



**BENDIGO & KYNETON 2024**

*Mercy. Pathways of Joy and Hope*

**STUDENT CONFERENCE**

CENTRAL VICTORIA 2024 25 - 27 JUNE 2024

# REGISTRATION BOOKLET

CATHERINE MCAULEY COLLEGE BENDIGO | BENDIGO, VICTORIA  
SACRED HEART COLLEGE | KYNETON, VICTORIA

# AMSSA



## PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME

*Mercy: Pathways of Joy and Hope* is our 2024 theme for the AMSSA student conference here in Central Victoria. We invite students from across the AMSSA schools to take part, share stories and contribute, developing and establishing a new space and era for the student body.

AMSSA is the Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools Association (AMSSA) and includes schools from across Australia, New Zealand and Oceania who were founded by the Sisters of Mercy or have adopted the Mercy Charism as their foundation.

### THE AMSSA OVERVIEW:

*God's Mercy to us is at the heart of our work as secondary educators. Catherine McAuley teaches us that "Mercy is the principal path marked out by Jesus for those who desire to follow him". To teach as she did is to help students grow in faith and in a joyful awareness of the providential Mercy of God in their lives.*

At the 2023 AMSSA Staff conference the theme was "Mercy in Liminal Times". The focus was to reimagine Mercy post COVID. AMSSA staff had not shared a space since 2019. AMSSA students have not met since Perth 2018. Through the expertise and support of Mercy presenters this conference is a unique opportunity to meet and forge a new direction for Mercy through the legacy and presence of Catherine McAuley.

Catherine McAuley College Bendigo and Sacred Heart College Kyneton are delighted to host students and staff in beautiful Central Victoria and the Macedon Ranges. Both schools are proud Catholic schools in the Mercy tradition and look forward to showcasing the natural environments in which our schools are situated. Visitors to the conference will travel past the spectacular Mount Macedon and through the Black Forest before entering the historic goldfields of Castlemaine and Bendigo.

*'The tender mercy of God has given us one another' - Catherine McAuley*

**Brian Turner, Principal**  
Catherine McAuley College Bendigo

**Darren Egberts, Principal**  
Sacred Heart College Kyneton





## CONFERENCE THEME

### **Mercy: Pathways of Joy and Hope**

The conference theme encapsulates the belief that mercy is the guiding light that illuminates the journey towards a world filled with joy, hope, and compassion. Our mercy path was first laid out by Catherine McAuley and her sisters in the streets of Dublin. Illuminating the light of mercy, the 'walking sisters' brought hope and joy to those who needed it most.

Following in these footsteps, Sr Ursula Frayne and her companions led the mercy path to the shores of Fremantle in 1845. Their paths, intertwined with the spirit of the Dreaming, are interwoven across this great southern land. Continuing this mercy path means embracing the legacy of compassion set forth by Catherine McAuley and her sisters. It entails extending kindness, forgiveness and understanding to all those we encounter, regardless of background or circumstance. By walking this path with humility and empathy, we can cultivate a world where joy, hope and compassion flourish.

Together, let us nurture the seeds of mercy in our communities, fostering connections, healing wounds and uplifting spirits. Through our collective efforts, we can create a better world, illuminated by the guiding light of mercy, where all beings experience the boundless joy and hope that mercy brings.

## CONFERENCE OUTCOME

As participants in the 2024 Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools Association Student Conference, you will embark upon a transformative journey guided by the theme "Mercy: Pathways of Joy and Hope." Inspired by Catherine McAuley's words, "we should be shining lamps, giving light to all around us," we'll explore how acts of mercy illuminate the path towards joy and nurture hope within ourselves and our communities.

Through engaging workshops, inspiring speakers, and collaborative discussions, you'll discover the power of compassion to create positive change. Opportunities for personal growth, formation and development are woven throughout the conference program, and times for stillness, reflection and prayer will deepen your appreciation of the Mercy charism. Through our call to live the Good News, we'll ignite a collective vision for a future filled with boundless joy, unwavering hope and enduring compassion. Let's walk together, along the path of Mercy to create a better tomorrow. At the conclusion of the conference, you will return to your home communities with a newly established network of fellow-travellers on the Mercy pathway.



