

Media Release

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Site announced for new Riverland Catholic college

A site has been named by Catholic Education SA (CESA) for the Riverland's proposed new St Francis of Assisi College, set to open at Renmark in 2022.

The Year 7 to 12 Catholic college will be located on Twentyfirst Street in Renmark, between Marrara and Korinthos streets.

A range of possible locations were considered throughout Renmark for the significant development, with this site deemed the most suitable following a thorough investigation process.

Construction is set to begin in February 2021. In partnership with Swanbury Penglase architects, the College is being designed for today and the future. The whole school development will occur over three phases. The 2021 initial phase building plans include a specialist Middle Years Learning Centre, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and Arts Centre, a Design and Technology Workshop, Administration Centre, and covered and outdoor learning, play and landscaped spaces.

St Francis of Assisi College will open with Year 7 and 8 in 2022 and will offer a new year level annually until it expands to Year 7 to 12 by 2026.

A specialised middle-school curriculum will prepare young people for the SACE and a range of pathways in senior years. A focus on entrepreneurship will be a key feature of the creative learning program.

Bishop Karol Kulczycki SDS, Bishop of the Diocese of Port Pirie, has welcomed the announcement of the College location.

"The College will take inspiration from St Francis of Assisi, patron saint of the environment, so appropriate for the Riverland. St Francis is a model of the Christian life, who dedicated his life to serving his neighbour, while being conscious of the strong presence of God in all forms of nature. His example will guide the College focus on care for self, others and our shared earth".

Nichii Mardon, Director, Catholic Education Diocese of Port Pirie, said the announcement of St Francis of Assisi College has been warmly welcomed by Riverland communities.

“News of the new College has been received overwhelmingly positively by families attending our primary schools at Renmark, Berri, Barmera and Loxton as well as those attending other schools across the regional towns.

“There is no current Catholic secondary pathway option for families within a 3-hour radius of the Riverland. This exciting initiative will change this. St Francis of Assisi College will serve students and families from across the Riverland region, providing increased choice, access and opportunities for families of all denominations.

“Catholic education has been a rich feature of parish life in the Riverland for over 150 years. We are building an even stronger and extended focus on student learning and high-quality teaching for all students across the region.

“We want our first group of graduates in 2026 and those who follow them to have experienced the benefits of a specialised, tailored Catholic education, provided by a team of expert staff that prepares them for life post-school and to use their gifts and talents to leave their mark on the world in a positive way.”

St Francis of Assisi College will develop a wide range of partnerships with community, government agencies, industry, Catholic Education SA, other school sectors, tertiary providers, local parishes of all faiths, and most importantly, with families, to provide high quality Catholic education relevant for young people.

“St Francis of Assisi College will be a place of strong community engagement. We are very excited about the opportunities the College will provide children and families in the Riverland, and look forward to our continued partnership with the community as the vision comes to fruition”, said Nathan Hayes, the recently appointed College principal.

This announcement has been welcomed by the local Council.

“The further progress into the establishment of the St Francis of Assisi College at Renmark is welcome news for our Riverland region. We are pleased it will add to the secondary education options for our families and students in the Riverland region” said Mayor Neil Martinson, Renmark Paringa Council.

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