

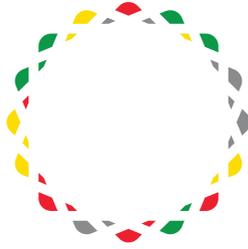
Toowoomba Catholic Schools

excellence
A W A R D S

2022



Diocese of Toowoomba
Catholic Schools



Toowoomba Catholic Schools

excellence AWARDS

Welcome to the 2022 Toowoomba Catholic Schools
Excellence Awards incorporating the presentation
of the *Spirit of Catholic Education Award*.

Sponsored by



Diocese of Toowoomba
Catholic Schools



The Spirit of Catholic Education Awards are presented annually as part of *Queensland Catholic Education Week* (CEW) celebrations. The awards aim to recognise those who are making an outstanding contribution within the Catholic education community.



2022 Diocese of Toowoomba recipient

Brian Cantwell St Joseph's College, Toowoomba

Brian's deep commitment to maintaining and building an inclusive community at St Joseph's College is what makes him exceptional.

Whether it is sharing the history of the College with new staff, cooking up a feast on the College BBQ or one of his famous mystery bus trips to support towns in drought or flood – he has a way of ensuring staff want to be involved.

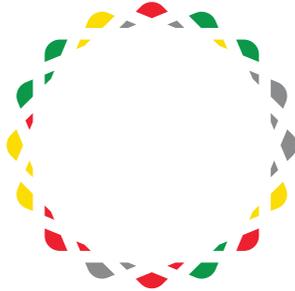
For students, his leadership of initiatives that engage them in service and outreach, have built wonderful partnerships and widened their sense of community. In particular is the link to St Joseph's School, Tara, where groups visit to build much needed resources, including playground equipment, garden beds and even a chicken coop.

As a member of the school's leadership team, Brian exemplifies the Edmund Rice tradition. Acting as a special minister of the Eucharist and leading liturgies for staff and students, assisting in the formation of staff and student leaders, mentoring pre-service and early career teachers and reinvigorating the Catholic identity of the school through the 'Joey's Way' project – are just some examples of Brian's influence and lasting impact.

Always looking for new ways to engage students, maximise the impact of technology and improve equity, Brian has been instrumental in a number of successful innovation programs including the 'Girls in welding' event, supporting girls to explore engineering pathways.

Brian's 'ministry of presence' is key to his leadership; his reliability, relationality, consistency and genuine support.





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Toowoomba Catholic Schools Excellence Awards recognise members of the Toowoomba Catholic Schools community who create exemplary places of learning where every student experiences academic success and comes to know and experience the loving presence of Jesus.





Teaching and learning support sponsored by Toowoomba Toyota

Kim Badcock – Teacher Aide St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe

Kim's ability to quickly develop a great rapport with learners, know what is required before being asked and to complete both learning support and administrative tasks to a very high standard make her a 'teacher's dream'.

Both staff and students admire Kim for her gentleness, foresight and innovation. In particular, she is acknowledged for her strong relationship with students and families with hearing and vision impairments.

Along with her support of students, she is a key advocate for staff wellbeing and is a keen coordinator of social functions and those extra touches to build community.

Enhanced learning team St Joseph's College, Toowoomba

Bringing together a team with a variety of expertise has ensured that learning outcomes for students are enhanced and all aspects of student life is supported.

Each brings to the team their own lens, whether that be wellbeing, academic, pastoral, spiritual, sporting, mentorship or social – and together they achieve more than they could on their own.

Most recently they have been focussed on improvements in Year 7-9 literacy. Through their collaboration, together and with teachers, they have been integral in reaping the rewards of improved outcomes for students.

Andrea Gormley – Middle Leader Learning Support Our Lady of the Southern Cross College, Dalby

Andrea's ability to quickly identify and offer a range of suggestions and strategies to support students' needs is exceptional. This has led to a considerable increase in the identification of students with specific needs and the creation and modification of curriculum programs and events that make for a more inclusive College community.

Whether she is leading a literacy intervention program, overseeing a life skills program or suggesting adjustments to College events, Andrea does so in a way that builds connections, confidence and commitment.



Administration, finance and facilities support sponsored by Hayball Architects

Kirsty Gillett – Business Manager **Mary MacKillop Catholic College, Highfields**

Reforming the financial operations of the College over the past four years, Kirsty has been instrumental in building College leaders' financial acumen.

Facilitating, consulting and educating, Kirsty has built strong processes and a team that is focussed on stewardship of resources and knows the importance of budget management.

Carolyn Richardson – Administration Officer: Marketing and Communications **Mary MacKillop Catholic College, Highfields**

It is through Carolyn's expertise and innovative approach that Mary Mac has been able to share its stories and grow its reputation as a place of vibrant, lived faith where student inclusion and attainment is a priority.

