



MacKillop Catholic Primary School

Statement of Special Religious Character

Approved: June 2019

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For Review: July 2023

Our Motto:

"Faith and Service"

Together, 'Faith and Service' represent and summarise the two keynote qualities which characterise the life and work of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop.

MacKillop proudly stands in the community of Mackay as a Catholic Primary School within the Diocese of Rockhampton. We follow in the tradition passed from all those pioneering men and women who were committed to the vision of creating a catholic school in this area in the early 1990's.

As a Catholic school we strive to give witness to the message and call of Jesus Christ and to share in the mission of the Church. Through a commitment to quality and inclusive educational practices we work together to foster and enhance faith and Christian action within the individual child and within the community as a whole. This mandate is given definition through the Diocesan Mission and vision for all Catholic schools namely, that:

- ***Inspired by the person and teaching of Jesus Christ, we serve the communities of the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton. We provide: Life-long faith education, Religious education, relevant, holistic, quality education; Assisting all in their search for meaning for life.***
- ***Our Vision for Catholic Schools***
 - ***Give witness to the message of Jesus and the mission of the Church***
 - ***Are open and accessible to all who seek our values***
 - ***Are communities of care and safety***
 - ***Have a clear Catholic identity***
 - ***Offer a relevant and holistic curriculum of quality teaching and learning***
 - ***Are characterised by inclusive partnerships within a community of faith***

Recognising each person's inherent dignity, as created in God's image, we seek to engage all in reconciliation, to deepen a respectful understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their histories, cultures and spiritualities.

(Rockhampton Catholic Education Office Website)

We are also, as a Catholic school, immersed in the mission of the wider Church, providing opportunities for learning and fostering faith through the rich celebration of the sacraments and rites of prayer. MacKillop, as a faith-filled school, works with the Church to educate the *whole person*.

MacKillop's special religious character is firmly embodied in its motto: "Faith and Service". If it wasn't for the faith and determination of many people and their over-riding commitment to service to the people of God, our school would never have flourished as it has.

In the years when Fr Peter Greene was the Parish Priest of North Mackay, a number of parishioners expressed the desire that another Catholic school should be established in the vicinity of Andergrove. The population of the area was growing and many parishioners supported the idea for a new school to be built. Fr Peter was a visionary and hard working man, who responded to the request with sincerity and dedication. A meeting was organised and a School Establishment Taskforce under the chair of Mr Michael O'Brien was established. The Parish of North Mackay then established a Working Committee and the financial burden undertaken by the parish was testament to their faith and service.

In 1993 Fr Peter with the help of the then Director of Catholic Education, Mr Joe McCorley, the present site of MacKillop was purchased. At that time, MacKillop was one of the first Catholic schools to have been established in the Diocese of Rockhampton, in the modern era, as the result of a lay driven movement. Interested families attending early meetings and were also integral in assisting the School Establishment Taskforce in these formative times.

Fr Peter Greene then approached Dr John Lyons, and he was duly appointed by the Diocesan Catholic Education Office (Rockhampton) as the school's founding Principal and through the support of St Joseph's School and the other Catholic schools of Mackay, MacKillop opened its doors for enrolment in 1995.

It cannot be understated the significant contribution that Dr John Lyons made in those years as he worked to lay the strong foundations that have contributed to MacKillop's growth and success.

It is not surprising that Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop, was chosen as the Patron for our school. At the time of Pope John Paul II's second visit to Australia for the beatification of Mary MacKillop, it seemed fitting for this strong woman of faith to be chosen as our school's patron. Her life's motto of "Faith and Service" seemed to capture the spirit and vision of the people of faith under the leadership of Fr Peter Greene. That legacy and the witness of Saint Mary of the Cross have continued to shape our school's unique spiritual identity.

Today, MacKillop Catholic Primary School is one of the four primary schools within the Parish of St Joseph's North Mackay. We offer children from the Preparatory Year to Year Six a Catholic education that proudly builds on our rich past to lead our children to faith in Christ and Christian action in the world.