

## Media Release

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# St Mary MacKillop School in Wallaroo set to expand

Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) has today announced plans to expand St Mary MacKillop School at Wallaroo into a Reception to Year 9 school.

St Mary MacKillop School, a Catholic school founded in the Josephite tradition, will commence offering Year 8 in 2022 and Year 9 from 2023.

The \$2.24 million expansion was approved by the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) this week.

Bishop Gregory O’Kelly SJ, Bishop of the Diocese of Port Pirie, expressed great satisfaction with the decision to progress this development within the Diocese.

He quoted the adage that the education of youth is the renewal of the world, and this endorsement of the ministry of education in the Diocese will be a source of great blessings for the young people and families involved.

Professor Denis Ralph, Chair, South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools said “This exciting expansion is part of our strong commitment to improving Catholic education pathways for children and young people in regional South Australia.”

As the oldest school in the Port Pirie Diocese, St Mary MacKillop School last year celebrated 150 years of Catholic education, recognising the longevity and strength of Catholic education in this region.

St Mary MacKillop School has experienced significant enrolment growth in recent years. This expansion will give students an extended pathway to high quality Catholic education in preparation for their transition to senior secondary years.

“We are excited to be expanding our provision of Catholic education on the Copper Coast and to be building an even stronger focus on student learning and quality teaching in regional South Australia,” added Nichii Mardon, Director, Catholic Education Port Pirie Diocese.

“This expansion follows a thorough consultation process with the school, parish and wider community that confirmed that there is strong appetite for a Reception to Year 9 school in Wallaroo.”

Construction of a Year 7 to 9 secondary learning facility on the current school site will begin in early 2021.

The purpose-built facility will include specialist areas for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Arts and incorporate outdoor spaces designed to cater for the needs of young adolescents.

“The expansion will build on the high-quality education and pastoral care that is already provided at St Mary MacKillop,” said Michelle Miller, Principal, St Mary MacKillop School.

“The local school community welcomes this announcement which will strengthen our educational offering to our students. We are excited to be able to offer specialist facilities to cater for the specific learning needs of our new secondary students.”

Her sentiments are echoed by school Chairperson, Karen Miers

“This initiative will achieve a long-awaited vision of adding secondary learning in our community. We’ve been hoping for this for some time.”

“This will give students the opportunity to complete their middle schooling closer to home and will prepare them for success in senior secondary years.”

Wallaroo will be the third regional Catholic school in SA in recent years to extend their provision to offer Year 9 education, including St Barbara’s Catholic School at Roxby Downs, which already offers R to 9 education and St Joseph’s School at Murray Bridge, which will open a new Year 7 to 9 facility in 2021.

“While a Year 7 to 9 expansion is not feasible at all regional schools, this is great news for the local community,” said Nichii Mardon.

Today the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools also announced a new Catholic secondary college for the Riverland. This follows a recent commitment to open a new campus of Xavier College at Two Wells in 2021.

#### **MEDIA OPPORTUNITY**

**Nichii Mardon and school principal Michelle Miller are available for comment.**

An architect’s 3D image of the development is available.

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