Ensuring she remains contemporary and that research and data inform her advice and action, Carolyn is able to provide timely and strategic advice, explore options, and guide and refine messages – and has shared this across the Diocese.





Excellence in Education Support

Volunteer support sponsored by Schoolzine

Tom Bower – Volunteer St Mary's College, Toowoomba

In 2020 Tom approached the College with the idea to establish a board game group. The aim of this was to enable the boys to grow friendships through an enjoyable pastime.

The group has grown from humble beginning with upwards of 35 students and staff coming together as a part of the group now called 'The Irish Brigade'.

Tom's rapport with the boys encourages effort and attendance and has seen boys who had difficulties socially or in working as part of a team making vast improvements.

Anita Crawford – Parents and Friends (P&F) Committee president St John's School, Roma

As a parent for over 10 years, Anita has been a stalwart for volunteering in the school.

As president of the P&F, Anita has led a team that has raised over \$200,000 to improve the facilities for Senior students, the playground for the Prep-Year 6 cohort and support the Chaplaincy program.

Her passion, commitment and willingness to 'get the job done' are all focussed on the students and promoting St John's in the community. This has earned her great respect and the gratitude of the staff, students and families.





Excellence in Teaching and learning

Early Career Teacher sponsored by Frontier

Lilly Daly – Year 5/6 teacher Sacred Heart Primary School, Cunnamulla

Lilly is an exceptional practitioner, putting ideas and innovation into action quickly and seamlessly. She has transformed her 'passenger learners' into 'participant learners', a skill which is admired by many, but most of all appreciated by the students she teaches.

Her gift to students is to give them a voice in their learning, enable them to explore real life issues as they grow their knowledge and skills, and to broaden their horizons to look beyond the local and think more globally.

Patrick Donnelly – Religious Education, Business and Economics teacher Assumption College, Warwick

Patrick has taken a lead role in designing ways to ensure student voice is present in the decision-making, review and design of key policies, procedures and the strategic direction of Assumption College.

Through his leadership of the Student Representative Council and in designing master units in Economics and Religious Education in the Diocesan Learning Profile, he has used the voices of the learners to inform what and how teachers teach and develop student ownership of their learning and behaviour.

Jennifer Potter – English, Religious Education, Humanities and Arts teacher St Saviour's College, Toowoomba

Jennifer naturally possesses confidence, competence and compassion and it is these qualities that are reflected in her teaching and pastoral care. Her focus on creating safe environments for less confident students to engage in learning and social activities, has seen many flourish.

It is because of her commitment to honing foundational skills, as well as encouraging questioning, probing and being curious about the world that students and staff alike seek out Mrs Potter's wisdom.





Excellence in Teaching and learning

Primary/Kindergarten Expert Teacher sponsored by Black Canvas

Kristen Bennie – Year 3 teacher **Our Lady of the Southern Cross College, Dalby**

Kristen's focus on the partnership between family, colleagues and community to nurture and educate those in her class and across the school, make her an exceptional practitioner.

Cultivating self and collective efficacy, Kristen's students are 'visible learners', and her colleagues seek her out to collaborate and observe her in action. With Catholic social teachings front and centre in all she does, Kristen is a role model and mentor, leader and team player, nurturer and encourager – bringing out the best in everyone.

Mary Donnelly – Year 5/6 teacher **St Patrick's School, Allora**

The 'Mary Donnelly experience' is explained by parents as one in which their child is not only educated but thoroughly engaged by her wit and intelligence. It is this experience of Mary that has had a positive and lasting impact on the community of Allora.

Mary's leadership of pedagogy and pastoral care, professional development of staff, expert differentiation of curriculum, authentic relationships and willingness to go the extra mile are the hallmarks of her career.

Kaylene Keleher – Year 6 teacher **St Monica's School, Oakey**

Kaylene is a born teacher and passionate lifelong learner. From building exceptional relationships with students, families and colleagues, to planning exciting and dynamic lessons using high impact pedagogical practices, Kaylene consistently demonstrates her teaching expertise.

Actively seeking out opportunities to grow her skills, Kaylene has taught across three Toowoomba Catholic schools and overseas. It is these experiences that benefit the students and her colleagues and have seen her become one of the community's most loved and effective teachers.

Catriona Lawson – Languages Other Than English/Arts teacher **St Mary's School, Warwick**

Catriona has flawlessly integrated the Arts and LOTE curriculum in an innovative, interdisciplinary-style. Now students 'favourite time of the week', where nobody is left out, and everyone is confident to 'let their creative juices flow' Catriona has reinvigorated this curriculum.

As a team player, Catriona has built enthusiasm and developed staff and students' collaborative, creative and innovation skills. With a new school and staff choir and Prep students who have been heard saying 'I went from a Forte sound down to a Pianissimo in mine!' her expertise is reaping rewards for all.



