



DIOCESE OF  
**LISMORE**  
CATHOLIC EDUCATION

**PARISH CONTRIBUTION  
TO EDUCATION  
IN THE DIOCESE OF LISMORE**

# Parish Contribution to Education in the Diocese of Lismore



Published in Australia by the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Lismore  
3 Dawson St, Lismore NSW 2480  
[www.lism.catholic.edu.au](http://www.lism.catholic.edu.au)

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Design by Anja Roehrdanz  
Editorial oversight by Warwick Forster

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It would welcome notification of any corrections that should  
be incorporated in future reprint editions.

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The Diocese of Lismore acknowledges that it resides on the Lands of the Bundjalung, Yaegl, Gumbaynggirr, Dunghutti and Birpai Nations.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians who have walked and cared for this land for thousands of years and their descendants who maintain these spiritual connections and traditions.

We would like to pay our respect to Elders past, present and future leaders.

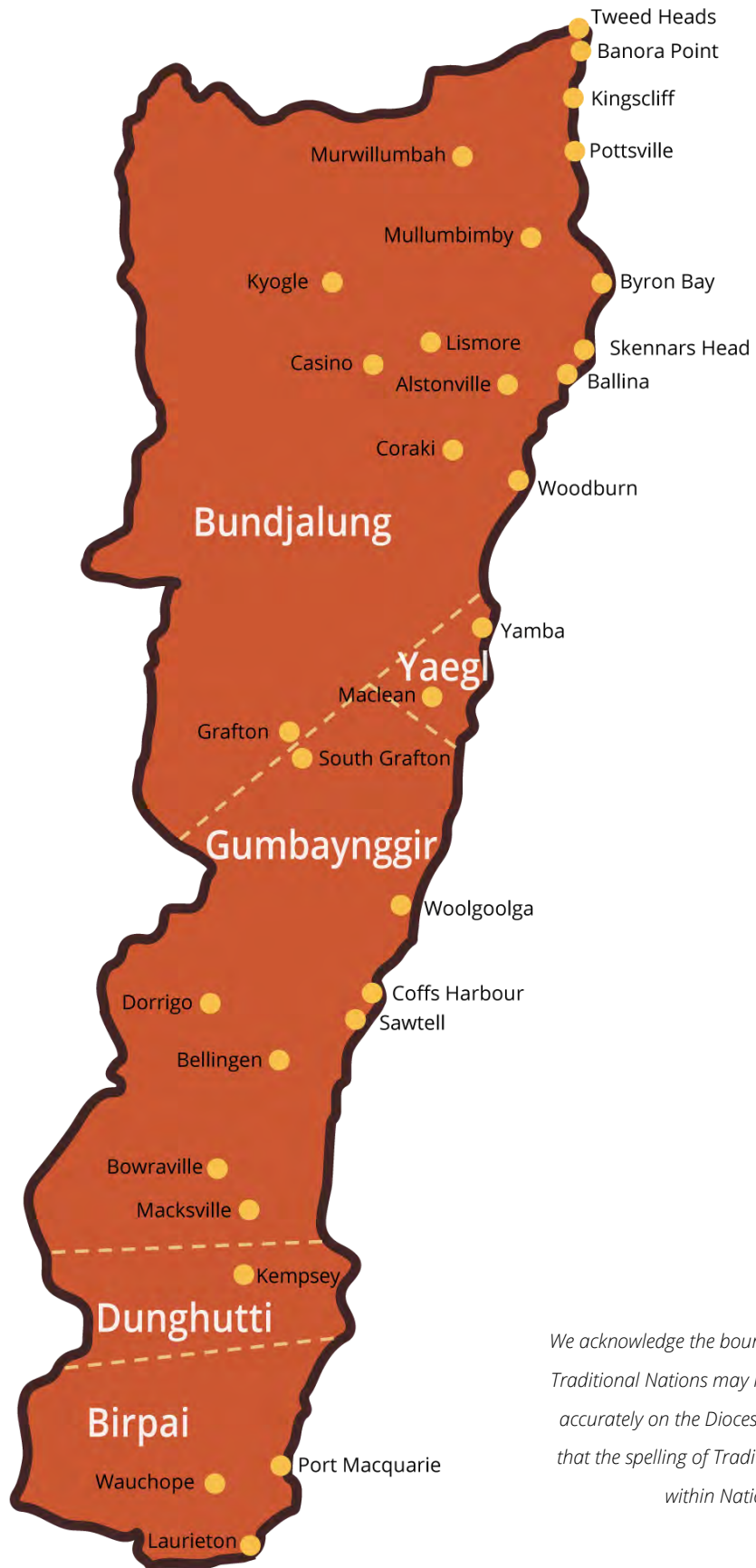
The Land we are on now, the land we live, work, breathe, eat and sleep: always was and always will be Aboriginal Land.

We reflect on the millions of footprints that travelled the Dreaming pathways and continue to walk this land today.

May we walk alongside the custodians of this beautiful country, Australia, as we seek Voice, Treaty and Truth.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, please be aware that this publication may contain images or names of people who have passed away.

NATIONS OF THE DIOCESE OF LISMORE



*We acknowledge the boundaries of the Traditional Nations may not be shown accurately on the Diocesan map, and that the spelling of Traditional Names within Nations may vary*



# Bishop of Lismore

In the late 19th century, as colonial governments moved to withdraw funding from non-state schools, Catholic leaders faced the extraordinary challenge of maintaining and building a schooling system using the resources of the church and the faithful.

Our 46 thriving schools demonstrate the resolve and tenacity of those who took up this challenge in our diocese.

This book provides a welcome contribution to understanding this history. It delves into the rich past of Catholic education in the diocese. It explores the tireless efforts of nuns, priests, and laypeople, the dedicated contributions of parishioners, and the countless stories of sacrifice

and commitment that have shaped the Catholic education system in the Lismore Diocese.

I commend this book to those who wish to know more about the individuals and communities who have worked so hard to provide a Catholic education to generations of students to benefit us all.

With my prayers and good wishes,



Most Revd Gregory Homeming OCD  
*Bishop of Lismore*

---

# The Chair of the Board of Directors

Knowledge of our history is important as it assists in the framing of our future. From the opening of the first Catholic school in South Grafton in 1868, the Catholic Church has been at the forefront of providing education in our region.

This book wonderfully illustrates the challenges the isolated communities on the North Coast experienced in providing an education for children. It describes how parishes overcame hardships to establish schools; the challenges that were faced in instilling a sense of Catholic Mission into schools and demonstrating the value of education to serve the needs of isolated communities. Above all, it establishes the commitment of parish priests and

the 11 religious orders that founded and delivered Catholic education to these regional communities.

Those religious orders are today no longer delivering that education in our North Coast parishes, but their charism still envelops our schools. Our educational history must be acknowledged, remembered and cherished as we enter a new era for delivering Catholic-centred education to the families of our diocese. This book is a celebration of that history as we mark another milestone in the work of the Catholic Church in our communities.

Hon. John Hannaford AM, *Chair*  
*Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools Limited*



# Foreword

This book provides a brief overview of the history of the establishment of Catholic schools in the parishes of the Lismore Diocese. It highlights the significant contributions made by priests, religious orders, and parishioners to schooling in the Northern Rivers districts of New South Wales (NSW) since settlement. While it cannot encompass a complete history of Catholic education in the diocese, it offers an insight into the development of parish schooling. The editors are conscious that for every individual that is referenced here, there are dozens of remarkable personal stories that limits of space or historical records prevent us from reporting, each of which could fill its own volume.

Much of the material used in the book has been drawn from parish publications, many of which have coincided with significant anniversaries. The anecdotes and memoirs from these publications add greatly to our understanding of the reality of life from the decades past and highlight the commitment and dedication of so many people in the early years of the schools, many of which still flourish today.

We live in a time when the funding of Catholic schools is a commitment made by governments at both the state and federal levels, funding that supports not only the staffing of schools but also the capital development of buildings and grounds. For many decades such funding was unavailable. Local Catholic communities supported the financing of education from the generosity of parishioners under the leadership of parish priests and religious orders who staffed the schools.

The timing of the publication of this book is important as the parish schools move to a new model of governance under Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools Limited. It is hoped that the book not only enhances our knowledge of the history of Catholic education in the diocese but also acknowledges and celebrates the work of so many in their leadership and devotion to schools in parishes.

# **Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore**

# Development of the Diocese

Parishes within the Diocese of Lismore have a long history of assisting parents in the provision of Catholic education for their children. From the early years of the diocese, priests and religious orders accepted responsibility for schools, with the local parish community providing resources for property and buildings, religious orders staffing the schools and parents contributing through fees and donations. The histories of parishes are also rich with the generosity of the parish community, providing material support for education and leadership skills as efforts were coordinated to promote and grow education within parishes.

The leadership of the Catholic Church in 19th century NSW was quite multinational, with the priests coming from diverse backgrounds. In 1854, the Archdiocese of Sydney appointed Irish priest Father Timothy McCarthy to take charge of the Armidale parochial district, embracing all of the 'New England Plains to the Pacific Coast of NSW'. In that same year and each successive year, he visited Grafton. And so began a long history with Grafton and its people, culminating eventually in naming a new diocese based in Grafton.

In 1862 Father McCarthy established the Grafton Parish, comprising the area from *'Tweed Heads to Coffs Harbour and from Tenterfield to Ballina'*. This was the embryonic territory of what would eventually become a large part of the Lismore Diocese. From December 1862, Father John Murphy served as Grafton's first parish priest, handing over the reins to Father William Xavier Johnson eight months later in August 1863. In 1867,

Father Johnson virtually halved his parish by establishing the Richmond-Tweed Parish; Father O'Neill was appointed its first parish priest, with Casino as its headquarters.

1869 saw the founding of the Diocese of Armidale and the appointment of its first bishop, Right Rev. Timothy O'Mahony, a native of Cork in Ireland. He arrived in Armidale in March 1871. The new Armidale Diocese included the Northern Tablelands of NSW and the coastal area from Tweed Heads to as far south as the Kempsey parochial district.

On Bishop O'Mahony's resignation in 1877, he was replaced in 1879 by the Italian-born Right Rev. Elzear Torreggiani, a Franciscan Capuchin, at the time Superior of the Monastery at Peckham near London. While there had been priests serving the Catholic population of the Northern Rivers earlier - notably Grafton's Father William Johnson - the first appointment from the Armidale Diocese occurred in 1871 when Rev Abbe Schürr arrived in Casino. He was a native of the French province of Alsace and had been educated in Paris.

The Catholic Church in Australia held a Plenary Council in 1885, and Catholic education was a critical agenda item. The Very Rev. Dean Jeremiah Doyle, having a keen interest in education, attended from Lismore, which was still part of the Armidale Diocese. Echoing Archbishop Polding's calls in Grafton in 1860, attention was paid to convincing Catholic parents to send their children to Catholic schools, encouraging Catholic communities to finance Catholic schools, and to finding



BUSH HOUSE, CLARENCE VALLEY

sufficient and suitable teachers. The Council insisted that there be a Catholic school in every 'mission' (a subdivision of a 'district', akin to a parish), that it be supported by mission revenue, and that the school be built before the church and used as a chapel in the meantime (Wilkinson, p. 3).

In 1887 the Diocese of Grafton was excised from the Diocese of Armidale, and Dean Jeremiah Doyle was appointed bishop of the new diocese. Doyle was recruited as a young seminarian in Cork by Bishop O'Mahony in 1870, and following his ordination, he served the Armidale Diocese from 1874. The new diocese comprised all the coastal parishes of the Armidale Diocese, but now it would span from Tweed Heads - beyond the Kempsey parochial district - to Port Macquarie, Port Macquarie being added to the new diocese from the Diocese of Maitland. In 1890 Bishop Doyle sought Vatican approval to transfer the seat of the diocese from Grafton to Lismore. Approval was granted in 1900, and Bishop Doyle became the first Bishop of Lismore.

