



# EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

OUR VISION

CARITAS CHRISTI URGET NOS

*Through our trust in Divine Providence, our vision is to witness the Gospel through our commitment to the values of hope, justice and compassion in loving service of God's people, especially the poor and the marginalised.*

## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT



MARY AIKENHEAD  
(AGED 20)

Since 1838, the Sisters of Charity of Australia have made a profound contribution to the education, wellbeing and social fabric of Australian society through health care, aged care, welfare and education.

On July 1 2009, the Sisters transferred the majority of their incorporated works to Mary Aikenhead Ministries. Today the work of these ministries is undertaken with compassion, courage and conviction by visionary women and men whose shared commitment is to the call of Jesus in the Gospel –

*“... to life, relationship and action for justice.”*

The company constitutions of Mary Aikenhead Ministries' incorporated entities specify the responsibilities of each:

1. To operate at all times as part of the mission of the Catholic Church and in conformity with canon law, and
2. To conform to the ethical framework and/or education philosophy of Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

## PURPOSE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The Trustees have prepared this educational philosophy to accompany the foundation documents of Mary Aikenhead Ministries: the *Theological Statement*, *Guiding Principles* and the *Leadership and Ethical Frameworks*.

It is intended to empower, guide and assist each ministry to faithfully fulfil its responsibilities around formation, education and training. Each and every campus, care centre, college and facility is invited to incarnate and animate the philosophy according to its distinctive purpose.

## MARY AIKENHEAD'S INVITATIONS

Mary Aikenhead's own life and work revolved around her deep compassion for the poor and her consciousness of their need for education. She was visionary, courageous, unshakeable in faith, hope-filled, compassionate and tireless. She invited her co-workers to:

- Reach out to those in any kind of need – material, spiritual, physical, or intellectual;
- Embrace the diversity of the contemporary world in all its complexity;
- Trust in God's providence;
- Value education in the broadest sense;
- Learn from each other and benefit from those more experienced;

- Be conscious of the bigger picture and have a universal vision for all;
- Value literacy;
- Have a great sense of humour;
- Build good relationships; and
- Treat with respect and reverence all that God has created.

### **In Mary's own words...**

*“Let us value the great gift of creation and do our best to conserve it.”*

*“May we always try to act with justice and truth.”*

*“Providence can provide, Providence does provide, Providence will provide.”*

## THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES

Educational activity and endeavour across the multiple and diverse professional settings of Mary Aikenhead Ministries occurs formally and informally.

It involves:

- Orientation and induction;
- Training and formation;
- Dialogue and discernment;
- Continuing education and professional development;
- Research and investigation; and
- Reflection and evaluation.

The Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries endorse and promote within their ministries exemplary education that is mission-driven and values-based.

It is education that:

1. Responds to the Gospel imperative with vision, courage, compassion and conviction;
2. Accepts the traditions, teachings and laws of the Roman Catholic Church;
3. Builds on the deep story of Mary Aikenhead and the charism and tradition of the Sisters of Charity of Australia;
4. Is driven by a sense of moral purpose exemplified by a strong commitment to the preferential option for the poor and a deep respect for creation;

5. Respects the dignity of each person and his/her right to develop their legitimate interests and talents through education;
6. Grounds leaders and learners, practitioners and researchers, teachers and students in authentic relationships that are collaborative, inspirational and influential;
7. Advocates for justice on behalf of the poor, the marginalised and the voiceless;
8. Discerns appropriate models of leadership and community for the Church and society in the present and for the future;
9. Uncovers opportunities for hope directed towards justice and the common good for all; and
10. Attends to excellence both in the quality of the present educational experience and as an aspiration in furthering the mission of the Church and the Gospel in health, aged care, welfare and education.

*The trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries invite all engaged in educational endeavours across each and every ministry to accept Mary Aikenhead's invitations and to embrace our Educational Philosophy.*

## IMPLEMENTING THE PHILOSOPHY

The Trustees have developed this educational philosophy through theological and philosophical reflection, dialogue with educators and trainers across the breadth of our ministries and discernment around education in the tradition of the Sisters of Charity.

This Philosophy draws on what is respected, valued and exemplary about education and training for service in our ministries. At the same time it carries the Trustees' conviction that their assumptions, values and priorities must continue to distinguish women and men who are committed to the call of Jesus in the Gospel and who are formed and educated within Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

## CHARTER FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Trustees call on all Boards and Executives across Mary Aikenhead Ministries to be responsible for communicating and embedding the educational philosophy by providing direction and resources for:

- introducing educators and trainers to our educational philosophy; and
  - self-assessment of current activity to identify:
    - that which carries our educational assumptions, values and priorities;
    - gaps which must be addressed in order to better reflect our educational assumptions, values and priorities; and
- additional work needed to reshape any educational endeavours to carry forward our educational assumptions, values and priorities;
  - ensuring that all new and future educational endeavours carry the educational assumptions, values and priorities of our educational philosophy;
  - fostering collaboration and the creation of partnerships that benefit our educational endeavour and formation for service of the poor; and
  - monitoring, evaluating and reporting as appropriate and in accord with various stakeholder requirements.

## INVITATION OF THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees invite their co-workers to reflect on the extent to which this educational philosophy already underpins its educational endeavours.

From 2011 the Trustees will welcome Annual Reports that include reflection on how our assumptions, values and priorities inform and shape:

- the life and work of the ministry;
- its commitment to the preferential option for the poor; and
- its respect for the dignity of the persons and for all that God has created.

We encourage the continued use of the format that best represents the life and work of that ministry.

PROMULGATED BY THE TRUSTEES  
OF MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES  
22 OCTOBER 2010.



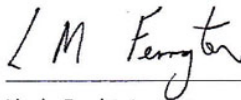
Elizabeth Dodds rsc



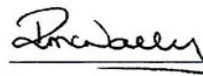
David Robinson



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