## ABOUT CENTRAL VICTORIA

Bendigo is situated on the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung (Djaara) People of the Kulin Nation and Kyneton and the Macedon Ranges are located on Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Country in the Kulin Nation.

Located in the Macedon Ranges on the banks of the Campaspe River, Kyneton was first occupied by European pastoralists in 1837. It became a stopping place on the way to the goldfields and is now a picturesque historic town featuring impressive bluestone buildings and lush botanic gardens. Kyneton and the Macedon Ranges is a creative hotspot, with vibrant retail streets, award-winning restaurants and acclaimed tourist destinations.

Bendigo, a little further north, was a goldrush town that now has an impressive collection of Victorian era buildings. The boom of goldmining led to an influx of migration from around the world and generated a thriving economy that lasted into the early 20th century. The city is now a vibrant regional city famed for boutique food and wine, heritage architecture, public gardens and a thriving arts and culture scene.

*The city is now a vibrant regional city famed for boutique food and wine, heritage architecture, public gardens and a thriving arts and culture scene.*

Photo supplied by Macedon Ranges Shire Council, photographed by Chloe Smith Photography



# AMSSA

## CONFERENCE DINNER

The Conference Dinner will take place in the magnificent Bendigo Town Hall. Its stunning interior reflects the story of the 'gold age' of Bendigo with gold leaf, decorative plaster, murals and soaring ceilings. The dinner will be seated with a dress code of smart casual. Local cover duo 'Slide' will play current and classic hits for guests to hit the dance floor after dinner.

## CLIMATE + DRESS CODE

The average temperature in late June around 14 degrees with overnight temperatures as low as 0 degrees. There may be rain and cold wind. Morning frost is a common occurrence, depending on the cloud cover with frosty mornings followed by clear sunny days. Students should wear warm clothing and comfortable shoes and socks. A warm coat or jacket is highly recommended, along with a scarf and gloves for outdoor activities.

## ACCOMMODATION

Students will be accommodated in twin, triple or family rooms depending on the requirements of each delegation. Several suitable motels have been booked for the conference and allocations will be made as registrations are received. The cost of accommodation is included in the registration with an option to opt out if a school needs to make separate arrangements. (Please note that transport to and from conference activities and events can only be provided to the motels arranged by the conference.)

## TRANSPORTATION

Delegates arriving at Bendigo Railway Station (including those travelling on the Airport Bus Service from Melbourne) and Bendigo Airport will be collected and transported to their accommodation.

Schools are asked to send a copy of their itinerary to the conference once finalised.

During the conference, delegates will be transported to all conference events and activities by bus.

## CONFERENCE HOSTS

### Bendigo

Catherine McAuley College Bendigo is a co-educational secondary school, established in 1876 by the Sisters of

Mercy and now set on two magnificent campuses. Students in Years 7 to 9 are located in a natural bush setting at our Coolock Campus at Junortoun on the eastern fringe of the Bendigo, while our Years 10 to 12 students are at St Mary's near the city centre. The Mercy Junortoun Sporting Precinct at the Coolock Campus will be the setting for the 2024 AMSSA Conference.



### Kyneton

Sacred Heart College Kyneton was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1889, and is a co-educational secondary school.

Situated alongside the Campaspe River on over 20 acres, the campus boasts stunning gardens as well as a blend of historic and modern facilities and continues to live this proud mercy tradition through its core values and practices. Today, Sacred Heart College has enrolments of nearly 900 students, and is celebrating 135 years since its humble beginnings.

Delegates will be transported to all conference events and activities by bus.

Schools are asked to send a copy of their itinerary to the conference once finalised.



## CONFERENCE PROGRAM

**Explore** how young people who are passionate about social and environmental justice can make a difference in the community in the spirit of Mercy.

**Discover** the rich history of Bendigo's goldfields by descending 61 metres below the surface to walk in the footsteps of past miners.

**Travel** through time and the streets of Bendigo on the Dja Dja Wurrung Tram Tour as members of the Dja Dja Wurrung clan share the history of the region's first people through stories and song.