*Maclean*

**PAROCHIAL DISTRICT.**

Number of Churches. *Seven (7)*

Where situated. *Maclean, Shark Creek Hill, Chateau, Palmer's Island, Slake, Jambo*

Names of Patron Saints. *(Seven) St Mary's, St Michael, St Dominick, St Patrick, St Francis, St Stanislaus, St William's*

CATHOLIC POPULATION. *1,077*

Number of Children attending Catholic School *140*

Number of Catholic Children attending State Schools *85*

Number of Children attending Sunday School. *111*

Number of Easter Communicants. *475*

Number of absentees from Holy Mass. *741* *on Easter Sunday*

Number of absentees from Easter Communion. *275*

Number of Baptisms, 1909. *32*

Number of Deaths, 1909. *14*

Number of Marriages, 1909. *12*

**DEBT ON PAROCHIAL PROPERTY.**

	£	s.	d.
(a) Church	0	0	0
(b) Presbytery	0	0	0
(c) School	0	0	0
(d) Convent	0	0	0
Total Debt on Parish	£ 0	0	0
Amount of Debt paid off during 1908-9	£ 0	0	0
<i>July 1910</i>	£ 475	0	9

PAROCHIAL DISTRICT SURVEY, MACLEAN - 1909



St. Joseph's College,  
Hunter's Hill

# MARIST BROTHERS' SCHOOLS



*Honours*



Marist Brothers' High School,  
Darlinghurst



Marist Brothers'  
College,  
Randwick

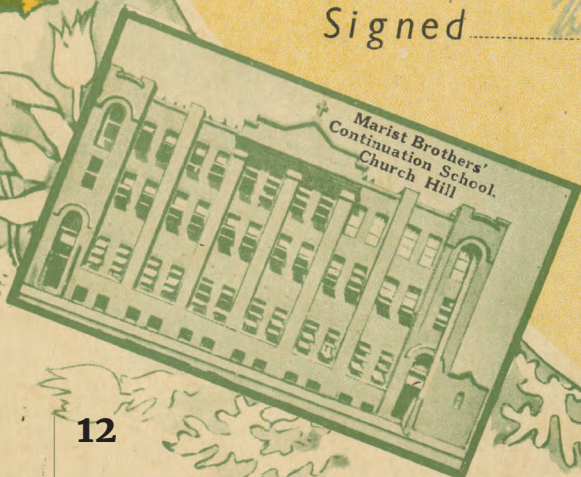
**This is to Certify** THAT

MASTER MERVYN B

HAS COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY  
THE SECOND YEAR COURSE OF  
SECONDARY STUDIES

DATE December 8th. 1950.

Signed *Br Andrew B.A.*



Marist Brothers'  
Continuation School,  
Church Hill



Marist Brothers'  
Technical School,  
St. Benedict's,  
George St. West



# History of Catholic Schools in the Diocese

The first Catholic school, in what was to become the Diocese of Lismore, was established at South Grafton by Mr Edward Tracy in 1860. Authorised from Sydney by Archbishop Polding, the school was housed in the church built by Father Timothy McCarthy. In 1868, the Catholic Denominational School was established in Grafton, and further premises for the school were built in 1876 and 1881. Following their arrival in Grafton in 1884, the Sisters of Mercy operated the school.

In 1883 Dean Doyle, later to become the first bishop, invited the Sisters of Saint Joseph (the Brown Josephites) to conduct a school at Swan Bay near Woodburn, with classes being held in the church. In 1886 when the Presentation Sisters arrived in Lismore, five schools in the diocese were operated by religious congregations. By 1900, parishes had built or provided buildings for 15 primary schools and three secondary schools in the diocese ('Educational Ministry in the Diocese of Lismore: Co-Responsibility in the Service of Mission,' p. 5).

The provision of Catholic primary education became a major thrust of parish endeavours as each parish built its parish school, installed a community of nuns as teachers and made itself responsible for their support. In 1880 there were fewer than 1,000 religious in Australia by 1950, there were more than 12,000, of whom more than 80 per cent were engaged in education (B. Kerr p.12). During the 20th century, parishes extended their

work into secondary schooling, and again by the mid-20th century in Australia, parish secondary schools were running alongside the older religious order established schools.

With post-war immigration and subsequent population increase, governments were pressured to provide financial assistance to the Catholic sector, its schools taking the bulk of European immigrants. In 1953 the federal government provided 'fledgling' financial assistance by amending the income tax laws, allowing a parent to claim up to £60 for school tuition fees as an allowable deduction. Shortly after, it undertook to reimburse the interest paid on loans raised to finance new schools or extensions in the Australian Capital Territory. This was a beginning, setting a pattern for future state aid and justice for the sector in New South Wales and across the nation.

Such aid partly assisted the introduction of the Wyndham Scheme in NSW in 1962, which created a four-year general education program for all secondary students ending with the School Certificate examination, followed by an optional two years of further study towards the Higher School Certificate examination, and was to impact the changes that were occurring at the time in schooling. To assist in the transition, the federal government provided funds for constructing science blocks and libraries. The number of secondary students in NSW grew by nearly 40 per cent between 1962 and 1968, to 244,000 (Dept. of Education NSW figures).

# Development of Formal Structures

During the 1960s, it became clear that increasing enrolments in Catholic schools were placing a severe strain on the capacity of parishes and most Catholic parents to provide the funding required to have smaller class sizes, better and more extensive facilities and to recruit properly trained lay teachers to replace the falling number of religious available for Catholic schools. Diocesan Boards of Education, or similarly named bodies, were being formed to ensure educational expertise and provide strategic approaches to governments. Diocesan Education Offices were also established in Lismore as early as 1955, and in many other dioceses in the years that followed.

In 1969 the first ever award for teachers in non-government schools was handed down in New South Wales, bringing a measure of industrial relations justice to teachers, a level of uniformity across the independent school sector, and adding considerable financial pressures, along with compliance demands. But even with the funding provided, parish communities and parents continued to bear a considerable financial burden in the provision of local Catholic schools.

In addition to the educational demands placed on them, Catholic Education Offices now classified teachers and staff, paid teachers' salaries from a central pool of funding, and provided long service leave and superannuation etc. as part of growing services to the Catholic schools. In 1974, the

COWPER CONVENT, 1891



NSW Catholic Education Commission was formed as the liaising body with governments - notably the newly established Commonwealth Schools Commission - forming the conduit for government funding to each diocesan system of schools. With the distribution of funds came growing responsibility for parish schools to meet the required educational standards, also reporting on educational and financial outcomes (B. Kerr, pp.16 - 17).

Writing in 1981, the newly appointed Director of Catholic Schools in the Lismore Diocese, John Kelly, paid tribute to Father Frank Devoy, who had initially been Inspector of Schools, then the Director of Education in the diocese for the previous 12 years. He congratulated Father Devoy on the changes he had overseen, *'changes brought about by the Second Vatican Council in the Australian Church and Education generally'*. He observed that *'increasing intervention and involvement by governments, especially in the areas of funding, calls for a more specialised approach to accountability and organisation'*.

Further, it was noted that *'the financial, human and material resources of the Lismore Diocese were galvanised to meet new circumstances in religious and secular education'* and that the Catholic Education Office had *'developed into a highly efficient and professional centre, which seeks above all, to serve the needs of those in schools and parishes'* (extracts taken from The Eagle magazine, St John's College, Woodlawn, 1981).



ST JOSEPH'S CONVENT SCHOOL,  
MULLUMBIMBY - 1911



# Development & Ongoing Growth of Parish Schools

During the two decades that followed, there was an expansion of educational support for parish schools from the Catholic Education Office in Lismore, and parishes offered increased administrative assistance and coordination locally.

As primary school enrolments increased in the Diocese of Lismore, there was also an increasing demand to grow the opportunities for secondary education across the diocese. Such demand placed pressure on parishes to upgrade existing schools to new standards, find new greenfield sites for schools, and then build the schools to meet enrolment demands. Governments recognised these needs. As early as 1965, a scheme was introduced in NSW, paralleling the federal government's scheme set up in the Australian Capital Territory in the mid-1950s, to subsidise the interest payable on the loans taken out by local parishes as their contribution to upgrade and build new schools. In 1970 the federal government announced that it would make funds available for capital works, a limited one-off offer, for the most-needy schools across Australia; Coffs Harbour Primary was rebuilt, and the Intermediate High closed.

While many small parish secondary schools closed with the Wyndham Scheme (ten in all, between 1963 and 1977), very few parishes could provide senior secondary schooling for many years into the future; the exceptions were the parishes of Lismore, Grafton and Port Macquarie. The financial largesse of the Whitlam Government (1972-75) eased

the pressure, providing generous funds in support of seven major programs available to non-government schools, including block grants for reconstruction or additions to schools. Consequently, the Catholic system stabilised, securing new confidence in the future. In most parishes, it was some 20 years after the first Higher School Certificate that Year 11 classes were provided.

In 1985 the NSW Catholic Block Grant Authority (CBGA) was established to distribute federal funding to fund, in part, capital works in schools. As parishes were responsible for running schools in the diocese, the management of the building programs and loans for capital works also fell to the local community.

The commitment of parishes to the acquisition of land, the management and supervision of capital works and the loans required for the building and maintenance of educational facilities in the Diocese of Lismore are worthy of note. NSW CBGA records show that since the late 1980s, there have been upgrades and new building projects in schools of the Diocese of Lismore funded through the CBGA, with a total value in excess of \$350m. Parishes have borrowed over \$100m to support those projects. In recent times, there have also been projects managed under the Catholic Schools Office, funding Compliance and Workplace Health and Safety grants, and the School Revitalisation and Innovation program.



ST PATRICK'S SCHOOL, MACKSVILLE - 1932



ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, COWPER - C.1913

One program of funding does warrant particular mention here; the Building the Education Revolution program of 2009/10, when all schools of the diocese shared in the unprecedented \$90m in federal government funding for capital works. Bishop Jarrett asked that there be wise and appropriate use of such funding drawing upon the principles of equity and the common good. The Director of Catholic Schools at the time, Dr Anne Wenham, concluded that the projects '*attest to the work of parish priests and parish teams, parish school principals and staff, CSO staff and architects, builders and contractors involved in the projects. They demonstrate a clear vision, imagination, ingenuity, and an understanding and appreciation for contemporary learning*'.

While parishes have a proud history of providing for Catholic education in the Diocese of Lismore and, indeed, were responsible during its growth, amendments to the Education Act in 2014 had implications for the involvement of parishes in schools. Similar to the need for change in the 1970s, the diocese has now been called upon to respond to the new demands of contemporary education in the 21st century. In 2018 Bishop Homeming called for a radical restructuring of school governance. After taking civil and canonical advice, the decision was ultimately taken to implement a new model in which a Schools

Company would be the vehicle for governing and delivering Catholic education in the diocese.

The point has now been reached where Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools Limited has responsibility for the governance of Catholic education in the diocese. As the diocese began a new phase in Catholic schooling, Bishop Homeming published the document, *Educational Ministry in the Diocese of Lismore: Co-Responsibility in the Service of Mission*, in which the following reminder about the past was made:

*'The history of Catholic schooling in the Diocese is testament to the monumental efforts of parishioners and their parish priests; the vision and planning of Bishops; the professional competence and generosity of eleven major Religious Orders of women and men; and the leadership and dedication of lay Directors of Catholic schools and their staff, principals and key school personnel, lay teachers and parents; all of whom in their time have served the Catholic schools of the Diocese over 160 years.'* (Educational Ministry in the Diocese of Lismore: Co-Responsibility in the Service of Mission, p. 5).

# The Parishes

# Alstonville & Wardell Parish

## 1. Alstonville Parish ■ established 1981

Catholic history of Alstonville records the blessing and opening of the church in 1887. It was not designated as a separate parish at the time, and it became part of Ballina Parish in 1903 and a parish in its own right in 1981.

The church served as the first school when the Sisters of St Joseph arrived in 1919. The three original nuns in Alstonville had support as there were already Josephite communities in Wardell (1913), Woodburn (1914), Bangalow (1914) and Byron Bay (1917).

The local community lauded the work of the Sisters of St Joseph in Alstonville, and *'Stories abound of their kindness and care. Many people treasure today the compassion and companionship the sisters brought with them. ... they would visit the dying and stay with families whose hearts were broken by death and tragedy. They tried to see that no one was in want. ... For years three sisters taught one hundred pupils, from six year olds to fifteen year olds and cared for boarders'* (Upon a Strong Rock, p. 85).

**//**  
**... the nuns saw that coal was being unloaded successfully by coal basket and crane, and so asked to be landed in the same way ...**

### St Joseph's School, Alstonville

The Sisters of St Joseph arrived in Alstonville in 1919. At that time the area was part of the Ballina Parish. A house had been acquired in the local community to be the convent, and the church was to be the school.

The three nuns arrived by steamer into Byron Bay in January, after travelling up from Sydney. When rough weather was going to stop their landing, the nuns saw that coal was being unloaded successfully by coal basket and crane, and so asked to be landed in the same way. After a horse and buggy trip to the Josephite convent in Bangalow, an overnight there, and a car trip (for the nuns a first) the next day saw them arrive in Alstonville. A Sunday Mass of welcome was celebrated the following day, only for school classes to begin on Monday.

JUBILEE JOURNAL 2000, A FAITH JOURNEY, P. 59.

Following rapid growth on the Plateau in the post-war period, Alstonville was made a separate parish in 1981. The Sisters of St Joseph were part of the school until 1987 after the first lay principal was appointed in 1985. Wardell Parish was later amalgamated with Alstonville Parish in 2013.

## The Parish and the Puddings

When Alstonville became a separate parish in 1981, the school was still under the Sisters of St Joseph. Father Darcy McCarthy, the first parish priest, saw that the classrooms at the parish school were in disrepair, and there was no capital funding for the school from the government at that time. He looked for a way to raise money to start the renovations.

Parishioners began with cake stalls outside the church, and a pudding business grew from there. Using a secret family recipe from Father Darcy's mother and in the presbytery kitchen, they baked around 300 Christmas puddings in his first year of production for what would later become 'Father Mac's Heavenly Puddings'.

In 1988, they made and sold 22,000 puddings, and the next year 36,000. By 1990 production had climbed to over 60,000 puddings a year, and the 'pudding factory' was a hive of local volunteer activity. The kitchen saw many early starts, the first batch beginning well before dawn, with generally three batches made a day.

The puddings paid for \$250,000 of renovations to the school buildings. The school was later supported with funding



FATHER MAC'S PUDDINGS ON DISPLAY

for other projects. The first capital funding from the government to the school came in 2003, but by then, the parish had raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to support St Joseph's School.

The community projects funded by the pudding production have been many and varied, from local charities that provide soup kitchens, crisis parcels and hampers, to meals for the homeless. If there was no specific project underway, the funds raised went towards providing school uniforms and equipment to those who were very poor within the community. Pudding profits were also used abroad for charitable causes, including wheelchairs in Cambodia, a water well in Ghana and AIDS education in Zimbabwe.

THE CATHOLIC LEADER, OCTOBER 2016. SISTERS OF MERCY, NEWS, JUNE 2017. SMH 7 SEPTEMBER, 1991.

## 2. Wardell Parish ■ established 1902<sup>1</sup>

Wardell Parish was established in 1902 and included the villages of Broadwater and Riley's Hill. Dean Doyle united it with Casino and Lismore in 1878, and it became part of Ballina Parish in 1890. It was amalgamated with Alstonville in 2013.

There is evidence of early Catholic settlement in the Wardell area from the 1860s, and priests from Casino serviced the district. It is recorded that the Bishop of Armidale (of which the area was part) confirmed 60 children and adults in Wardell on a visit in 1873.

The first church, St Patrick's, was blessed and opened in 1879, and the area grew quickly based on growing sugar cane.

With the growth of other educational opportunities in the region and the changing curricula in schools, enrolments fell at Wardell in the 1960s. The school was closed in 1967 when the nuns withdrew.

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<sup>1</sup> UPON A STRONG ROCK, P. 178,  
OTHER SOURCES CITE 1901

ST PATRICK'S CHURCH, WARDELL  
C.1911-1913



### St Patrick's Convent School, Wardell 1913-1967

When a new brick church was built in 1910, the existing church was renovated and converted into a school, opened under the care of three Sisters of St Joseph in 1913. The nuns came from Sydney on a 36 hour ocean journey, and were welcomed by the whole community of the lower Richmond area. A convent, built the previous year was ready for them.

The children of the cane farming and dairying families of the area had to travel by boat to get to school, before the introduction of buses, and even then had to cross the river by ferry morning and afternoons. Horses were another mode of transport for some to get to school, and often the nuns were seen in their horse and buggy visiting families of the community.

The old church school served the parish until it was demolished in late 1950 to provide materials for a new school for infants to fourth class for the 1951 school year. As reported by the parish at the time, '...the new school was constructed from materials available after the demolition of an old building which once served as church and latterly as a school. Indeed the old building was in use as a school until December 10, last year... on January 29 the new building was ready for the reopening of the School year'

While supervised by a building contractor, the majority of work was done by volunteer labour, organised by the parish priest. The total cost of the school reconstruction was £1500, and the school opened with a debt less than £500, due to the generosity of parishioners.

Schools of the Alstonville & Wardell Parish:



**St Joseph's Primary School  
Alstonville**

Founded: **1919**

First principal: **Sister Marie-Therese Moylan**

Motto: '**Growth Through Love**'





# Ballina Parish

■ established 1890

In 1854, Father Timothy McCarthy was appointed priest-in-charge of the New England Plains 'east to the Pacific Ocean and north to the Tweed', and there is evidence of visits from priests to the Catholic settlers of the Ballina area at that time.

In 1862 Father McCarthy created a 'smaller' parish encompassing the coastal region from Coffs Harbour to Tweed Heads and inland from Ballina. It was administered from Grafton.

The first church of St Francis Xavier in Ballina was opened in 1881 when the town's population stood at 600. By 1890, the population grew to 1000, and the Bishop of Lismore answered the needs of Catholics in the lower Richmond River area when he established the separate Parish of Ballina in that year, with Very Rev. Father Hern as priest-in-charge in 1891.

By 1894, Ballina Parish included Wardell and Broadwater. However, in 1903, with Wardell itself a parish, the Parish of Ballina now included Alstonville and Tintenbar, with Newrybar and Rous as station churches. Alstonville remained with Ballina Parish until 1981.

The Presentation Sisters came to Ballina in 1892, opening their first branch convent from Lismore. In July that year, with an enrolment of 44 pupils, St Francis Xavier School was opened in the parish church. A boarding school for girls and boys was also added in 1924.

//

*... These humble women ... took on the task of educating our Catholic children ...*

## Presentation Sisters in Ballina

In the Ballina Parish Jubilee Journal for the year 2000, the Presentation Sisters are remembered in the following way '... it was mainly in the schools that we remember them with love and gratitude. These humble women – having taken the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience – took on the task of educating our Catholic children, with their only tools of trade originally, being a chalkboard, duster and chalk, and a textbook as a guide.

With precious little training, but with great dedication, commitment and a deep resolve to carry on God's work, they coaxed, urged and sometimes bullied the best out of their charges. Academically, they often achieved great results, but it was in training the person in their faith and virtues that they excelled – specifically through their own deep spiritual sense and undeniable example'.

JUBILEE JOURNAL 2000, A FAITH JOURNEY, P. 48.



NUN AND BUILDER DURING WORKS ON ST FRANCIS XAVIER SCHOOL HALL

ST FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH SCHOOL AND CONVENT, BALLINA - EARLY 1900s



A secondary school was established in 1935, and the majority of boarders were girls drawn from the Tweed and Richmond areas as well as Sydney, Darwin and even New Guinea.

The following was written by Sister Joachim, the principal of St Francis Xavier School from 1958 to 1965;

*'In the 1960's the new Wyndham Scheme was launched - geared more to larger schools. A science room was a 'must'.... The old primary school was divided, refurbished and soon we had a well equipped science laboratory.....We all worked hard to ensure that after four years of secondary education our students would face the first School Certificate examination with confidence.*

*It was at the end of 1965 that the Catholic Education Office decided to make Lismore the regional centre for the Richmond and Murwillumbah for the Tweed. This meant the closure (of the secondary section) of St Francis Xavier's in Ballina and St Joseph's at Tweed Heads. The era of large schools had dawned' (Jubilee Journal 2000, A Faith Journey, p. 49).*

The Presentation Sisters were involved in education in the parish for nearly 100 years until the first lay principal was appointed to lead St Francis Xavier's School in 1988.

The schools at Skennars Head had been part of the planned expansion of education in the parish for over 20 years before Holy Family Catholic Primary School opened in 1997. While the parish had not offered secondary schooling since 1965, with two primary schools

now in the parish, there was demand again for secondary education. A long-held parish dream was realised when Xavier Catholic College opened in 2000. After a great deal of work in the parish, particularly by the Parish Finance Council members, in collaboration with the Catholic Education Office in Lismore.





ST FRANCIS XAVIER SCHOOL, BALLINA - 1932



ST FRANCIS XAVIER SCHOOL, BALLINA - 1969

## Schools of the Ballina Parish



### **St Francis Xavier Primary School Ballina**

Founded: **1892**

First principal: **Sister Patrick Power**

Motto: '**Growth through Love And Loyalty**'



### **Holy Family Catholic Primary School Skennars Head**

Founded: **1997**

First principal: **Paul Cronin**

Motto: '**Life to the Full in Christ**'



### **Xavier Catholic College Ballina**

Founded: **2000**

First principal: **Eric Littler**

Motto: '**Act Justly**'



# Bellingen Parish

■ established 1908

The first Catholic families came to the Bellingen Valley in the 1860s and were serviced by priests from Kempsey - perhaps visiting three or four times a year. The Freeman's Journal tells us, *'The journey from Kempsey in those days was a very difficult one, as there were no roads, and bridges were unknown. The way was long, and all travel was done on horseback along bridle tracks, through dense forests and over steep hills'* (UPON A STRONG ROCK P. 93.).

The districts of the Bellingen and Nambucca valleys were made into a separate parish in 1880, and Bellingen's first church was built in 1881. The year 1894 records that All Saints' Church Bowraville served Bellingen, Macksville and Raleigh churches with Father Ahern as parish priest until 1900, when he was succeeded briefly by Father Doyle.

In those early years, there was a shortage of priests to minister to the Catholics of the area, so the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart priests were invited by the bishop to the valley in the year 1903 and remained until 1907; their pastoral responsibilities included Bellingen and Raleigh, with station churches at Dorrigo, Coramba, Coffs Harbour, Bucca Bucca and Kangaroo Creek.

With the departure of the Sacred Heart Fathers, a separate Parish of Bellingen was established in 1908. It was still cared for by Bowraville until 1909, when Father Durney was appointed its first parish priest. Bellingen and Raleigh were the key centres, while Dorrigo and Bucca Bucca remained station churches. When the Presentation Sisters arrived, the pastoral focus shifted from Raleigh to Urunga in 1923.

CATHOLIC CHURCH, BELLINGEN - EARLY 1900s



ST MARY'S CONVENT SCHOOL, BELLINGEN - 1911



A church school, St Mary's Convent School, was established in Bellinggen when the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart from Kensington arrived in 1911. Not only did the nuns teach the children at the school, but they also ran a boarding school for children from outlying areas and taught classes to junior secondary level from 1926.

*Cont. page 36*

ANZAC DAY, ST MARY'S SCHOOL, BELLINGEN - 1950



ST MARY'S SCHOOL, BELLINGEN - 1933





FIRST COMMUNITY, PRESENTATION SISTERS, BELLINGEN - C.1950

### St Mary's Bellingham - A Memoir

My earliest memories of St Mary's Bellingham revolve around the Sisters (sic) of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Although generally we 'feared' them, we regarded them with awe and respect. No one, not even our parents, questioned their authority. There could be no doubting their dedication and commitment. The Sisters worked long hours and knew nothing of life's comforts and luxuries.

When I started school in 1943, the school consisted of the school hall and a separate small building which accommodated the Infants classes. During the War years there was an air raid trench in the grounds behind the school buildings. I don't remember having any drill and doubt that, in the event of an attack, everyone would have found a space in it.

As there was only one nun for three Infants classes, we probably started formal work at an early stage, learning from the older pupils. Four classes and two nuns occupied the one large (school) room, until finally the hall was divided with movable partitions. I wonder how we coped with the distractions, as a lot of learning was done by rote and there was a lot of 'chanting' going on.

I suppose that is why we spent so much time on the verandahs! We learnt our prayers, catechism and Latin hymns by rote, and our knees were ridged from kneeling on the wide cracks in the wide floor boards.

St Mary's School, Bellingham, Memoirs, 1994

||

*... There could be no doubting their dedication and commitment. The Sisters worked long hours and knew nothing of life's comforts and luxuries ...*

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, BELLINGEN



## Holy Name Catholic Primary School, Urunga.

The Presentation Sisters had arrived from Lismore, and the convent was situated across a swamp from the church school; a fallen log, with the top pared flat, made a bridge for pedestrians. One of the early nuns remembers those days in these words:

*'When I first went to Urunga I had reached the ripe old age of twenty. I had been professed one week and had a fairly large band of novitiate companions. I was very lonely. I used to watch the train going north each day – somehow it used to link me to Lismore.'*

*We walked the plank across the swamp to the church-school on the hill.*

*At night we carried lanterns as we went to Benediction (How Nano Nagle, Cork's 'lady of the lantern', would love that bit!)*

*Urunga was a poor place and food was given to needy children. A huge dish of rice was prepared each morning so that something sustaining was always at hand'.*

HOLY NAME CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, URUNGA 1923 – 1975, A REUNION MEMOIR.

MOUNT ST JOHN'S SCHOOL,  
DORRIGO - 1943





### Annual Report of Holy Name School, 1943.

*'We have the pleasure of presenting our annual report of the school this year. The gross enrolment numbers 54 – Boys 30, Girls 24.*

*During the year every endeavour has been made to continue the building up of the good traditions of this school. While doing our very best in preparing our pupils to be successful in their various school subjects, it has been as much our aim to produce young children of fine noble character and of definite positive and worthy personality.*

*As a Catholic school the religious training must ever claim our first and special care. Our pupils are taught to realise that the highest vision is to 'seek first the Kingdom of God and His Justice, and all things else shall be added unto you.*

*The standards of today are not Christian ones. In the hands of the young rest Australia's destiny. The Catholic school teaches the beauty of virtues, modesty and reserve, the nobility of justice and loyalty to God and His Church.*

*In attendance, punctuality, application to study, conduct and frequentation of the Sacraments the children have given every satisfaction.*

*The annual inspection by Rev. Fr. O'Brien M.A. Dip. Ed. took place in July. He was very pleased with the work of the school, and gave an excellent report... In conclusion we acknowledge our deep indebtedness to Very Rev. Fr. Ryan (Parish Priest) for his devoted interest in the spiritual and temporal welfare of the children.'*

HOLY NAME CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, URUNGA 1923 – 1975, A REUNION MEMOIR.

*From page 31*

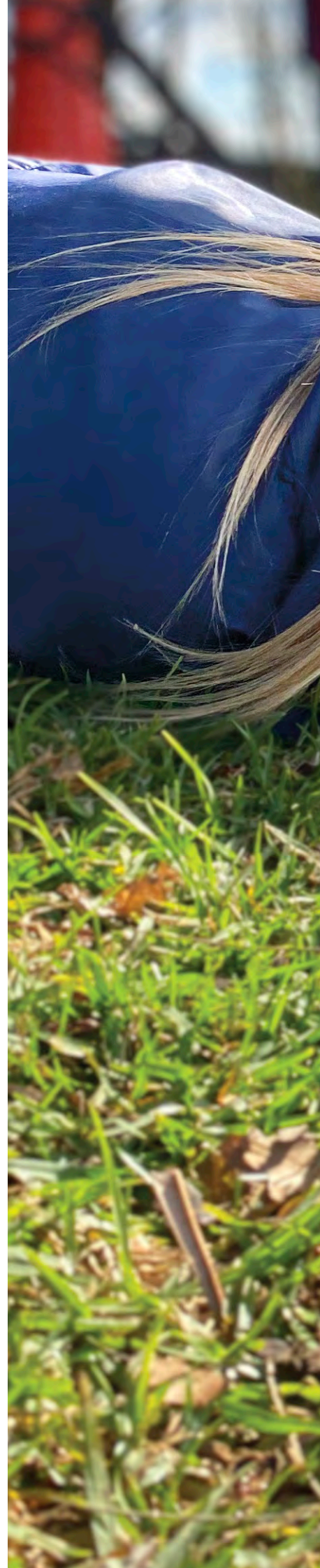
The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart left the school in 1949, as the congregation was needed for work in foreign missions, and were replaced by the Presentation Sisters the following year. The Presentation Sisters had been in the neighbouring towns of Urunga since 1923 and Dorrigo since 1924.

Father Durney was appointed the first priest-in-charge of the new Parish of Dorrigo in 1909. The first church was built in Dorrigo in 1910 and remained a separate parish until it re-amalgamated with Bellingen in the 1990s. The Presentation Sisters had founded Mt St John's School in 1924; it was essentially a primary school with a small boarding school attached.

In 1980 the Presentation Sisters left the school in Dorrigo, and the Sisters of Mercy from Grafton took over for a short time. The Presentation Sisters returned in 1990 and until recently had a presence within the parish and school.

### **Holy Name closes**

As Director of Education in 1975, Father Frank Devoy arranged an evening meeting with the parents of the Infants classes to announce the closure of the school and identify the arrangements for the students to attend St Mary's Bellingen. The parents brought their children along wearing dressing gowns in the hope that would convince the Director. The parents finally accepted the decision, warmly thanking Father Devoy for coming to meet with them.





## Schools of the Bellingen Parish



### **St Mary's Primary School Bellingen**

Founded: **1911**

Founding order: **Our Lady of the Sacred Heart**

Motto: **'Live in Harmony'**



### **Mount St Johns Primary School Dorrigo**

Founded: **1924**

First principal: **Mother M Vincent**

Motto: **'Learn, Grow, Celebrate'**

# Byron Parish (Bangalow-Byron Bay)

■ established 1902<sup>2</sup>

The first settlers were drawn to the area around Bangalow (known then as Byron Creek) by the rich stands of cedar of the Big Scrub, later to give way to fertile dairy farms. The first Catholic church, St Kevin's, was built in 1894, the same year the railway line was opened between Lismore and Byron Bay.

The parish was established in 1902, and its boundaries took in the towns of Bangalow, Mullumbimby and Byron Bay. Father Charles Casey was its first parish priest.

The Presentation Sisters opened St Kevin's Convent School in Bangalow in 1909 with an enrolment of 43 students. The Sisters originally travelled from their convent in Lismore each day. After no permanent accommodation was found for the nuns in Bangalow, they withdrew from the school in 1913.

The Sisters of St Joseph took over the school's leadership in 1914. The Josephites had been in Mullumbimby since 1910, and so nuns travelled by train daily from Mullumbimby to Bangalow until a new convent was built for them.

## St Joseph's Convent and St Kevin's School – Bangalow

Eventually the convent was opened in 1914 and the Sisters of St Joseph built up fine traditions in Bangalow. They now took boarders into St Joseph's Convent and also added a Secondary Department to St Kevin's School. Female boarders were admitted first, though by the 1920s male boarders were also enrolled and numbered as high as 32.

Over the years, the school enrolments were as high as 100. The Sisters of the convent were always keen to promote things artistic. For many years they provided Music tuition. During the period from 1971-72 changes in the patterns of education and a fast dropping school enrolment saw the Sisters of St Joseph withdraw from the school in Bangalow. As a result the school was forced to close in 1973 after 62 years.

ST KEVIN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH BANGALOW  
1894-1994, PP. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> OFFICIAL PARISH DIRECTORY. OTHER SOURCES CITE 1903



ST KEVIN'S SCHOOL BANGALOW - 1918



ST FINBARR'S SCHOOL BYRON BAY - DATE UNKNOWN



The first church in Byron Bay had been built in 1900 and was also used as a school in those early years. The Sisters of St Joseph opened a purpose built school in 1917, and the nuns travelled from Bangalow each day until a convent was opened in Byron Bay in 1918.

At this time, the separate Parish of Mullumbimby was established in 1917, leaving Bangalow and Byron Bay as the main towns of the Bangalow Parish.

When the Sisters of St Joseph left Bangalow in 1973, St Kevin's School amalgamated with St Finbarr's in Byron Bay and students were able to transfer schools. By the late 1970s, the population of Byron Bay began its steady growth, and the old church was replaced in 1979. Due to continued growth in the Bay overshadowing Bangalow, the pressure was building to rename Bangalow Parish, and in 2000 with the agreement of all parishioners, it was named Holy Spirit Byron, with centres in Bangalow and Byron Bay.

St Finbarr's School likewise continued to grow, and the parish acquired land to build an annexe, opening with two classrooms in 1991. While the intention was always to develop a new school on the annexe site, progress was slow due to various governmental regulations, but enrolments grew. Finally, with the direct intervention of the parish priest, Father Frank Devoy, under the NSW government, the full relocation of the school to the annexe site on Bangalow Road was approved and opened in 2008. The Building the Education Revolution (BER) funding of 2009 enabled the completion of the school's relocation.





**Schools of the Byron Parish**



**St Finbarr's Primary School  
Byron Bay**

Founded: **1917**

Founding order: **The Sisters of St Joseph**

Motto: **'Loving like Jesus, growing together as friends, learning for life.'**

# Camden Haven Parish

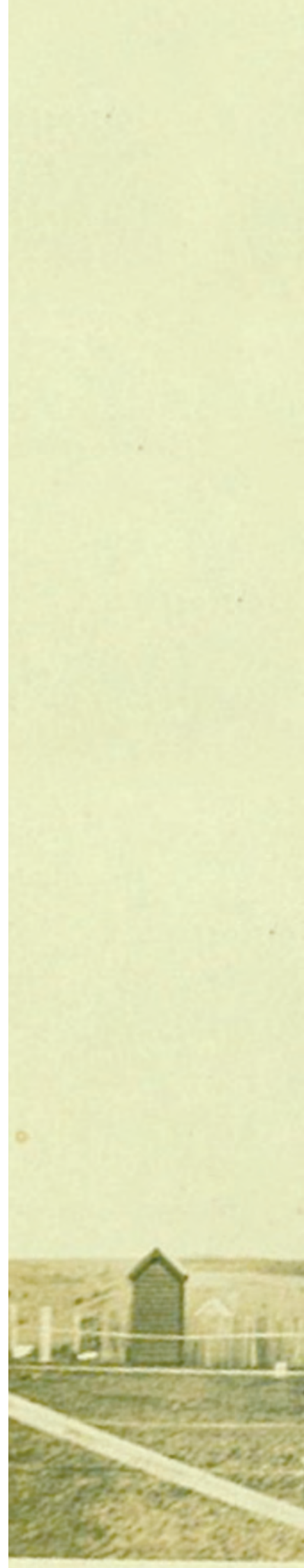
**Laurieton & Kendall ■ established 1939**

Although the growth of the districts around Laurieton and Kendall was associated more with Port Macquarie than Taree, the Australian Catholic Directory of the time shows that the Camden Haven (River district) was included in the Parochial District of the Manning River when it was established in 1855.

The Catholic community formed part of the Taree Parochial District, which became a parish in 1872. The first church, St John the Evangelist, was built in Camden Haven in 1880, and a foundation stone for the new brick church of the same name was laid in Kendall in 1918 and opened in 1920.

The Parish of Kendall was not established until 1939 and included both Kendall and the Camden Haven districts. In the post-war years, the district saw population growth, and the demand for a Catholic school in the parish grew as well.

On 19 January 1952, in a triple ceremony at Kendall, the Coadjutor Bishop of Maitland, Dr Toohey, blessed a new presbytery, a new Convent, and a new school. (The Newcastle and Maitland Catholic Sentinel, 1 March 1952). Sisters of St Joseph had arrived to take charge of the convent school, which opened in January, following the blessing. Records show that the school year started with an enrolment of 43 students and 66 when the year ended.



Because the population spread towards Laurieton rather than Kendall, the decision was taken to relocate St Joseph's School from Kendall to Laurieton in 1977. The school was renamed St Joseph's Community School to reflect the fact that the school did not cater for only Catholic students but included all denominations.

In 1983, the convent in Kendall was closed, and the nuns moved to Wauchope, commuting daily for school and parish community work. In 1985, the parish priest moved from Kendall to Laurieton.

The Parish of Kendall was the northernmost parish of the Diocese of Maitland until 1976, when by mutual agreement of both bishops—Lismore and Maitland—it was administered from the Lismore Diocese. In 1983 canonical approval was sought from Rome for the Parish of Kendall to be assumed officially into the Diocese of Lismore and this approval was subsequently granted; it became the property of the Trustees of the Diocese civilly shortly after.

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL, COMBOYNE







Schools of the Camden Haven Parish



**St Joseph's Primary School  
Laurieton**

Founded: **1951**

Founding order: **Sisters of St Joseph**

Motto: '**Courtesy, Faith and Diligence**'

# Casino Parish

■ established 1867

Mallangannee 1929 | amalgamated 2013

Casino's first Catholic school was a humble affair. It opened in a small cottage in 1884 under the direction of a single lay teacher. The Casino township came into existence in 1856, though a settlement known as 'The Falls' had been established before this on land which formed part of an extensive cattle station named 'Cassino'.

Although Catholics had been cared for by visiting priests since 1854, in 1867 the Richmond-Tweed parochial mission was formed with Father J H O'Neill taking charge. His task was no small one.

Monsignor Carey, Diocesan Inspector of Schools, in the Freeman's Journal on the occasion of the Golden Anniversary of the Diocese, wrote, '*a large area had to be covered by the priest stationed in Casino. In those pioneering days, the priest had to travel from Casino to the Queensland border by way of Tabulum and Woodenbong. He had to cross the river mouth at Brunswick Heads to reach the Tweed, then back to Ballina, Coraki and Yugilbar*' (Upon a Strong Rock p.105).

When the first Catholic school was opened in 1884, 3,500 people lived in Casino and district. Other notable events in that year included the establishment of a weekly bus

FIRST CONVENT SCHOOL,  
CASINO - C. 1890s





service between Casino and Tenterfield, a performance by Ashton's Circus in which £50 was raised for the Hospital Fund, and the arrival of a case of books on loan to the School of Arts Committee from the Public Library in Sydney.

By then, a church had already been built, a fine brick building dedicated to Mary Immaculate, opened free of debt in 1876 on land purchased from the Crown. It was the first brick building in Casino and would remain until the present church was blessed in 1940.

Three years later, 1887 saw the arrival, at the invitation of Bishop Doyle, of the Sisters of Mercy in Casino, now part of the new Diocese of Grafton, later to be Lismore. The Sisters would be involved in the schools until 1992. From an initial enrolment of 40 students, there was provision for infants and primary students, and a boarding school for girls was opened in 1890. In 1902, secondary classes were added.





By 1906, the present St Mary's Presbytery had been built. The old presbytery was then used as class and music rooms. The parish then built a large school hall at Tatham, nine miles from Casino. Tatham now had a school and a convent to which all the children of the village went. The Sisters of Mercy would remain in the village until 1950.

1917 saw the building of the Brothers School, which, when opened, was staffed by the Sisters of Mercy. It was not until 1945 that the Marist Brothers arrived and began teaching in 1946.

In 1960 the Daughters of Charity, who had been at Saint Michael's Home since 1957, began to teach at the newly opened Saint Michael's Infants School over in South Casino until 1969, when the Sisters of Mercy took over.

Education in the parish continued to grow in the post-war years, with the building of St Michael's Infants School in South Casino and more facilities for the existing primary and secondary schools.

