



2 March 2026

## **RESIGNATION OF DR SALLY TOWNS**

It is with sadness that I announce that due to ill health Dr Sally Towns has stepped down from her responsibilities as Executive Director of Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE).

For the last four years, Sally has led BCE with great vision, dedication and personal faith, as well as with warmth and compassion. Sally has traversed the Archdiocese, leading with a purpose that will benefit us for decades to come. She has stewarded a system of 146 schools with a clear focus on faith-filled, inclusive and high-quality education for every student. Sally's leadership has been characterised by a deep commitment to Catholic mission, educational excellence, technological innovation and strong partnerships with families, recognising parents as essential partners in their children's learning journey.

While being open about her health challenges in recent years, Sally has continued to work without complaint. Her courage has been an inspiration. In the words of Saint Paul, Sally has fought the good fight.

Sally will now focus on her wellbeing and spend valuable time with her family. She will send a message to staff in the weeks ahead. Sally leaves her position with my blessings and good wishes, and with the gratitude and prayers of all in the Archdiocese. We will continue to pray for Sally and give thanks for her contribution to Catholic education over more than thirty years.

I am grateful to the many outstanding staff at BCE who will take on additional responsibilities while we begin a recruitment process for a new Executive Director. Patrick O'Sullivan has accepted my request to be the Acting Executive Director for the next week.

Following that, I have appointed Ross Tarlinton OAM as Acting Executive Director, commencing on 9 March. Ross will hold this position until a permanent Executive Director starts with BCE.

**MOST REVEREND SHANE MACKINLAY**  
**Archbishop of Brisbane**



We are very fortunate to have someone of Ross's expertise to oversee BCE during this time. Ross has extensive experience in Catholic education across Australia. He was Headmaster of St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill, from 2006 to 2017 and in 2020–2021. Ross has held senior leadership and governance roles with Marist Schools Australia and the Diocese of Lismore, including Diocesan Director – Strategy & Governance, where he supported the development of a new corporate structure overseeing forty-five schools. His career has included diocesan, state and national appointments within Catholic education, reflecting a strong commitment to stewardship, governance and educational leadership.

It is difficult to predict the length of the recruitment process for our next Executive Director. However, the process has begun, and we will work as quickly as we can to fill that position.

For now, please join me in praying for Sally and her family. Under her guidance, Brisbane Catholic Education strengthened its mission to teach, challenge and transform young people, ensuring schools remain places where faith, learning, and community are deeply connected.

Sally is a much-loved and exceptional leader, and an inspiration to us all.

Yours sincerely,

**MOST REV. SHANE MACKINLAY**  
ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE