

Media Release

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More secondary Catholic education options for regional South Australia

Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) has today announced plans to expand St Joseph's School in Peterborough and St Joseph's School in Clare to become Reception to Year 9 schools.

Both Catholic schools, founded in the Josephite tradition, will commence offering secondary education with Year 7 and 8 in 2022 and Year 9 from 2023.

The expansions were approved by the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) earlier this week.

These announcements complete the first phase of Catholic Education South Australia's Regional Schools Pathway Project. The project reviewed access to Catholic education pathways in areas where Reception to Year 7 schools currently exist in regional SA.

"This project is about a renewed focus on Catholic education throughout regional South Australia and building an even stronger focus on student learning and quality teaching for all students", said Nichii Mardon, Director, Catholic Education Diocese of Port Pirie.

"It is about providing choice of education for families in regional South Australia. We have been listening to communities who have expressed their strong desire for their children to remain within their familiar Catholic school communities as they prepare for senior secondary education. This has been sought for a long time in these communities and was particularly highlighted as families in South Australia prepare for Year 7s transitioning to secondary settings from 2022".

"The outcome of this extensive research and community consultation is the establishment of a new Catholic secondary college in the Riverland – the first new Catholic School in regional SA in 20 years – and four school expansions."

In addition to the expansions of Clare and Peterborough, SACCS endorsed the following:

- St Joseph's School in Murray Bridge will become a Reception to Year 9 school, offering Year 7 and 8 in 2022 and Year 9 from 2023.
- St Mary MacKillop School in Wallaroo will become a Reception to Year 9 school, offering Year 7 and 8 in 2022 and Year 9 from 2023.

This will take the total number of Reception to Year 9 schools in regional SA to five including St Barbara's Parish School in Roxby Downs which already offers a R to 9 education.

"This model enables schools to provide personalised learning and care for children aged 5 to 15", said Nichii.

"Adolescence is a time of significant developmental change and students in Year 7 to 9 are ready for more independence and increased responsibility. They require personalised schooling, where academic and personal growth is nurtured in ways that are relevant to stages of development.

"This approach enables strong spiritual, learning and wellbeing support and a smooth transition to senior secondary years, through specialist teachers, tailored curriculum and custom-built facilities.

"Parents tell us they desire their children to stay at their school for Year 7 to 9 because of the overall focus on the kids, not just on the academic but on their wellbeing. They still have their friends and all the wonderful values continued into their secondary education".

Each new school expansion will see dedicated multi-use facilities developed on the existing school sites during 2021.

From 2023, of the 19 regional Catholic schools throughout SA:

- 5 will provide Reception to Year 12 education
- 5 will provide Reception to Year 9 education
- 9 will be Reception to Year 6 schools, following the 2022 transition of Year 7 into secondary years, in line with all South Australian primary schools

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Nichii Mardon, Director, Catholic Education Diocese of Port Pirie is available for comment.

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