The Marist Brothers withdrew from the parish in 1985, and the Sisters of Mercy withdrew from the school leadership in 1987. St Mary's High School was formed with the amalgamation of the boys and girls schools. The Catholic Education Office in Lismore, in conjunction with the parish, was instrumental in expanding the school to incorporate Year 11 & 12 classes in 1993, and an extensive building program was undertaken - the first Year 12 students graduated in 1994.

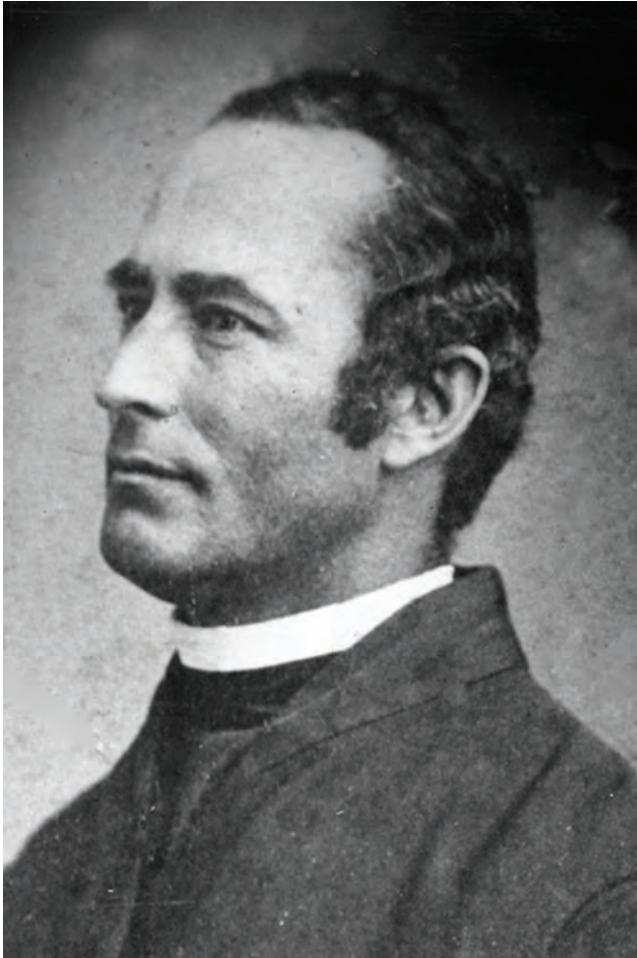


ST PATRICK'S CHURCH, TATHAM



THE EARTH CENTRE, ST MARY'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE





ABBE FELIX SCHURR

**//**  
**... He thus became the founder of the cane-growing region industry on the Richmond ...**

### **Abbe Felix Schurr – A Man of ‘Abounding Charity’**

Casino has seen many priests of verve, character and entrepreneurial zeal, but few more beloved by his community than French native Abbe Felix Schurr.

The Catholic Weekly sketched out these details in an obituary in 1942:

Born in Alsace-Lorraine in the 1820s. Father Schurr, a 'master of almost every language in Europe', spent periods as a missionary on the West Coast of Africa and in the West Indies. He came from Ireland to the district of Casino – a 'practically unsettled district' in 1871 – on the invitation of the Bishop of Armidale.

*'He thus commenced a mission which lasted for nearly 30 years, and embraced an area of wilderness which reached from the Clarence to the Tweed on the one hand, and from the mountains to the sea on the other. We hear of him patrolling Richmond in a boat, with which he entertained the dwellers in scattered camps with music and song, and exercising his priestly vocation wherever possible... When the farming era started, he induced the farmers on the Lower River to commence the growing of sugar cane... and had the satisfaction of seeing his venture become a success. He thus became the founder of the cane-growing region industry on the Richmond.'*

(P 3, CATHOLIC WEEKLY, SYDNEY, NSW: 1942-1954)  
THU 6 AUG 1942



**St Mary's Primary School  
Casino**

Founded: **1884**

First principal: **Reverend Mother Donegan**

Motto: **'Together in Faith and Charity'**



**St Mary's Catholic College\*  
Casino**

Founded: **1902**

Founding Order: **Sisters of Mercy**

Motto: **'Reach Out'**

*\*Formerly St Mary's High School*

# Cathedral Parish

■ established 1878

Terania 1985 | amalgamated 2013

It is in the 1850s that there is evidence of priests ministering to the Catholic settlers of the Lismore district; the priests were from Queensland and later Father Timothy McCarthy came from Armidale and formed the mission of *'the New England Plains and of the Pacific Coast'* (Upon a Strong Rock p.49).

While priests were appointed to care for the geographic area, including the Clarence, Richmond and Tweed valleys, the early appointments to the district used Casino as the centre from 1867. The first church, St Mary's, was built in Lismore in 1877, *'a hardwood and cedar building with pine lining which had been furnished with 20 pews each capable of sitting 50 persons'* (Bass, p.50).

In this building, Father Jeremiah Doyle, later to become the first Bishop of Lismore, established the first Catholic school after he was appointed in the following year to care for both the Richmond and Tweed districts.

St Mary's Church School was established in 1880, and with the arrival of the Presentation Sisters from Ireland in 1886, the school was operated by the nuns, and the name changed to St Carthage's (Bass, p.69). The nuns also opened St Mary's College in the same year, with an initial enrolment of six girls.



ST MARY'S CONVENT,  
LISMORE - LATE 19TH CENTURY



FATHER JEREMIAH JOSEPH DOYLE

Dean (Fr) Doyle took part in the Plenary Council that took place in Sydney in 1885. *'...he returned to Lismore and at once set about preparing for the Presentation Nuns. Three thousand pounds was to be expended on enlarging the little Church, and building*

*a Convent. It seemed an immense sum in those days, but Dean Doyle knew his faithful people and he collected – good men signed a guarantee bond, and the money was raised'.*

D'ARCY, P. 22

### **Teacher Training School for Novices, 1916.**

*The training school for novices was established at the Lismore convent in 1916. Here the novices are instructed in general methods of teaching. Demonstration lessons are given as well as lectures on the theory and practice of education. Since the establishment of the Board of Registration in 1931, the training school has been inspected each year by the Board's inspector. The sisters in training are entered for the Board's examination held each year in the theory and practice of education, and have received their certificates of registration.*

UPON A STRONG ROCK, P. 185.

Three Marist Brothers arrived in Lismore in 1911, and opened St Joseph's School for boys. Secondary classes began in 1922, and the school presented the first two Intermediate Certificate candidates in 1924 (Bass, p.146). In 1950 the first student (Barry Wappett) achieved the Leaving Certificate.

In 1966, in response to the reforms of the Wyndham Scheme for high schools, the Lismore Parish built 'The Senior School', as it was known, making possible co-instruction for the students in the two senior years of St Mary's College and St Joseph's High School. This marked the early beginning of what would become Trinity Catholic College.

'The Senior School' opened for the first sixth form students (now Year 12) in 1967. In the following year, students in fifth and sixth Forms from both schools were placed in co-

instructional 'Home Rooms' for classes, with each school retaining its separate identity. Science classes, conducted in laboratories, took the form of 'co-educational'.

In 1977, 'in order to make more effective use of buildings and staff', St Carthage's and the Marist Brothers' primary classes combined in a co-educational school.

While both high schools retained their separate identities, the schools moved closer to integration: Year 7 to 9 students - boys and girls - attended classes on the Marist Brothers site, often referred to as 'the Junior School'. Boys and girls were taught in separate classrooms. All Year 10 to 12 students moved to the Saint Mary's College site in a co-educational setting. The first integrated co-educational Year 7 class began on the Marist Brothers (Junior) site in 1978, with the gradual process continuing so that by 1981, the school was fully co-educational.

At this time, negotiations commenced for a closer organisational arrangement between St Mary's College and St Joseph's High School that led to the schools' amalgamation and the formation of Trinity Catholic College in 1985. The college became a regional school to the area before Xavier Catholic College opened in Skennars Head (2000) and St John's College Woodlawn was to become a day school (1999), serving the needs of Catholic education well beyond Lismore. By the mid 1990s, the college had an enrolment of more than 1,300 students. Currently, Trinity is the only independent Catholic College in the Diocese of Lismore. The college has its own board and governance structure, and its administration is separate from the Catholic Schools Office.

The Marist Fathers opened St John's College Woodlawn, Lismore, in 1931. They were invited to Woodlawn by Lismore's second bishop, John Carroll. Bishop Carroll was a long-standing friend of Archbishop Francis Redwood SM of Wellington, New Zealand, a champion of Catholic education over his 60 long years as a bishop. Woodlawn College, staffed by Marist Fathers, was an offshoot of St Patrick's College Wellington, which the Archbishop established in 1885. The Marist Colleges at Woodlawn and Silverstream New Zealand opened with proud historical traditions in 1931.

Woodlawn began as an agricultural school for boys and was academically highly successful. It operated as a boarding school with 400 boarders at its peak and virtually no day pupils. With the decline of Marist priestly vocations and an ever-decreasing number of boarders by 1998, it became a co-educational day school under the care of the Lismore Parish.

ST MARY'S BOARDING SCHOOL  
LISMORE - 1895



ST MARY'S, DESTROYED BY FIRE  
- 1905





## Flooding in the Northern Rivers

Trinity Catholic College, and St Mary's College before it, has a long history of flooding dating back to the late 19th century. In 1887, just a year after its establishment, St Mary's and Lismore were affected by one of the worst floods in their history when the Wilsons River burst its banks. In 1954, a major flood hit the city and caused significant damage to infrastructure and property.

In recent decades, the city of Lismore has seen several other noteworthy floods, including in 1974, 1989, 2017, and twice

in 2022. The February 2022 flood was particularly severe and saw the Wilsons River reach its highest ever recorded level. This resulted in widespread damage to Trinity Catholic College, forcing students and staff to temporarily relocate to Southern Cross University and St John's College at Woodlawn. Mary Help of Christians' School in South Lismore was also compelled to relocate. Schools in the Coraki and Casino parishes suffered serious damage from the floods.



ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, WOODLAWN -



ST MARY'S PRESENTATION CONVENT -  
C. 1920s

### Other parish schools:

In July 1955, the new Parish of North Lismore was established, covering the villages of Dunoon, Tullera and Numulgi, and Goolmangar was also to be served by the new parish. The Scalabrini Fathers came to work in the Diocese of Lismore in 1958, and their main goal was to assist Italian migrants and their descendants in Australia. They came at the invitation of Bishop Farrelly, who had a large community of Catholic families to the northwest of Lismore, over half of whom were Italian. The Scalabrini Fathers stayed for 20 years in the parish. While Bishop Carroll had invited the Daughters of Charity to come to the diocese in 1940, their work

in schools did not start until 1944, when two nuns founded the School of the Holy Family in North Lismore, where the Sisters stayed until 1966. In 1967 the Presentation Sisters came to continue the work of education.

A new school, Our Lady of Lourdes Infants, and church were opened in 1958 in East Lismore. In an interesting observation by Ray Bass from his research, '*...this was the first occasion on which a school or church had been opened in the parish without an appeal or donations being made on that day*'. Perhaps the introduction of Planned Giving throughout the diocese during the 1950s was partly the explanation.



HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL, NORTH LISMORE - 1953



## Schools of Cathedral Parish



### **St Carthage's Primary School Lismore**

Founded: **1886**

First Principals: **Mother Carthage Price,  
Mother Angela Burke, Mother Teresa Brophy**

Motto: **'Let Your Light Shine'**



### **St John's College Lismore (Woodlawn)**

Founded: **1931**

First principal: **Father Thomas Segrief**

Motto: **'Tenete Traditiones'**

**(Hold fast to the traditions)**



### **Trinity Catholic College\* Lismore**

Founded: **1985**

First principal: **Sister Mary Cannane**

Motto: **'In Word and Deed'**

*\*Trinity Catholic College is an independent diocesan school*

# Clarence Valley Parish

■ established 2013

**Cowper** ■ established 1890 | amalgamated 2013

**Grafton** ■ established 1862 | amalgamated 2013

**South Grafton** ■ established 1926 | amalgamated 2013

While the first settlers arrived in the Clarence in the 1830s, there is evidence that priests came to the area to serve the needs of the Catholic settlers well before the first church was built on the south side of the Clarence River in Grafton in 1857. It was the first church to be built on the north coast of NSW.

Such is the beginning of Catholic schools in the region now known as the Diocese of Lismore. The first parish priest was Father John Murphy, who held the position briefly and was replaced in 1863 by Father William X. Johnson (1863-1869).

*'As history records, the first Catholic school in the Diocese was authorised by Archbishop Polding and Father Timothy McCarthy. It was established at South Grafton by Mr Edward Tracy in 1860. Classes were held in the Church built there in 1857. In 1862, the "Grafton parochial district" was established, extending from Tweed Heads to Coffs Harbour and from Tenterfield to Ballina".'*

EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE OF LISMORE, P.5

Father McCarthy was born in Ireland, ordained in 1852, and arrived in Sydney in 1853, from where he was appointed to missionary work on the New England Plains. As part of his ministry, he travelled widely, and Cardinal Moran, in his *History of the Catholic Church in Australasia* wrote that Father McCarthy's 'periodic excursions lasted for three months. From the Tweed to the Richmond, thence to the Clarence and on to Walcha, then across the Liverpool Plains to the Gwydir and back by way of Glen Innes and Tenterfield to Armidale, such was the route he traversed in the discharge of his ordinary missionary duties. He was generally supplied with horses from station to station, the Protestant squatters treating him with uniform kindness'.

CARDINAL P F MORAN, HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUSTRALASIA, P. 398.

The Catholic Denominational School was established in Grafton in 1868 with 36 students, and new premises for the school were built in 1876 and extended in 1881.

The St Mary's Parochial School and a girls' high school were opened in early 1884 and following their arrival later that year, the Sisters of Mercy operated the school.

The Sisters were also in charge of the newly constructed St Joseph's School in South Grafton from 1889, after a number of lay teachers had succeeded the first teacher, Edward Tracy, in the original school of 1860. The Sisters of Mercy continued in the school for 98 years.

The first lay principal was appointed in 1984, after the original school in Spring St was moved (due to regular flooding) to the present site when a newly constructed school was opened in 1985.

The Sisters of Mercy were the cornerstone of education in the Clarence Valley, and their commitment to the families of the valley can be seen in the many schools they opened.

ST PATRICK'S CHURCH, SOUTH GRAFTON  
DATE 1882

## **Teacher Training - Grafton**

As can readily be imagined, the Bishop had great difficulty securing suitable teachers for the Catholic schools in his Diocese in the late nineteenth century, and wrote to the Sisters of Mercy in England asking for Sisters to establish schools. Over 900 pounds was raised in the Grafton parish to bring the nuns to Australia. They arrived in Grafton in January 1884 to establish a school.

One of the big problems that presented itself to the fledgling service was the training of teachers. Many of the early nuns operated under great difficulties and only succeeded by their dedication and devotion to the cause. Gradually teaching became more professional, and the teachers were supervised by another nun who was in charge of teacher training. Supervision, comments and suggestions, self criticism, and demonstration lessons by a qualified teacher all contributed to the improvement in teaching. The award of a teacher's certificate from the University of Sydney was the ultimate goal in those early years.

Towards the end of the 1920s, a Board of Registration of Catholic teachers for primary schools was established, and a Training School for teachers was started as part of the novitiate of the Sisters of Mercy in Grafton.

HISTORY OF ST MARY'S PARISH GRAFTON,  
1862 - 1994, P. 37.

The Parish of Cowper was established in 1902, but the first church in the area was built on Woodford Island at Brushgrove in 1871, and the church was used as a school. When this church blew down in a storm, it was decided to build the new church at Cowper.

In 1891 the Sisters of Mercy went to Cowper, opened a school, and a boarding school for girls was established in 1895. The Diocesan Orphanage was established in Cowper in 1914, also under the care of the Sisters of Mercy.

In 1897 the Sisters of Mercy opened a school in Ulmarra and travelled daily on the steamer from Cowper by river. By 1920 they had a convent in Ulmarra, and a new school was built in 1923.

The parishes of the Clarence Valley were similar to other parishes of the Lismore Diocese, which took responsibility for raising funds to support Catholic schools at a time when there was no government funding available; all manner of activities were used for fundraising, and the parish literature is rich with anecdotes of these efforts.

## The Catholic Ball Tradition – Grafton

The Catholic Ball has a long tradition in the parishes of the diocese, both as a social gathering and an important fundraiser. On the 25th of September 1886, the following advertisement appeared in the local newspaper, The Clarence and Richmond River Examiner;

*‘The First Annual Ball, Convent of Mercy, Grafton. It has been proposed to have a ball in aid of the funds of the Grafton Convent annually, and to have innocent amusement combined with a charitable object. The Inauguration Ball will be given as a plain and fancy dress ball, in the Roman Catholic School, Victoria Street, under the auspices of a special committee, whose duty it will be to make the undertaking a success – socially as well as financially’.*

HISTORY OF ST MARY’S PARISH GRAFTON,  
1862-1994, P.42.

GRAFTON CONVENT AND  
SCHOOL - 1884



## Local Funding of Schools - Grafton

During the 1950s, with the ever-increasing demands for bigger and better schools, plus the ever-present expenses of administration and maintenance, Catholic parishes everywhere were searching for methods of financing their needs. In Grafton, the introduction of 'Direct Giving' was the turning point, as it was in so many parishes of the diocese.

A parish census was taken, and all parishioners were invited to a dinner to hear the planned approach to be taken to fund raising. In July 1959 a system of regular envelope donations was commenced, where parishioners pledged for the next three years their contribution to the Planned Giving. The ambitious targets for the first three years were the funding of a boys' school and Brothers' House in the parish, as well as renovations to the presbytery and general parish maintenance. The boys' school, St Aloysius College, and the monastery for the Marist Brothers opened within six years.

HISTORY OF ST MARY'S PARISH GRAFTON,  
1862-1994, P.20.

Secondary schooling was provided in the Grafton Parish at St Mary's College until the Marist Brothers arrived to open St Aloysius College in 1965. While the first block of classrooms for the new school had been built in 1963, they were used and staffed by the Sisters of Mercy to relieve the pressure on facilities at St Mary's College. The Marist Brothers arrived on 3 February 1965 and remained in the parish's schools until 1995.

The senior years of schooling in the parish were offered in the new Holy Spirit College from 1973, and all three secondary schools amalgamated to form Catherine McAuley College in 1990. After opening as a boarding school for girls in 1929, St Mary's College continued to offer boarding places until 1996.

It was clear to the parish from the mid-1990s that the senior school was outgrowing the sites in Victoria Street adjacent to the church; with the generosity of parishioners, the hard

ST MARY'S GRAFTON - DESTROYED BY FIRE IN 1913





CORONATION CEREMONY, GRAFTON - 1953

work of the parish priest and parish finance committee members, and a new secondary education vision for the Clarence Valley, a new college was built and opened at Clarenza in 2004. With the new location, to better serve the needs of the Clarence region, came a change of name to McAuley Catholic College.

**“**  
*... For many years,  
 the parish planned for  
 the upgrade of secondary  
 school facilities ...*

### **McAuley Catholic College - Clarenza**

*'For many years, the parish planned for the upgrade of secondary school facilities, and in 2001 Commonwealth capital funding was secured, and a decision was taken to relocate Catherine McAuley College to South Grafton. An increasing number of students were coming to the college from towns outside the immediate Grafton area and it was hoped that selecting a site on the Pacific Highway at Clarenza would help to regionalise the school's location.*

*In 2003 the school was renamed the McAuley Catholic College and the first sod of soil was turned for the construction of the new school. '*

HISTORY OF ST MARY'S PARISH GRAFTON, PP 27,30



## Schools of Clarence Valley Parish



### **St Mary's Primary School Grafton**

Founded: **1868**

First principal: **Mother Mary Stanislaus Simson**

Motto: '**God's Glory**'



### **McAuley Catholic College Grafton**

Founded: **1990**

First principal: **John Mullins**

Motto: '**To Know Wisdom**'



### **St Joseph's Primary School South Grafton**

Founded: **1860**

First principal: **Edward Tracy**

Motto: '**Living and Growing**'

# Coffs Harbour Parish

■ established 1906

As can be said of many districts of what was to become the Diocese of Lismore, the Coffs Harbour area was originally settled because of the rich stands of red cedar and later for the use of the valley for dairying and agriculture. Less known is that gold was found in the area in the 1850s, and the settlement grew quickly because of gold mining activity.

A priest initially serviced Coffs Harbour from Bellingen in the 1880s, and the first church in the area was built at Karangi in 1902. Coffs Harbour became a separate parish in 1906, and St Augustine's Church was built in 1909 after the first church of St Anthony was destroyed in a storm.

KARANGI CHURCH AND COUNTRYSIDE  
1904





### Coffs Harbour Parish – 1906

The first church to be built in what was to become the Parish of Coffs Harbour was opened at Karangi (about 10 km inland from Coffs Harbour) in 1902.

The announcement of the establishment of the Coffs Harbour Parish is found in a local newspaper *The Raleigh Sun*, on December 14, 1906. *'The Rev. Charles O'Gallagher arrived at Coffs Harbour this week from Casino, where he has been acting as assistant priest... His reverence promises to be a great acquisition to the town and district. He has for a number of years been professor at various Catholic Colleges in Italy, France and Belgium... He speaks eight different languages'*.

A Sunday School was established at the Karangi church in April 1907, and was reported in a local newspaper, *The Coffs Harbour and Dorrigo Advocate*, *'There are about twenty boys and girls in the school and they were examined in the presence of their parents in Christian Doctrine by Father O'Gallagher. It speaks highly both for the industry of the children and the quality of the instruction imparted when Father O'Gallagher found it necessary to pass all the scholars in the subject'*.

CATHOLIC PARISH COFFS HARBOUR 1906-2006, P.13.

In 1913, with the arrival of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, the first school was established, using the 'unlined and rough timber' church for classes. On the first day of classes, there were 31 students, and the numbers doubled within the first month.

ST THERESA'S CATHOLIC CHURCH  
CORAMBA - 1927



ULONG CATHOLIC CHURCH -  
1931

### Coffs Harbour Convent School - 1913

In early 1913, it was announced that the Sisters of the Good Samaritan Order had accepted the invitation of Bishop Carroll, the second Bishop of Lismore, to establish a convent school in Coffs Harbour. Five Sisters set out from Sydney on the steamer the Orara, arriving at Coffs Jetty on February 2 that year. St Brigid's Convent was housed in the original presbytery, which was given over for the nuns' use.

A first-hand account of these days is given in the Annals of the Good Samaritans-1937: 'It was a new town. Many people were living in tents. Still there were many good buildings... The site of the Convent was a beautiful one, on the crown of a hill and just across the road from the church... At 9 am on Monday, February 3, 1913 the Convent bell rang for the first time. After Bishop Carroll celebrated Mass in St Augustine's Church, 31 pupils were enrolled in the 'bush school'... The church was to be the school also... There was not a book nor a blackboard nor a piece of chalk'.

CATHOLIC PARISH COFFS HARBOUR 1906-2006, PP.22-24.

//

*... The church was to be the school also... There was not a book nor a blackboard nor a piece of chalk ...*

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Hwy & Committee. 21.

Coffs Harbour  
Sept 20<sup>th</sup> 1916

My Lord

The plan enclosed is in respect of the land that your Lordship inspected for a school site the price is £230. and with it will be included the two blocks of Crown Land marked in the sketch. Mr Macnamara thinks there will be no difficulty in getting Market street closed and adding the piece marked with red ink also. If that could be managed the high land available would be ample. The street in question would not be required as there are plenty of other streets leading to the lands at the back. I am submitting this to your Lordship for your instructions.

Yours faithfully  
C. H. ...



CORRESPONDENCE TO BISHOP CARROLL ON SECURING A SITE FOR A SCHOOL IN COFFS HARBOUR - 1916





A new school was built in 1919, and as enrolments increased, there were several building programs to extend the facilities. In the 1960s, a new church, convent and school were built in the parish. Still, the parish's growth required further expansion in the 1970s. Father Tony Casey was appointed parish priest in 1971 with 'a commission to build up Catholic education in the parish'.

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan withdrew from St Augustine's School at the end of 1972, and the Sisters of Mercy from Grafton took over the running of the school in the following year.

At this time, the federal government offered special capital grants, limited in number, for the most-needy independent schools. Sir Ivan Dougherty travelled across the diocese with the Director of Education, Father Devoy, examining applications and finally settling for funding a new St Augustine's School on the present site in Coffs Harbour. The intermediate high school was closed, and the science and library blocks were integrated into the new school plan. The school was blessed by Bishop Satterthwaite and opened by the Federal Minister for Education, Senator John Carrick. This left the parish without a secondary school.

After years of planning for a purpose-built secondary school in the parish, St John Paul College (originally called John Paul College) opened in 1983, for students in Years 7 and 8, then on to Year 10: the school was the first secondary school in the diocese to have a lay principal, Mr Peter Mullane. The introduction of Years 11 and 12 posed an educational dilemma regarding whether to move forward with technical education or an academic stream. The matter was resolved in favour of the latter, and Sister Anne Henson PBVM became the new principal.

The first Catholic church was opened in Woolgoolga, part of the Coffs Harbour Parish, in 1968, although there is written evidence that the priests from Coffs Harbour had visited and delivered Mass from as early as 1919. During the 1980s, with the growth of the population to the north of Coffs Harbour, a new school was planned for Woolgoolga.

St Francis Xavier Primary School in Woolgoolga opened at the beginning of the 1994 school year under the leadership of the Sisters of Mercy. The first lay principal was appointed in 2005 when the Sisters of Mercy's only principal in the diocese stepped down.

