NATIONAL
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FIRST CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL AT UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

Catholic Education has hailed the announcement of planning for the first Catholic secondary school located on an Australian university campus as an exciting development for the future of Catholic schooling.

James Cook University and Catholic Education in Cairns will today announce a Memorandum of Understanding to investigate a new secondary college at JCU's Cairns Smithfield Campus, as well as an on-site childcare centre operated by Catholic Early Learning and Care. The College will be autonomous and operate under a long-term lease.

"This is an exciting model of a dynamic education hub that opens up enormous opportunities for our students and teachers," Catholic Education's National Executive Director, Jacinta Collins, said.

"There are already discussions about students from the new on-campus Catholic college, and from a number of local schools, accessing university courses in their senior years. Students will be the big winners from this partnership, which heralds exciting opportunities for the future for Catholic education."

Catholic Education Services Acting Executive Director Sally Towns said the proposed Year 7-12 college would serve the fast-growing Cairns northern beaches communities. Local Catholic Colleges are already at capacity with demand outstripping places.

"We see a great opportunity to work with the university as the incubator of our next generation of teachers and as a place where our existing teachers and school leaders can have access to the best professional development opportunities," Dr Towns said.

The college is expected to open in 2022 for Year 7 enrolments, then grow a year level annually until Year 12 was offered in 2027. It will have 700-800 students when fully operational. Construction costs would be in the order of $30 million.

JCU Cairns Campus Director David Craig said: "We have seen students' aspirations rise, as engagement with the University has helped them discover what they can achieve."