



JOURNEYS

NEWSLETTER

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EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

In June 2016, 70 delegates gathered at Mt St Michael's College in Brisbane for the *Mary Aikenhead Ministries Education Symposium*. The theme for the symposium was *Mission, Culture and Identity: Authentic Schools in the Spirit of Mary Aikenhead*. Delegates included Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries, College Principals, senior executive and leadership staff, College Board Directors, executives of a former Sisters of Charity school, the Mission Development Coordinator for the education ministry, Mary Aikenhead Education Australia Advisory Council members, and the Executive Officer of Mary Aikenhead Education Australia.

Key questions for delegates concerned the contemporary nature of the Church and the world in which our young women live. *What is the mission of our schools for young women in these contexts? How is Catholic identity constructed within these educational contexts? How do we invite and journey with our college communities in this great ecclesial and educational conversation? What signs or indicators demonstrate progress in this mission for our students and their families?*

Noteworthy issues for educators of young women were discussed. For example, the influential leadership of Pope Francis; our baptismal call to action and not timidity; the professionalisation of various ecclesial ministries; the call and role of the laity in our Church; our responses to those who experience poverty in its many contemporary forms; multiculturalism; inter-faith dialogue; secularisation; and social exclusion.



Professor Marie Emmitt, David Hutton OAM and Sr Liz Dodds rsc at the Symposium



Table discussion at the Symposium

A striking feature of the symposium was the variety of short presentations and responses from people across various areas of governance in Mary Aikenhead Australia Education.

One session of the Symposium included an inspiring presentation by the Principal of Mt St Michael's College, Alison Terry. Alison guided us through a process that can create cultures for colleges in Mary Aikenhead Ministries that enhance the mission of the Church.

The 2016 *Mary Aikenhead Ministries Education Symposium* provided a marvellous opportunity for delegates to gather and reflect together on the Catholic education we offer young women in Australia, today and tomorrow. It enabled us to renew our commitment to educational programs that will enhance our mission, teaching, learning, leadership and service of those who are poor.

Michele Hugonnet

Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries

WHAT DISTINGUISHES A MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES' SCHOOL?

THE EDUCATION MINISTRY

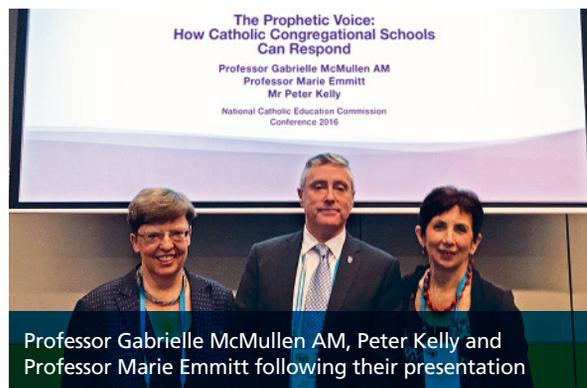
Mary Aikenhead Education Australia, which currently encompasses four schools, namely Catholic Ladies College and St Columba's College in Melbourne, Mt St Michael's College in Brisbane, and St Vincent's College in Sydney, seeks to sponsor and promote exemplary contemporary education, in the Catholic tradition, principally for young women. In the tradition of Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity, at the heart of this ministry is a sustained commitment to serve others, particularly the poor and marginalised.

When the Trustees established the Mary Aikenhead Education Australia Advisory Council (MAEAAC) in 2013, it asked the Council to work with the Colleges to *"develop a set of contemporary indicators which identify education in the tradition of Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity of Australia"*. The MAEAAC established a working party chaired by Council member Professor Marie Emmitt and supported by MAEA Executive Officer Peter Kelly to undertake this project, which has involved extensive consultations with the Colleges. Why was this a priority project for the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries and the education ministry?

WHAT DEFINES A SCHOOL IN THE MARY AIKENHEAD TRADITION?

There were a number of reasons for undertaking this project. In particular, ministerial PJPs (public juridic persons) are entrusted with ensuring the ministries under their stewardship not only flourish but remain faithful to their Catholic heritage. For Mary Aikenhead Ministries, it was important to establish clarity about what defines a Catholic school in the Mary Aikenhead tradition in order to take this heritage purposely into the future.

Further, there are some 60 other schools formerly conducted by the Sisters of Charity of Australia (many of which are now part of Catholic Education Office or religious institution school systems) which share this heritage and for which Mary Aikenhead Education Australia is now the 'flag bearer' for contemporary interpretations of the tradition and for development of resources underpinning Catholic education in the Mary Aikenhead tradition. Some of these schools have links with Mary Aikenhead Ministries, such as attending its conferences, pilgrimages and joint school activities. In fostering their connections with Mary Aikenhead Ministries and potentially inviting them into partnerships, it is important to have a deep understanding of the essence of Catholic education in the Mary Aikenhead tradition.



