



AMSSA Report

The AMSSA Executive met on Saturday 20 February in Melbourne to develop an action plan for the Association's work next two years. It was a very productive meeting.

We spent some time mapping the AMSSA landscape including identifying the governance structures and the heritage of member schools. With the latter we focused on whether schools had one of more congregational heritages. What became clear from our mapping exercise was that about 33% of member schools are owned directly or through a corporate structure by the Sisters of Mercy. Another 14% are formally affiliated with a Mercy Network such as the Mercy 5 or MEL. A further 30% are not formally affiliated but have single heritage in Mercy. The remainder of schools have more than one heritage usually because they have been formed through amalgamation of two or more schools.

This information together with feedback from the survey conducted by our Executive Officer Kitty Guerin at the end of last year assisted the Executive to shape their work over the next two years. We wanted to identify what we could offer that was not available to those with close Mercy connections and further what services we were placed to offer because of the breadth of our network.

The Executive confirmed two major areas for 2016/2017

Continuing the program of staff and student conferences. AMSSA is able to provide this service to schools because of the size of the membership. These conferences build networks, shared knowledge and hopefully assist in keeping the charism of Catherine McAuley flourishing in schools.

Drawing together resources that are available about Mercy, the story of Catherine McAuley and works of the Sisters today. Many resources are available through the Governance structures or

are developed by individual staff or school members. Over the last twelve months a new AMSSA website has been launched and this provides a vehicle to provide access to resources through links to other websites and storing resources contributed by individual schools and teachers.

These two areas are incorporated into the Action Plan for 2016/2017. The plan is attached and also includes a focus on documenting Association protocols so that these are available for all member schools.

At the February meeting The Executive also conducted the review for the Executive Officer, Kitty Guerin. Kitty has now been in the 0.2 FTE role for two years. She brings great knowledge of the Mercy schools to the role and she has effectively and efficiently managed the work of the Association. As a result the Executive have now offered Kitty a further two year contract.

The Executive received a report on the AMSSA Student Conference being held in Sydney from Saturday 24 – Wednesday 28 September 2016. A save the date email was recently sent to Principals. This is a great opportunity for our students to gather together as ‘Mercy students’. Thank you to the Sydney organising committee for the work that has been done.

Julie Ryan

President

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Journey to Jabiru

Sacred Heart College, Geelong

On the 13th of September, 19 Year 10 students began the long journey to Jabiru Northern Territory. We were greeted by a warm welcome from the Girl's Academy before settling in for the week. Friendships were beginning to form as we spent the afternoon with the Girl's Academy.

A highlight event of our trip was a talk with the crocodile expert Gary Linger where we witnessed a croc release before seeing the crocodiles feed at high tide.

We marvelled at the breathtaking rock art and shared in the stories that go along with them from our group leader Meg. We really bonded together playing touch footy, soccer and AFL with the local community. At the school we painted the girl's nails, did their hair and practiced gymnastics on the grass.

A busy day walking through Nourlangie rock ended with the Gulyumbi River Cruise where we were in awe of the stories that our tour guide Tyron shared with us about their family and culture. They told us some of their dreamtime stories and we were amazed how much these stories matched science. We admired the usefulness of the land and how in touch the Aboriginal community is with the land.

Our bonds with the students drew closer as we engaged in a fitness session, basketball games and an overnight camping trip. We shared in the traditional food, magpie goose with both Lissey and Patsy. Going to Patsy's house was such an honour as we learnt so much and we were inspired by her skills and stories. As we sat around the fire made out of items from Patsy's property we reflected on how truly special and amazing the Aboriginal culture is.

We were stunned by the beautiful sunrise as we watched the birds flock to the mating site. Another momentous moment for us was at the sacred women's site. As a group we reflected and shared stories of important and influential women in our lives.

The sunset over Ubirr rock left us speechless as the serenity of the open plains was undeniably beautiful.

When we had free time we created a dance which we presented to the Girl's Academy. They also presented a dance that they wanted to share. We talked and bonded and reminisced about the marvellous trip we had experienced. When it was time to leave we were all deeply saddened. We did not want to leave the beautiful place and the bonds that we had created. We all vowed that we would come back again to strengthen the bonds already made. No camera could possibly catch the beauty of Kakadu. As a group we made life-long friendships and learnt things that no textbook or teacher could ever teach us.





Abbey Lynch and Charlotte Bucki-Smith (Year 10, 2015)

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Bishop Barry Jones' Farewell Marian College Christchurch

At Marian College, we were saddened to hear the news recently that Bishop Barry Jones had passed away. Bishop Barry was the Proprietor of Marian, and he was always supportive of our college and interested in our progress. He celebrated Masses and many other events with us over the years.

It was an honour for our Kapa Haka and head girls to proudly represent Marian College at Bishop Barry's pōwhiri at Te Rangimāire Centre. The pōwhiri, a central part of Māori protocol, is a ceremony of welcome involving speeches, waiata (song) and hongi. Kapa Haka groups from all Catholic secondary schools in Christchurch performed a haka pōwhiri as Bishop Barry was taken into the chapel. The kaikōrero (speakers) on the paepae (orator's bench) reflected on Bishop Barry's strong connection and history with Te Rangimāire and the whānau/parishioners who established Te Rangimāire.

"...the pōwhiri was a very moving experience, and a lovely chance to be able to come together as a community to pay our respects to Bishop Barry. Thank you...(to) all those involved for giving us the opportunity to respect the work that Bishop Barry has done, and reflect on what a wonderful leader he was".

Hannah Everingham - Head Girl

"I found it extremely moving and eye opening. It was incredible to see how much of an impact Bishop Barry had on the lives of our church community, and you could tell that there was an

enormous amount of love and respect for him which was very special to witness". ***Claudia McKenna - Deputy Head Girl***

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OLMC Parramatta expands historic campus with Roseneath Cottage acquisition

In late January 2016, the keys to the historic Roseneath Cottage were handed over to Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta Principal, Stephen Walsh, as this local treasure became a part of the College's 127 year old campus in the heart of Parramatta.

Located on the corner of Ross Street and O'Connell Street, Roseneath Cottage is considered to be one of the best surviving examples of a colonial cottage exterior in the Parramatta/Cumberland area. The simple yet elegant sandstock brick cottage was built in 1837 for Janet Templeton who is believed to have been responsible for the introduction of the Merino Sheep to the colony of Victoria. The building has particular historical significance therefore due to its association with the early Australian wool industry.

Roseneath's heritage significance was recognised early when it was proclaimed to be "a place of historic interest" under the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme in 1960. It was also amongst the first 50 places in NSW to be listed under the Heritage Act 1977 (from Heritage Branch files).

Principal Stephen Walsh said the OLMC Parramatta community was very excited to be moving into a new phase of the College's long history: "OLMC has played a central role in Parramatta's history, educating local girls for over 126 years. This historic cottage brings not only its own history and community standing but also its beautiful nineteenth century aesthetics that will further enrich our campus which already features a range of heritage and brand new buildings."

The College plans to establish a Centre for Mercy Excellence at Roseneath Cottage: "A commitment to cultivating excellence is at the core of all our decision making and planning at OLMC. This new Centre will foster excellence with a focus on innovation and adaptability, creating new and different learning spaces. The acquisition is also an opportunity to reflect on best practices in creative and innovative twenty first century learning and professional development and then seek to purpose-build the necessary facilities.

A detailed and thoughtful process of investigation, research and consultation will begin to consider restoration and renovations plans. We are constantly striving to deliver the absolute best in contemporary education for Mercy Girls," says Principal Stephen Walsh.

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AMSSA Staff Conference

August 8 – 10 2019

Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College, North Sydney