
Australian Catholic education virtual symposium to focus on school improvement and supporting disadvantaged students

This Friday is World Teachers Day and Catholic Education is hosting its first Virtual Symposium on school improvement and supporting disadvantaged students in a COVID world.

Around 1,000 educators across Australia are expected to join the three-hour symposium, as well as participants from New Zealand and overseas.

The 'Faith in the Future' Virtual Symposium will feature a keynote address by Dr Carol Campbell on School Improvement in a COVID World.

Dr Campbell is Associate Professor of Leadership and Educational Change at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, and is a leading expert and researcher in school improvement and professional learning strategies. She has worked extensively with the Ministry of Education in Ontario, which is regarded as having some of the highest performing school districts in the world.

Leading Scottish Philosopher, Professor John Haldane, who was recently appointed to the Australian Catholic University as Professor of Philosophy of Education, will also provide a keynote address on the challenges and opportunities for Catholic education.

A panel discussion moderated by Australian broadcaster Geraldine Doogue AO, on school improvement, student wellbeing, faith formation and parent engagement, will feature panellists Glenn Fahey from the Centre for Independent Studies, Carmel Nash OAM, Catholic School Parents Australia, and school leaders from urban and remote schools in Australia.

This month marks the 200th anniversary of Catholic education in Australia, and the Minister for Education Dan Tehan and Shadow Minister for Education Tanya Plibersek will address the symposium and take part in the Bicentennial Games – a fun, quiz-style segment on the history of Catholic education.

National Catholic Education Executive Director Jacinta Collins said the symposium was organised in response to the postponement of Catholic Education's quadrennial conference, which was due to be held in Melbourne this year.

“With the great challenges of schooling this year as a result of the pandemic, the Commission felt that a virtual symposium would provide a good opportunity to support teachers and leaders, as well as look at some of the issues the pandemic has presented for school communities, particularly for disadvantaged students.”

“The symposium also falls on World Teachers Day and what better way to recognise the extraordinary work of our teachers and leaders this year, than to spend a few hours together focused on professional learning and supporting them in their critical work.”

The next National Catholic Education Conference will be held in Melbourne from 4-7 September 2022. The Bicentenary of Catholic education will be officially celebrated in 2021, with a national launch in early Term 1.

For more information on the Virtual Symposium and to register visit

www.ncec.catholic.edu.au