## Schools of Coffs Harbour Parish



### **St Augustine's Primary School Coffs Harbour**

Founded: **1913**

First principal: **Sister Mary Virgilius**

Motto: **'In all things may  
God be glorified'**



### **St John Paul College Coffs Harbour**

Founded: **1983**

First principal: **Peter Mullane**

Motto: **'The way, the truth, the life'**



### **St Francis Xavier Primary School Woolgoolga**

Founded: **1994**

First principal: **Sister Margaret Bannon**

Motto: **'Love, Peace, Knowledge'**



# Coraki Parish

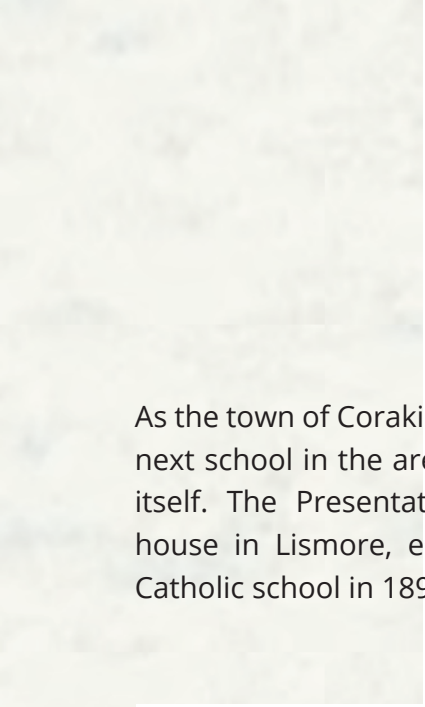
■ established 1890

Although the Parish of Coraki was not established until 1890, the first church was built in Coraki in 1874. The first priest in charge visited the lower Richmond area in 1878 and found Coraki 'a town of three houses and three churches, Anglican, Catholic and Presbyterian'; he also found 31 Catholic families in the Swan Bay area and 27 in the Coraki area.

Other churches were built in neighbouring settlements. Swan Bay, near Woodburn, was one such important riverside settlement, and in 1883 the Sisters of St Joseph were invited by Father Jeremiah Doyle, the priest in charge of the Richmond area, to conduct a school at Swan Bay. The classes were held in the already constructed church.

OFFICIAL CONSTRUCTION BEGINS OF A NEW CHURCH IN CORAKI -1904





As the town of Coraki grew in importance, the next school in the area was built in the town itself. The Presentation Sisters, from their house in Lismore, established Coraki's first Catholic school in 1896.

//

*... Our predecessors had warned us to be particularly watchful of snakes, as they were very numerous, and to examine our beds at night in case they should be occupied...*

### **St Joseph's Convent School, Swan Bay**

The school at Swan Bay was set on a meander in the Richmond River, and very prone to flooding. In 1892 there was one such flood, and one of the Sisters of St Joseph recalls her appointment there at the time.

*'Our destination was rather a lonely place, situated on the bank of the river, about 30 miles from Lismore. On one side of the cottage-convent was a sugarcane field and on the other, a few yards distance, was a small church-school. With the exception of a small store and a hotel ...there was no town. The river, after flowing past the convent for quite some distance takes a great bend backwards a mile or so distant, thus making it a doubly precarious place in flood time. Our predecessors had warned us to be particularly watchful of snakes, as they were very numerous, and to examine our beds at night in case they should be occupied by one or more of these wily reptiles'.*

*'All went well, however, until some time in March (1892). The Heavens were opened and most assuredly it rained the scriptural forty days and forty nights. The river rose rapidly and broke its banks a half a mile or so above us'.*

The school closed the following year and the Sisters of St Joseph left the parish!

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, WOODBURN,  
75TH ANNIVERSARY, P. 15

## St Joseph's, Coraki

Fundraising for Catholic schools took many forms over the years before there was government funding. Horse racing was ever an Irish and Catholic pastime. The town of Coraki was the centre of local racing in the early days, with three recorded tracks, and Woodburn also had a track. The racing was unregistered, what was called 'bridle' racing. It is written that the Catholic schools of the time benefitted from fundraising from the race meetings.

The following comes from a short history of the Coraki Parish: *'A typical bridle meeting was held in the late 1960s at Spring Hill. It was conducted to aid the Coraki Parents and Friends and attracted what (the then newspaper) The Northern Star thought to be a crowd of three thousand. A three furlong track was prepared by voluntary labour, with the home straight finishing on the hill. ... It was a busy day for the organisers and a profitable day for the P & F.'*

A SHORT HISTORY OF ST JOSEPH'S PARISH CORAKI, P. 29.

ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH, CORAKI -1930s



St Joseph's continued as both a primary and secondary school until the Wyndham Report in the 1960s resulted in the compulsory introduction of science into the curriculum and the extension of secondary schooling to six years. In 1965 the secondary school section of St Joseph's closed. After serving education at St Joseph's since its foundation in 1896, the Presentation Sisters departed in 1986, and the first lay principal was appointed.

While the Italian settlers had built a church, St Peters, in New Italy in 1887, the first church in nearby Woodburn was not built until 1904.<sup>5</sup>



Having left Swan Bay in 1893, the Sisters of St Joseph returned to the parish in 1914 when St Joseph's School in Woodburn was opened with 75 students. By 1933 the present church, school and convent had been opened on a new site, and the original convent and church buildings at Swan Bay were dismantled to provide building materials for the new school.

By the 1960s and 1970s, the Sisters of St Joseph did not have enough nuns to support their schools throughout NSW, and they were forced to withdraw from many schools. In 1976 the nuns withdrew from Woodburn. The Sisters were replaced by Mr Glenn Roff, the first lay principal of a primary school in the diocese, and by lay teachers.

### **From religious to lay leadership at St Joseph's, Woodburn**

*'The changeover from the Josephite Nuns to the first lay principal was remarkably smooth. Sr Jenny, a Brown Joey Motor Mission Nun, played a soothing and reaffirming role within the community. She was ever present and spent much of her time reassuring the community that St Joseph's was (a) in good hands, (b) still Catholic and (c) the future would have a promise all of its own. She found positives we couldn't even see and was a giant in the transition.'*

GLENN ROFF (PRINCIPAL 1977-1979), ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL WOODBURN 1914-2014, CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN WOODBURN,

<sup>5</sup> KELLY, E CITES 1905





Schools of the Coraki Parish



**ST JOSEPH'S**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL **CORAKI**

**St Joseph's Primary School  
Coraki**

Founded: **1896**

First principal: **Sister Conception D'Arcy  
Mother Berchmans Barnwell**

Motto: **'Deed not word'**



**ST JOSEPH'S**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL **WOODBURN**

**St Joseph's Primary School  
Woodburn**

Founded: **1914**

Founding Order: **Sisters of St Joseph**

Motto: **'To grow in truth and love'**





# Kingscliff Parish

■ established 1960

**K**ingscliff Parish was originally part of the Tweed Heads Parish until 1960, when the decision was taken to cut off from Tweed Heads all the area on the south side of the river and establish a new parochial district with Kingscliff as the centre.

**From such rudimentary beginnings, the parish began to take shape. However, there was no church or school at Kingscliff. Rather there was an option to buy two blocks of land from the local RSL right on the beach front. An old army hut on site was where Mass in Kingscliff was celebrated awaiting the building of a new church.**

HISTORY OF THE KINGSCLIFF PARISH, P.2.

Although there were already churches in the smaller communities of the parish, the first Kingscliff church was opened in 1961. The newly enlarged church of today was built in 1993.

In 1968, at the instigation of the parish, two Presentation Sisters opened St Anthony's School with an enrolment of 51 students. It was housed in the original Uki Convent School, closed in 1964, and was brought to Kingscliff by road. The Presentation Sisters originally travelled from their convent in Tumbulgem daily and continued in the school until 1980, when the first lay principal was appointed.

The area of Pottsville was serviced by the parishes in Murwillumbah for many years and was added to the Kingscliff Parish in 1977. The church in Pottsville was built in 1983 on land donated to the parish by parishioners for that purpose.

St Ambrose Primary School was opened in 2015, next to the church and on the donated land, in recognition of the growth in the area and the continuing demand for Catholic education.

**The Parish Priest set about making plans for Kingscliff Parish's own Church ... and a group of prominent parishioners were galvanised into raising money for the project. .... a Parish Loyalty Dinner was organised for Sunday, 4 June 1961 to pledge to raise nine thousand pound over a three year period. Two hundred and fifty people attended the dinner**

**In that three-year period an enormous amount was achieved – the erection of St Anthony's Church, purchase of land at Fingal and Chinderah. Purchase of land and a house at Kingscliff, furnishing the presbytery, payments of loan interest, repayment of bank loan, operating expenses of the Parish were met as well as subsidy payment to the Presentation Sisters. Those early Church members were people of commitment and vision and set an excellent foundation for the continued growth and development of our parish.**

HISTORY OF THE KINGSCLIFF PARISH, P.3.

//

*... Those early Church members were people of commitment and vision and set an excellent foundation for the continued growth and development of our parish ...*

ST ANTHONY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL,  
KINGSCLIFF - 1986





## Schools of the Kingscliff Parish



### **St Anthony's Primary School Kingscliff**

Founded: **1968**

First principal: **Sister Margaret Mazza**

Motto: **'Love and Service'**



### **St Ambrose Catholic Primary School Pottsville**

Founded: **2015**

First principal: **Brian Laybutt**

Motto: **'Christus Est Nobis'**  
**(To Us Christ is All)**

# Kyogle Parish

■ established 1916

The first Catholic church was built in Kyogle in 1906 when the settlement was part of the Casino Parish. The separate Parish of Kyogle was established in 1916<sup>5</sup>.

With the purchase of much of the land currently used by the church, presbytery and school, the parish was able to build a convent and school to mark the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in 1913; there were four nuns and an enrolment of 50 students, and by 1937, there were 170 students. Additions to the school were added in 1929, 1953 and 1954 with the ever-increasing enrolments.

A new two-storey school block with three classrooms and a tuck shop was built to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of service to the Kyogle Parish by the Sisters of Mercy. A further extension to the school was needed by 1984 when another two-storey classroom block was added. It was at this time that the parish hall was constructed.

<sup>5</sup> Kelly, E cites 1908

ST COLEMAN'S CHURCH, KYOGLE - 1906



The parish hall has a history all its own. Starting out as a school/hall, the original timber building was part of the 1914 school, and had been moved and been added to as the school grew in enrolment. After the new school buildings were completed by 1984, the old timber hall stood out *'like the proverbial sore thumb'* according to the local parishioners at the time.

The decision was taken to move and renovate the hall to create a parish hall. *'Response to the working bees was good and a few weekends saw the older eastern end of the building, the kitchen on the southern side and the front porch pulled down, stacked and the unwanted material auctioned'*.

*'This left the section to be moved perched precariously on its blocks. The plan was to pull a number of logs underneath the building to form a giant slide onto which the building would be lowered and moved to its new site. The Lord in His wisdom had other ideas. One particularly strong gust of wind during a midweek storm pushed it sideways on its blocks and it folded like a pack of cards on the ground'*.

The parishioners were undaunted and decided to build a new hall, this time in brick, and thanks largely to the generous volunteer labour of so many, the hall was completed in time for the parish Melbourne Cup dinner of 1985.

THE BUILDING OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS PARISH HALL 1984/85, P. 2.

The Kyogle Lions Club made significant contributions to the school grounds. A brick shelter shed was built and handed over to the parish on 15th August 1965 when the Golden Jubilee building was blessed and opened. The Lions Club had also erected a cricket pitch and wire nets which were demolished when the parish hall was built in 1985, and so a new pitch and netting was erected by the club on the southern corner of the school grounds as a replacement.

A PAGE FROM HISTORY, 1987.

**//**  
***... The parishioners were undaunted and decided to build a new hall, this time in brick ...***







Schools of the Kyogle Parish



**St Brigid's Primary School**  
**Kyogle**

Founded: **1913**

Founding Order: **The Sisters of Mercy**

Motto: **'Strong in Faith'**

# Maclean Parish

■ established 1876

While the area around Maclean was settled in the 1860s, the Catholics of the Clarence Valley were served by priests from Grafton. The first Catholic church was built in Maclean in 1868, and schooling was provided. Maclean became a separate parish in 1876. The imposing Church of St Mary's was opened in 1893.

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, MACLEAN  
(PHOTO KGBO, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)



In 1868 the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Sydney visited the Clarence, and encouraged the local Catholic settlers to establish schools in Grafton and Rocky Mouth (later to be known as Maclean), and soon after schools were started in both Rocky Mouth and Shark Creek (1875). Both schools had lay women as teachers.

