education family



Catholic Education  
Diocese of Rockhampton

**Thursday 15 June 2023**

Good morning everyone

I am very much looking forward to attending our Formation Days next week together with Leadership Team members from our Kindergartens, Primary Schools and Colleges as well as our Priests from across the Diocese. Presenter, internationally renowned theologian, Fr Richard Lennan will lead the two-day gathering, focussing on the topic *Co-Responsibility for the Mission*. Fr Lennan is currently Professor of Systematic Theology at Boston College in the United States, having also taught at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts and the Catholic Institute in Sydney. Most recently Fr Lennan was a member of the theological panel for the Plenary Council of Australia (2021-22). I am most grateful to Bishop Michael for convening this very valuable opportunity for staff to hear from such an exceptional presenter. My thanks to all involved in the detailed preparation for these very important days.

Next Thursday, at the 8:00am Mass at St Joseph's Cathedral, a special celebration will be held for priests marking significant jubilees this year including Fr Bill Senn (10 years), Fr Jomon Poothara (15 years), Fr Peter Tonti (20 years) and Fr Peter Connor (60 years). I would commend this celebration to those in Rockhampton who may be able to attend as we give praise and thanks to God for the great blessing of these priests and their dedicated service to the Church in our Diocese.

This week over 60 Finance staff members from across our Primary Schools and Colleges and from the Catholic Education Office came together in Rockhampton for their annual gathering. The program featured sessions with a diverse array of high calibre industry professionals as well as presentations supporting pastoral and personal aspects of the Finance role. Congratulations to Amanda Houston (Assistant Director: Business and Strategy), John McDevitt (Finance Manager) and the CEDR Finance Team for their work in coordinating this important professional development for staff.

The Australian Minister for Education is encouraging teachers, parents and students to complete a survey to inform the development of the next National School Reform Agreement (NSRA). Survey participants can have their say on a range of issues including improving educational outcomes, supporting student health and wellbeing, and supporting and retaining teachers. The survey is available to complete [here](#) and will be open until Friday 23 June 2023. Thank you to school leaders for encouraging broad engagement with the survey by sharing the link with parents, students and teachers.

The Australian Literacy Educators Association (ALEA) has a very active local Council (ALEA CQ). This professional association offers outstanding professional development opportunities for both primary and secondary teachers. Brenda Barry, former Curriculum Consultant with Catholic Education, and Louise O'Shaughnessy (Curriculum Consultant) have recently stepped down from their positions as President and Treasurer (respectively). We thank them for their years of service to teacher professional development and congratulate Deb Foster (Curriculum Consultant) on her appointment as Vice President.

Congratulations to the staff and students from Shalom College, Bundaberg who were involved in the College production of *Legally Blonde*, last week. I was delighted to hear of the show's success with a Saturday matinee released due to the evening shows being virtually sold out. Thank you to all who made this performance opportunity possible for students.

Finally, I wish to advise that I remain committed to finalising Enterprise Bargaining negotiations in a fair, just, and timely manner so that the benefits to staff can be passed on as soon as possible. You would have received updated communication from me last week [read](#) and I thank you for your support during this process and for your commitment to Catholic Education.

God bless,

*Leesa*

**Where's Leesa:** Monday 19 June, Secondary Principals' Meeting; Tuesday 20 June and Wednesday 21 June, Formation Gathering; Thursday 22 June, Office; Friday 23 June, QCEC, Brisbane.

**Please remember in your prayers recently deceased members of our wider Catholic Education Family.**

**Lorna Apelt**, Grandmother of Chris Apelt, AP: Teaching and Learning, Catherine McAuley College, Mackay and wife Hayley, St Brendan's Catholic Primary School, Mackay.

**Please remember in your prayers members of our wider Catholic Education Family who are unwell at this time.**

**Brendon (Ben) Hall**, father of Lachlan Hall, Marist College, Emerald.

**Congratulations to:**

**Mark Gabriel**, The Cathedral College, Rockhampton on his appointment as Acting AP: Students-Middle School, for Term 3.

**Erin Sheldrick** and husband Stephen Chant on the safe arrival of Oliver Aubrey.

**Alex Lamb**, Catherine McAuley College, Mackay and husband Jason Lamb on the safe arrival of Michael Philip.

**Jennifer McDuff**, former staff member Shalom College, Bundaberg on receiving an OAM in the King's Birthday Honours List for her contribution to the arts.

**Online Prayer Service for Refugee Week  
2023 Tuesday, 20 June 2023 at 7:00pm  
(AEST)**

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office and the Office of Justice Ecology and Peace invite you to an online prayer service to commemorate Refugee Week from 18 to 24 June. The theme of Refugee Week 2023 is **Finding Freedom**. The prayer service will be broadcast live at 7:00pm AEST on 20 June. Please register now at <https://bit.ly/RWPS23>

8 June was World Oceans Day and the Year 2 students at **MacKillop Catholic Primary School, Mackay** shared information at the Assembly about protecting the ocean.



**Emmaus College, North Rockhampton** recently commissioned local artist Andrea Farrow to do a sculpture celebrating the last part of the Emmaus Gospel story where the disciples run back to Jerusalem with their hearts burning to tell the Good News. The sculpture was recently blessed by Fr Alex, pictured below with students and Eamon Hannan Principal.



Pictured below; Leesa and Jennette O'Mullane Principal **Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, Gladstone** during a recent school visit.



Every year, on the first Sunday in July, Catholics come together to celebrate **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday on 2 July**. It is an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the gifts of Australia's First peoples to our Church, our country and our communities. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council has developed a resource to assist schools in celebrating the day as well as conducting activities to encourage further learning and exploration. The 2023 resources are titled **A new life in Christ** and include several suggestions that can assist in creating liturgies in a classroom setting. The resources and associated multimedia assets are available [here](#).

Pictured below: photos from the Blessing and Opening at **St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Gladstone**, last Friday.



**Marist College, Emerald** staff were recently acknowledged for their contribution to Marist College and Catholic Education. Mr Tim Collins, Assistant Director: Schools - Western Region, presented plaques and certificates to the following staff, pictured from left: Mitchell Dean 10 years' service; Sophie Basford 20 years' service; Anne Wilson 10 years' service; Mark Green (Principal) 30 years' service and Laurence Tucker 20 years' service. We congratulate these staff members and thank them for their dedicated service to Catholic Education and to Marist College, Emerald.



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**QCEC**

New Executive Director  
[read](#)

**NCEC**

Religious Freedom and Catholic school, update.  
[read](#)

**Reflection from  
Pope Francis**

Many children, instead of receiving a good education, are exploited, subjected to child labour. No effort should be spared to end the scourge of child labour! Children are our hope. Let us not allow that hope to be stifled.