



**Please remember in your prayers members of our extended Catholic Education Family who are unwell:**

**Peter Bartlett**, teacher at St Brendan's College Yeppoon.

**Sienna McGarry**, Year 5 student at St Mary's Bundaberg.

**Mia McEldowney**, Year 3 student at St John's Walkerston.

**Oliver Burndred**, Year 2 student at St Brendan's Mackay.

## Pope Francis Reflection



How important it is to learn to be a friendly and outstretched hand! Try to grow in friendship even with those who think differently than you, so that solidarity might grow among you and become the best weapon to change the course of history.

**Wednesday 4 December 2019**

Good morning everyone

In writing this final *Message Stick* for 2019, I reflected on the past 12 months and there is no doubt it has been another amazing year for Catholic Education here in our Diocese. There have been many exciting events, positive initiatives, fantastic projects and wonderful celebrations that have certainly made it a year to remember for Catholic Education.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to every member of our Catholic Education family for all you have contributed to the life of your School, College, Kindergarten and the Catholic Education Office over the past year. Please find here a link to my Christmas message to everyone on behalf of Catholic Education. [Christmas Message](#)

I congratulate our Principals, Leadership Teams, all teachers and staff for your professionalism and compassionate care of your students. I thank you for the great gift you are to each other, in all that you do every day to ensure our schools are safe and nurturing places of quality teaching and learning. I thank the many generous people in our school communities who give so willingly to volunteer their precious time and talents on our School Boards and P&F Associations, for reading groups, in tuckshops, as sporting coaches, and in countless other roles that sustain and build our communities. In giving to others, each one, has been the person of Jesus and provided authentic witness to our gospel values.

To our Bishop and pastoral leader, Bishop Michael, I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude for his ever present prayerful and practical support and for presiding at so many significant events in our school communities and for Catholic Education. I would particularly like to thank Bishop Michael for his guidance and leadership throughout the Diocesan Assembly process which will bear much fruit for our Diocese in the years ahead. I would also like to thank our Priests and the members of our Religious Congregations for their prayerful and practical support of Catholic Education and the faith development of all in our communities.

This weekend 35 of our teachers and students will travel to Perth for the Australian Catholic Youth Festival from 8-10 December, please see <https://youthfestival.catholic.org.au/>. We pray for their safe travel and that they will experience, through the Holy Spirit, a renewed awakening and deepening of their relationship with Jesus. We thank each of them for their enthusiasm and the willingness to be disciples in the world today.

Sunday marked the commencement of Advent – that season of waiting, longing and spiritual preparation for celebrating the birth of Jesus, our Saviour. We lit the first of the four Advent candles, the candle of Hope. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those hoping for drought-ending rain to restore livelihoods and rejuvenate suffering communities. Bishop Michael's inspiring message provides great encouragement – *"The Christmas story gives us hope – hope that we can stand together and live our faith through all adversity and be encouraged by our brothers and sisters who, generation upon generation, stood up and were counted as life-affirming followers of Jesus."* Let us take the Hope of Christmas and renew our support for those adversely affected by on-going drought and prayerfully petition our ever-loving and generous God to quickly send life-giving rain.

I wish everyone a holy Christmas, a happy New Year and may the treasured gifts of peace and joy, good health and safety, be with you and all your loved ones at this most joyful and wondrous time of year.

God bless

*Leesa*





**eSafety Parents Gift Guide** The [Office of the eSafety Commissioner](#) provides excellent resources and advice on anything relating to online experiences. They have produced a very good resource called the [eSafety Gift Guide](#) to empower parents to “Be smart and secure when choosing tech gifts for children and young people.”

### Long Serving Staff who are leaving Catholic Education this Year



#### **John Lyons** – Holy Spirit College, Mackay

John Lyons retires from fulltime employment with Catholic Education after 36 years of outstanding leadership and service to school communities across the Diocese. John served as Principal of St Patrick's Bundaberg, St Francis Mackay, Foundation Principal of MacKillop Mackay, Supervisor of Schools and Principal of Holy Spirit College, Mackay since 2003. John is highly respected as a man of integrity whose deep faith has informed his leadership and shaped his relationships with others. John is recognised for his love of learning, his vast knowledge of education and his quest to always uphold the dignity of those he works with. John has left a legacy in Catholic Education in this Diocese that he can be immensely proud of and, for those who have had the privilege to work with John, we have been the richer for this opportunity. Thank you, John, for all you have been, and continue to be, for Catholic Education in the Diocese of Rockhampton and we wish you God's many blessings in your retirement.



#### **Helen Dean** – St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Rockhampton

Helen joined Catholic Education as a fulltime teacher at Sacred Heart Yeppoon in 1991 and has taken on leadership roles since 2005 including Assistant Principal Admin and Acting Principal at Sacred Heart, Principal at St Joseph's Clermont and Acting Principal and Principal at St Anthony's Rockhampton. Helen is well respected as a committed and faithfilled leader with an inspiring work ethic and a genuine love of her vocation. In building relationships with students, staff and families, Helen recognises the inherent dignity of each person. Her lived example of Catholic ethos has set a culture of authentic witness to gospel values that promotes meaning for life. As Helen steps away from her leadership role as Principal we are delighted that she will continue in her vocation as a classroom teacher with Catholic Education. Thank you for your great service, Helen.