Secondary Expert Teacher sponsored by RemServ

Kirstie Andrews – Teacher Librarian and Literacy Improvement Leader St Joseph's College, Toowoomba

Kirstie is an expert when it comes to using cultural, academic, pastoral and spiritual practices and strategies to ensure inclusivity; enabling all students to develop their strengths and a deep connection to hope-filled beliefs and values.

An early adopter of current, research based approaches, she is able to lead and guide others, as they integrate these practices into their day to day teaching and learning.

Mark Baker – Chemistry, Physics and Maths teacher Assumption College, Warwick

Mark's kind, patient and unwavering belief in the capacity of every student, is coupled with challenge and support, and a commitment to relational and high impact pedagogical practices.

His ability to connect with and motivate staff, assists them to remain current and confident within the exceptionally demanding subjects of the Sciences and Maths. Sharing his planning and teaching resources across Colleges, Mark is a leader in his field.

His passion for his subjects and the success of his students mean he is committed to never leaving the classroom!

Lisa McPherson – Chemistry, Physics, Science and Maths teacher St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe

Lisa's dedication to her craft is infectious. She is a professional who is not afraid to take risks in the pursuit of improved pedagogy and her 'impact cycles' are always inspired, meticulous in their organisation and data informed.

Pastoral care and a focus on the wellbeing of students is also of paramount importance to her and make her a strong advocate and voice for those that need it.

Contributing beyond the school to the profession, she has presented at conferences, contributed to text books and collaborates with external providers.

At the heart of all of this is her desire for the best outcomes for others – staff and students.





Excellence in Teaching and learning

eLearning sponsored by Pulse

Joanna Holden – Education Officer: Numeracy (Secondary) Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office

Joanna has been instrumental in the formulation and delivery of the trial of hybrid learning in key senior subjects for the Diocese.

Her focus on modelling the combined online, face to face and use of e-books to improve interactivity and engagement has been well received by students and school staff alike.

Through applying best practice use of technology and her expert subject knowledge both independent, teacher-led and peer-to-peer learning has been made possible.

eLearning collective – Our Lady of the Southern Cross College, Dalby, St Joseph’s School, Stanthorpe and Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office

After many years of trialling various external modes of eLearning to provide equitable educational opportunities to senior secondary students, the need for a homegrown model that ensures excellence in senior secondary subject delivery was conceived. The immediate impact was the availability of Specialist Mathematics, Literature, Modern History and Legal Studies.

The eLearning collective is an innovative, entrepreneurial, realistic and high achieving group; establishing the new norm in online teaching and learning. Their mindset, application and transformation of hybrid learning is reaping rewards for the staff and students alike.





Excellence in leadership

Emerging leader

sponsored by Australian Catholic Superannuation Retirement Fund

Kirstie Andrews – Teacher Librarian and Literacy Improvement Leader St Joseph’s College, Toowoomba

Kirstie’s strong advocacy for self-learning and passion for literacy have coupled to drive a strategic literacy program that has led to improvements in Year 7 and 9 NAPLAN results. This program has also impacted students’ achievements in other subjects.

Her authentic leadership empowers young people and models respect, dignity, compassion and endeavour. Her collegial approach to supporting staff has enhanced the role of teachers as they become evaluators of their teaching and build collective efficacy.

Ben Gehrmann – Design and Technology teacher St Joseph’s College, Toowoomba

As the chair of the College’s Professional Learning Committee, Ben has supported this team to re-envisage how they engage with staff. Utilising the ‘impact cycle’ from the Ignite Learning project, the work of the team has moved from being perceived as ‘being done to staff’ to ‘empowering a learning community’.

His active listening, engagement in dialogue and creation of an ePortfolio for Professional Growth Plans have enhanced the staff professional development programs so that they are now innovative, bespoke and an integral part of the connected work environment.

Anita Roberts – Year 5/6 teacher St Thomas More’s Primary School, Toowoomba

Anita is seen as a leader across teaching and learning and staff and student wellbeing. As a key member of the Wellbeing Committee and Social Club, she is proactive in suggesting actions and willingly gets in and does what is needed both for the school and community.

She is a lead practitioner, trying new strategies and sharing openly successes and areas for improvement in her own pedagogy. As a member of the Innovative Practitioners Network she has successfully implemented blended learning in her classroom, and shared this and supported others to do the same.





Middle leadership

sponsored by Australian Catholic Superannuation Retirement Fund

Kimberley Challenor – Pastoral Leader and Early Career Teacher Mentor St John's School, Roma

Leading the introduction of the Resilience project across the school, Kimberley has upskilled staff, engaged students and parents and built a language and approach that is now owned by all.