**Celebrate** Mass together in the magnificent Sacred Heart Cathedral. The Cathedral, which was constructed in 1897, is the third largest church in Australia and second tallest after St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne.

**Develop** friendships and deepen connections during the Conference Dinner at the stunning Bendigo Town Hall. Be stirred by an inspirational speaker before hitting the dance floor for a fun night out.

**Hear** good news stories from Mercy Works and hear how their work is improving the lives of vulnerable communities.

**Find** moments of peace and reflection at the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion, the largest stupa in the Western World. Learn about interfaith harmony and the fundamentals of Buddhism.

**Reconnect** with nature and deepen ecological identity, spirituality and action with Juliet Talarico.

## PRESENTERS

### Mercy Works

Mercy Works is the development arm of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea. The organisation works in partnership with vulnerable communities and local organisations domestically and in the Asia Pacific region to build capacity, dignity and self-reliance.

### Young Mercy Links

Young Mercy Links is an inclusive group of young people with a spirit of Mercy and a passion for social and community justice. They are involved in justice and advocacy in areas such as sustainability, women and poverty, and people seeking asylum.

### Juliet Talarico

Juliet Talarico is passionate about environmental education and ecology. She is committed to empowering young people to address the challenges of Earth degradation.

## STUDENT CONTRIBUTION

Students will be asked to bring a candle to represent their school at the Conference Mass (size to be travel-friendly). One candle for each school.

Each school will be asked to supply a poster to show where they are from and to share their Mercy story. Details will be forwarded to schools after registrations are received.

## MEALS

Conference fees will include breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks on Tuesday and Wednesday. Thursday will include breakfast and morning tea.

Meals throughout the conference will be communal and enjoyed in a variety of locations. Delegates will be transported to the conference venue for shared breakfasts rather than eating at the motels, to maximise opportunities for social interaction.

Delegates will be asked to notify the conference of any dietary requirements when registering. For specific concerns, contact the organisers directly to ensure needs are met.

Students should bring a water bottle for use during the conference. Drink bottles are easily refilled at any of our water stations throughout the conference venue. Bendigo tap water is fine to drink.

## PRE-CONFERENCE DINNER

Those who arrive in Bendigo throughout the day on Monday 24 June are invited to enjoy a relaxed evening at the conference venue getting to know each other and sharing dinner of pizza. This is an optional activity and an additional charge of \$20 per person will be incurred to cover cost of the meal and transport to the venue.

Scan for  
booking page



## REGISTRATION

Conference Registration fee includes credit card fees, local transfers, meals and activities.

Conference Registration Payment will be made via: Trybooking.com: [www.trybooking.com/CQCEF](http://www.trybooking.com/CQCEF)

Full registration fee ▼	Full registration fee ▼	Conference only registration fee ▼	Conference only registration fee ▼
<b>STUDENT</b>	<b>STAFF</b>	<b>STUDENT</b>	<b>STAFF</b>
\$780.00 AUD	\$887.00 AUD	\$543.00 AUD	\$426.00 AUD
Inclusive of everything, including accommodation Monday 24, Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 June	Inclusive of everything, including accommodation Monday 24, Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 June	Excludes accommodation	Excludes accommodation

Schools requiring a variation to standard accommodation package should contact the Conference Facilitator directly to arrange a customised booking and charge.





Photo supplied by City of Greater Bendigo

## REGISTRATION DETAILS + MEDICAL PLANS

Schools will obtain and manage consent, contact and medical information for their own students.

## CANCELLATIONS

Refunds will be made only for cancellations received more than 30 days prior to the commencement of the Conference. This will incur a \$30 AUD cancellation fee.

## ACCESSIBILITY

All venues are fully accessible, but the Conference Facilitator should be made aware of students with specific needs so that these may be accommodated.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Delegates will be asked to give permission for their photograph taken or recorded by Conference Staff. These photos may be used for promotions and social media and may be used for advertising purposes on the AMSSA website and Associated Mercy Schools.

## CONTACT

**Barbara Lomas**

Conference Facilitator

- AMSSA Student Conference 2024

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