#### **Vicki Heggie** – Catholic Education Office, Mackay

After more than 30 years of exemplary service to Catholic Education in this Diocese, Vicki Heggie retires from the role of Religious Education Consultant at the end of this year. In her previous roles at Mercy College and Holy Spirit College, Vicki has made the most amazing contribution. Vicki is a very gracious and kind person of deep faith and this has shone through in all the roles she has held with Catholic Education. She has earned the respect and admiration of all who have had the opportunity to work with her or to be taught by her. So many people have benefited from her wisdom, support and encouragement. Thank you, Vicki, for all you have been to Catholic Education in this Diocese and may God bless you and your family into the future.



#### **Gail Davis** – Catholic Education Office, Rockhampton

Gail Davis retires after 28 years in a variety of roles at St Anthony's North Rockhampton, St Joseph's Wandal and at St Mary's North Rockhampton prior to spending the past 14 years as a Consultant (Teaching and Learning Religion) at the Catholic Education Office. Hundreds of students (and teachers) have been blessed to have had Gail as their teacher. Gail with her love of Scripture and amazing story-telling, her hearty laughter and caring nature will be deeply missed but her legacy will live on through the many teachers whom she encouraged, affirmed and mentored assisting them to grow in their knowledge as they nurture faith in their students. Thank you, Gail, for your contribution to Catholic Education in this Diocese and may God bless you and your family into the future.

### Employment:

For details regarding positions available please visit [Careers](#)

### Important dates:

4 December Last Day for Western Schools  
6 December Last Day Term Four  
8 to 10 December Australian Catholic Youth Festival Perth.  
20 December Catholic Education Office closes  
25 December Christmas Day  
2 January Catholic Education Office reopens  
22 January Opening Year Mass for Far Western Schools  
24 January Opening Year Mass, Mackay, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Gladstone and Central Highlands  
27 January Australia Day Public Holiday  
28 January Term One commences

**St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Barcaldine, has a new vegie garden, which despite the heat is progressing very well.**



**St Joseph's Catholic Kindergarten in Bundaberg is taking shape in preparation for opening in 2020.**







**John Loch – Emmaus College, Rockhampton**

John Loch, after an illustrious career as a Vet, turned his hand to teaching and in 1987, Emmaus got lucky. Over the following 33 years, he has had a huge impact all over the school especially in the areas of Biology, English, RE, SOR, Campus Ministry, Productions, Spirituality, retreats, photography, leadership and as AP Mission. Lochie leaves a legacy of many 'God' moments in the lives of those who have shared the journey with him. He will enjoy semi-retirement reading, writing, singing and continuing to contribute to the Mission. We thank him for the many blessings he has shared with our community. He will be greatly missed.



**Joy Philippi – Emmaus College, Rockhampton**

After a decade and a half as Campus Minister at Emmaus College, Joy Philippi is returning to Diocesan work. Her deep appreciation and understanding of the faith of young people, long evidenced in her work in youth ministry, will serve our Diocese well. We will sadly miss her enthusiasm, energy, wisdom, competence and companionship on the Emmaus journey. She has been a mentor and critical friend to many students and staff. Joy continues the evangelising mission that lies at the heart of her life, proclaiming Christ's Gospel joyfully.



**Mark Mitchell – Catholic Education Office, Rockhampton**

After teaching at The Cathedral College for a term in 2000 Mark took on his current role as Library Consultant at CEO. Mark embraced technology and implemented remote access of school library systems from as early as 2005 revolutionising support for library staff. With endless patience and care, Mark's gentle guidance was greatly appreciated by Library staff as he facilitated the use of progressive updated systems and software across the diocese. Mark has been extremely thorough in his efforts to provide the very best advice and support for the resourcing of our libraries and schools including extensive access to quality E-Libraries. His expansive knowledge is well respected, and his generous spirit and empathetic ways have always been widely appreciated. Thank you, Mark and Bernadette, for the great gift you have been to Catholic Education.



**Bernadette Mitchell – The Cathedral College, Rockhampton**

Bernadette joined staff at St Joseph's Park Avenue as Teacher Assistant (Music) in 1996 then commencing as Cultural Coordinator at The Cathedral College in 2005. Bernadette has shared her extraordinary musical talents generously at countless events for St Joseph's, The Cathedral College, Catholic Education and for our Church enriching the celebrations and events for all present. She has been instrumental in the continuation of the annual Diocesan Music Camp and coordinating, preparing and accompanying students for Eisteddfods, musicals and state festivals and programs. Bernadette has given generously of her precious time and wonderful musical talent and she will be deeply missed by many. Her extensive contribution to Catholic Education over so many years is sincerely appreciated.



**Shane Hair – The Cathedral College, Rockhampton**

Shane commenced with Catholic Education as APRE at MacKillop Mackay then as Principal of St Joseph's Mackay before moving to secondary teaching at The Cathedral College Rockhampton in 2015 teaching Religious Education and English in Middle School and senior Religion and Ethics classes. Shane has been a valued Boarding Supervisor at TCC Boy's Boarding House, a Pastoral Care Teacher and has been actively involved in the Cathedral Parish. We thank Shane for his tremendous contribution to Catholic Education.



**Barbara Hair – The Cathedral College, Rockhampton**

Barb joined Catholic Education in 2005 and over the past 15 years has worked as a fulltime teacher at St Joseph's and MacKillop in Mackay, St John's Walkerston, St Paul's Gracemere and most recently at St Anthony's in Rockhampton in charge of Intensive Reading and ESL. Barb also took on the role of boarding supervisor at The Cathedral College. Barb has proven to be an adaptable and versatile teacher taking on new challenges with enthusiasm. We thank her sincerely for her professionalism and her dedicated faith-filled service and we wish Barb and Shane every future blessing.