She has also spearheaded the revision and relaunch of the school's behaviour management plan, building capacity and a culture of shared responsibility.

Her work with early career teachers, at the school and further west, has created a dynamic, purposeful and focussed network.

Kimberley's caring and compassionate nature, juxtaposed with a commitment to high student expectations, are what makes her a successful leader.

Rebecca McGregor – Middle leader and Assistant Principal: Religious Education St Monica's School, Oakey

Rebecca (Bec) had an immediate impact on teaching and learning when commencing at St Monica's in 2021.

With faith and exceptional pedagogy as her foundation, Bec promoted collective responsibility and accountability for student achievement and wellbeing. Her willing dedication to leading professional development, collaborative planning and teaching, and genuine interest in each individual soon became a model for others.

As a lived example of the Benedictine values, Bec is committed to the academic, spiritual and psychological growth of all.

Kevin Murphy – Curriculum Leader (Religious Education) St Mary's College, Toowoomba

Enlivening the curriculum so that students and staff experience the loving hand of God is central to Kevin's leadership. This is coupled with his ability to ensure that academic rigour is built into Religious Education units and that ongoing professional development of staff is focussed on collaboration, common understanding and a collective ownership.

His pastoral care of all, is a reflection of the touchstones of Edmund Rice and bring to life an inclusive community committed to justice and solidarity.



School/Kindergarten leadership

sponsored by Australian Catholic Superannuation Retirement Fund

Pollyanna Crawford – Principal and Assistant Principal: Religious Education Sacred Heart Primary School, Cunnamulla

Polly's focus on creating a professional learning environment, with faith and student voice at its heart is unwavering.

Her strategic recruitment of staff has led to a strong team made up of early career and more experienced practitioners and the development of a cohesive, personalised teaching, learning and wellbeing program; owned by all.

Polly's support of spiritual and faith development has also built a powerful sense of belonging and confidence for all in living and sharing the Catholic faith.

Kathy Doherty – Assistant Principal: Religious Education Mater Dei Primary School, Toowoomba

Kathy's outstanding leadership has ensured Mater Dei is a community that values academic success while experiencing the loving presence of Jesus.

Leading the Catholic Identity Team, Kathy has enhanced the visible connection to charism as well as providing units of work, linking scripture to learning dispositions and supporting teachers to build confidence in teaching Religious Education.

Kathy's gentle and approachable manner makes her a relatable leader, who enables others to explore possibilities, grow their gifts and live the Benedictine charism of listening with the ear of the heart.

Madonna Sleba – Principal St Saviour's Primary School, Toowoomba

Educative leadership, within a Catholic vision defines Madonna's leadership.

Madonna has an innate ability to authentically influence and work together with staff and parents. This is supported by her clear thinking about the future direction for the school community based on research, evidence and collaboration with her peers and other education experts.

Clear expectations, encouragement, creativity and challenge are the ways that Madonna has fostered in all the value of sharing wisdom, supporting each other and as a result has built collective efficacy.





School/Kindergarten leadership

sponsored by Australian Catholic Superannuation Retirement Fund

Emma Timmins – Principal St Mary's School, Warwick

In the first six months of her leadership at St Mary's Warwick, Emma's quietly determined, calm and consistent leadership enabled her to effectively communicate a strong strategic direction and build shared ownership for the amalgamation of the lower and upper campus of St Mary's.

Her ability to succinctly describe the advantages of such an amalgamation and advocate for her school led to a successful Capital assistance bid.

Her foresight, co-design consultation, eye for detail and openness to suggestion have resulted in a contemporary learning environment that engages both staff and students in 21st century learning.

Jessica Wade – Deputy Principal St Saviour's College, Toowoomba

Jessica (Jess) is an outstanding teacher and leader who by explicit example, develops and implements highly innovative school-wide teaching and learning strategies that improve student learning outcomes.

Her leadership extends beyond the boundaries of the College, and sees her engaging as a mentor, adviser, peer and advocate in a range of networks and advisory groups.

As a big picture thinker, Jess is strategic in her approach, and her vision and foresight attracts others to 'come along' with her. Her passion and desire to see students access high-quality education as a right drives her and raises students up, empowers them, and models to them that they are loved and worthy of education.

Sarah Yates – Assistant Principal (Primary) St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe

Sarah's leadership decisions are made with learners as the central focus, guided by her strong faith. In the 6 years she has been at Stanthorpe, the generous sharing of her knowledge and practice has led to improvements in others' practice and in the success of students.

Sarah walks the walk along with talking the talk, teaches multiple classes and puts into practice what she learns. She is unafraid to take the same risks and work through the same reflective processes as the rest of the team.

Creating opportunities to celebrate and discuss learning, she empowers learners and teachers alike.



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