Professor Gabrielle McMullen AM, Peter Kelly and Professor Marie Emmitt following their presentation

Additionally, the focus on a particular charism and its associated story is a means of enlivening and strengthening the Catholicity of a ministry. Some schools without this heritage have joined a religious institute or PJP school system as a means of fostering their Catholic identity. Catholic Education Offices are also approaching religious institute and PJP schools systems to consider sponsoring new schools in areas of population growth. The Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries would welcome other ministries joining the PJP but, before this occurs, there needs to be clarity about the nature of Catholic ministry in the Mary Aikenhead tradition. The indicators project is key to gaining this understanding for the education ministry.

Finally, it is envisaged that, within cyclical reviews of Mary Aikenhead Ministries' schools, a component related to the contemporary indicators would be included. This would 'measure' the faithfulness of the schools to ongoing commitment to the charism which marks them as a Mary Aikenhead Ministries' school.

MOVING FORWARD

Importantly, in undertaking the indicators project, there has been clear understanding that the 'charism' inherited from the Sisters of Charity continues to evolve under Mary Aikenhead Ministries, while the 200 year legacy of Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity is treasured and honoured.

Much work has now been undertaken to date and the Trustees are indebted to Professor Emmitt and her working party. Recently the 'embryonic' indicators were presented to the 2016 Education Symposium held at Mt St Michael's College on 3-4 June and a report of the project was presented by Professor Emmitt, Peter Kelly and Trustee Professor Gabrielle McMullen at the 2016 National Catholic Education Conference held in Perth on 19-22 June.

Professor Gabrielle McMullen AM
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries

RITUALS OF FAREWELL

FAREWELL AT MT ST MICHAEL'S COLLEGE

Celebrations of loving service resounded during three days in July 2016 when members of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity in Australia came together in Brisbane for farewells at the Convent at Mt St Michael's College in Ashgrove and the old Mt Olivet Convent in Kangaroo Point and for the blessing of the new Mt Olivet Convent.

It was an honour to be invited to join the Sisters, the College community and the Hospital staff.

On 29 July, the entire College student body and staff assembled at Mt St Michael's College for an emotional and inspiring ceremony led by the Principal, Ms Alison Terrey, with a presentation to each of the attending

Sisters of a hand engraved glass plate and single rose by senior students. Congregational Leader, Sr Clare Nolan rsc, an ex-student of Mt St Michael's College, shared a personal recollection of her days at the College and how much the College means to the Sisters. This was followed by Mass, lunch with the school staff and a ritual of farewell at the Ashgrove Convent.



Sisters at the Mt St Michael's College farewell



CHANGES AT MT OLIVET

On 30 July, the Sisters were joined by senior staff of St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane (pictured, from right), Ms Cheryle Royle – Chief Executive Officer, Ms Janifer Willis – Business Planning Manager, Mr Peter Williams – Director of Clinical Services and Mr Michael Hart – Mission Executive, for prayer and ritual at the old Mt Olivet Convent, followed by blessing of the new Mt Olivet Convent and lunch.

CELEBRATIONS AT ST FINBARR'S

Sunday Mass on 31 July was celebrated at St Finbarr's Parish Church, Ashgrove with accompaniment by a choir from St Finbarr's Primary School.

The Sisters of Charity commenced teaching the catechism in the Ashgrove Parish Church after 9am Mass on 31 May 1925. St Finbarr's Primary School was opened by the Sisters the following day, with 28 pupils on the roll.

Its motto, *In Faith and Love (Fide et Amore)*; is derived from that of the Sisters of Charity, *The love of Christ impels us*. In a moving finale children from St Finbarr's encircled the Sisters at the altar and sang in joyous tribute.

Morning tea served in the gardens beside the Church was a happy occasion for catching up with many families and friends associated with the Sisters of Charity in Ashgrove.

Dr Tessa Ho
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries

SVHA PROMOTING RECONCILIATION THROUGH ART

The Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries joined Board Directors and senior staff of St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA) for its *Leadership Team Conference and Innovation and Excellence Awards 2016* in Brisbane on 15-16 September. It was an exciting two days as we heard about key mission and innovation initiatives across SVHA.



Unveiling of the SVHA reconciliation triptych



SAVE THE DATE TMAM Conference 2017

The Trustees are pleased to announce that the TMAM conference will be held at the Novotel Sydney Central in Haymarket on 11-12 May 2017.

The conference is the primary formation activity conducted by the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries for leaders of their health, education, research, aged care and outreach ministries.

A highlight was a presentation on the SVHA Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and, in particular, its RAP Collaborative Arts Project. The project involved a collaboration between three Indigenous artists and some 50 SVHA staff as well as SVHA Board Director Sr Maryanne Confoy rsc and Trustee Dr Tessa Ho who participated in reconciliation art workshops held in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

Each participant painted an image of, and then spoke about, their understanding of reconciliation. Under the guidance of the Indigenous artists, the individual contributions have been brought together into a unique triptych, which was unveiled during the conference. Participants were captivated by the account of the project and the spectacular outcome. A silk print of the triptych will be provided to each of the 55 SVHA facilities as an ongoing reminder to all of working towards reconciliation.

[Professor Gabrielle McMullen AM](#)
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries



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