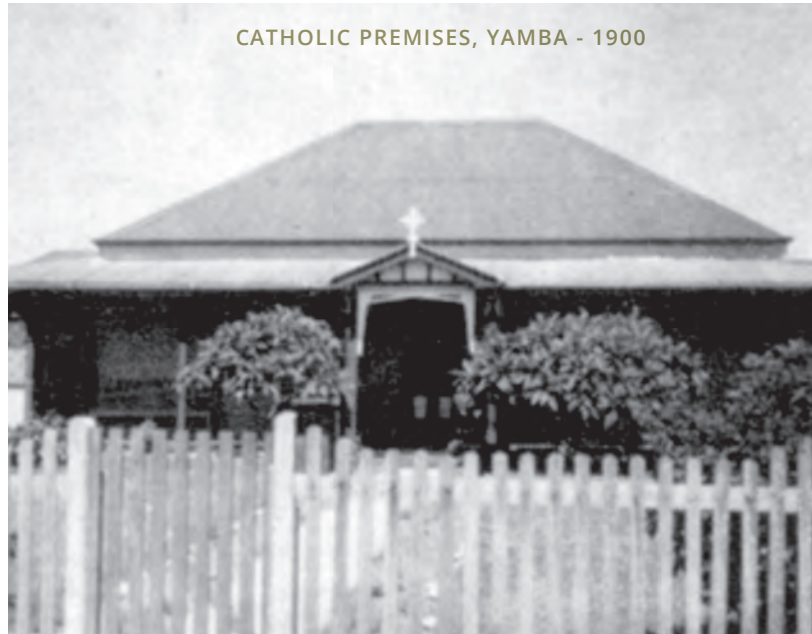
While the denominational school in Shark Creek did not last long, there is evidence that a form of schooling continued at Tara Hall which was also the Mass centre for the area, until the building was demolished in 1953.

In 1876 the new Parish of Rocky Mouth was established, and in 1882 another parish was established which centred on Palmers Island, including Chatsworth, Harwood, Yamba, and Iluka, which lasted to 1905. In 1889 the Parish of Rocky Mouth was renamed St Mary's Parish, Maclean.

Unfortunately, by this time the parish had built up a large debt in excess of three thousand pounds, through the building of churches, presbyteries, convents and schools, and a writ was taken out by the bank against a guarantor. A fund raising campaign by the Parish Priest and a loyal band of parishioners and donors saw the debt paid in six months.

A CENTURY SET IN STONE, ST MARY'S CHURCH  
MACLEAN 1893-1993, PP. 22-23.

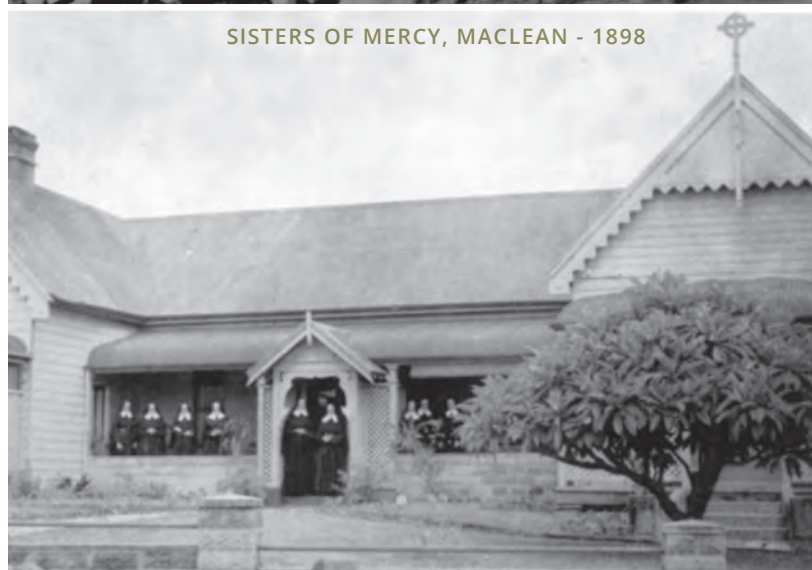
CATHOLIC PREMISES, YAMBA - 1900



ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, YAMBA - 1963



SISTERS OF MERCY, MACLEAN - 1898



The Sisters of Mercy arrived in Maclean in 1898, opening a school with 80 students in temporary accommodation, and the convent and school were opened later that year. The nuns also opened a school in Harwood that year, and soon, two of the nuns could be seen each day driving their horse and sulky via the Harwood ferry to the school. It was not until 1928 that a separate convent was built in Harwood.

Over the years, several parishes served the Clarence Valley, and many small towns had churches and church schools.

In 1900 the Sisters of Mercy established a school in Yamba with 26 pupils, which closed in 1964. St James' Primary School opened in 1997 and still serves the community. The convent and school in Harwood closed in 1957 because of declining enrolments, and the school building was re-sited to Yamba.





Schools of the Maclean Parish



**St Joseph's Primary School  
Maclean**

Founded: **1898**

Founding Order: **Sisters of Mercy**

Motto: **'Living, Loving, Learning, Together'**



**ST JAMES SCHOOL**  
*Yamba*

**St James' Primary School  
Yamba**

Founded: **1997**

First principal: **Paul Edgar**

Motto: **'Every Day is a Journey'**

# Macleay Valley Parish

■ established 2013

**Kempsey** ■ established 1864 | amalgamated 2013

**Smithtown** ■ established 1886 | amalgamated 2013

**K**empsey is one of the oldest parishes in the Lismore Diocese, having been established in 1864 as part of the great Sydney Archdiocese. In its earliest days, it included the Macleay district and the Nambucca and Bellingen areas and extended to Dorrigo and Coffs Harbour. Like so many early parishes in NSW, Kempsey was part of several dioceses over time: first, the greater Sydney diocese, and later Maitland, then Armidale, the Diocese of Grafton, and finally the Diocese of Lismore.

The Sisters of St Joseph arrived in 1884 to bring parish schooling to Kempsey, and St Joseph's School grew strongly under their leadership. Unfortunately, the small band of three nuns were recalled to Sydney in 1895.

The Presentation Sisters replaced the Josephites the following year, but they stayed for only a short time before being replaced by the Sisters of Mercy in 1900.

The parochial district of Smithtown comprised the lower Macleay area and was part of the local mission of the Catholic Church from the 1860s until Smithtown became a separate parish in 1886. The Sisters of Mercy opened St Joseph's School in 1912 and provided leadership of the school until the first lay principal was appointed for the 1978 school year. The school closed at the end of 1983.

Secondary schooling commenced in Kempsey in 1924 when St Philomena's High School was opened in the convent and continued until it became St Pius X High School in the mid-1960s.

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, SMITHTOWN - 1912



## St Joseph's Convent School, Smithtown

When three Sisters of Mercy came to Smithtown in 1912, the school consisted of one room. It was decided to take small boy boarders and a dormitory was built in 1914 for the first boarders the following year. Boarding continued at the school until 1964.

In the early days, children came to school on the riverboat, while others came on horses which were kept during the school day in a paddock over the road from the school by the river.

The Smithtown St Joseph's Convent School Parents and Parishioners Association was formed in the late 1950s, the object being to provide modern facilities for Catholic education. Much of the furniture and equipment then in use had been there from the school's foundation.

The school was equipped as well or better than many others, with modern cedar desks, chalk boards, TV sets etc. All facets of Catholic education were helped. Teachers were provided with new desks and chairs, a piano for the music pupils, electric stove for the cooking classes, and machines for the sewing classes. Cooking, sewing, swimming, football and netball were all taught by enthusiastic volunteers.

ST PATRICK'S SMITHTOWN PARISH CENTENARY  
1886-1986, P.25.

//

*... The government had decided that defensive measures were required in all schools in case of enemy attack ...*

## Air Raid Shelters in Schools - Kempsey

In March 1942 the parish priest notified the parishioners of a *'special meeting that was to be held at the school on next Thursday night to make arrangements as to what steps are to be taken for the safety of our school children in the event of air raids.'*

The government had decided that defensive measures were required in all schools in case of enemy attack. *'The digging of trenches will begin at the school next Saturday. Every man in the parish should be there. Final arrangements will be made on Thursday night.'* Working bees were conducted over three days *'to conclude air raid shelter work.'* The trenches were removed from the Convent School in February 1944, when it was deemed by the local Council that the threat of invasion had well and truly passed.

THE HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IN THE MACLEAY VALLEY, BRUCE CAIN, P.48.



## **Working Bees – Kempsey**

It must be remembered that these were the days of the 1950s ...the church was the centre of social contact, especially for these rural residents who spent most of their lives in isolation. It was normal for parishioners to attend church organised functions and to assist in the organising and running of those functions.

There were continuous pleas for assistance on working bees from setting up for the Convent Ball, boxing tournaments, labouring on school or church grounds, property donated to the parish or the organising of the Christmas Carnival. The parish priest arranged a series of working bees to pull down the larger of the old school buildings.....eight Saturdays were occupied with the dismantling of the redundant building, thus saving many hundreds of pounds in demolition costs. The old building materials were then sold.

As was announced in the church bulletin at the time, 'Working Bees next Saturday beginning at 7am. If you cannot come in the morning come in the afternoon. Work – to pull down the old school. Work for everyone. All you need is a claw hammer. If you haven't one your hands will do.'

THE HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE MACLEAY VALLEY, BRUCE CAIN, P.55.

St Paul's College was established in 1965 by the Catholic community of the Macleay Valley and educated boys from Year 5 to 4th Form. It was initially led by the Christian Brothers, who stayed at the school till 1987. The first lay principal was appointed to St Paul's for the 1984 school year.

## **Founding of St Paul's College, Kempsey**

750 parishioners attended a loyalty dinner held at the Agricultural Hall on Monday night 17 June 1963. The reason for the dinner was to establish fundraising initiatives for the establishment of St Paul's College. Construction was expected to commence shortly, and a cost of one hundred thousand pounds, including fittings and furniture, was envisaged.

The contract for the construction of the College was signed on 20 March 1964. The College was officially opened and blessed by the Bishop on 18 July 1965.

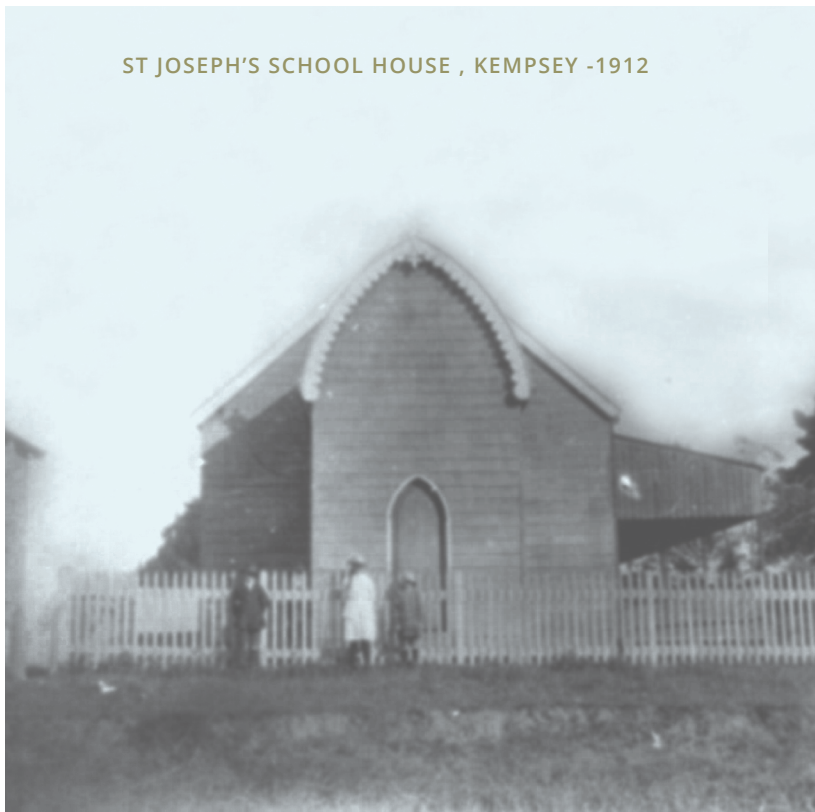
The buildings had cost ninety-four thousand pounds, but with an additional costing for equipment and fees, the final tally was one hundred and six thousand pounds, with the debt to the parish of sixty-four thousand pounds. The Commonwealth Government had subsidised the Science block to the extent of nine thousand pounds, which would have been the first government subsidy for Catholic education received in the parish since the parish was established in 1864.

THE HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE MACLEAY VALLEY, BRUCE CAIN, P.62-64.

In November 1973, new buildings for St Pius X High School, still under the leadership of the Sisters of Mercy, were opened on the eastern side of the boys' school. St Paul's and St Pius X High School were administered separately but shared the library and science facilities.

The college reached its final structure in 1980 when the two Catholic high schools amalgamated to form Macleay Regional Catholic High School. In 1985, the school reverted to its original name and became St Paul's College. In 1991, the first Year 11 students were enrolled, and two years later, they became the first HSC candidates.

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL HOUSE , KEMPSEY - 1912



ST PHILOMENA'S SCHOOL, KEMPSEY - 1934



## Schools of Macleay Valley Parish



### **St Joseph's Primary School**

**West Kempsey**

Founded: **1884**

Founding Order: **The Sisters of St Joseph**

Motto: **'Truth & Honour'**



### **St Paul's College**

**West Kempsey**

Founded: **1965**

First principal: **Rev. Brother M.E. Cryan**

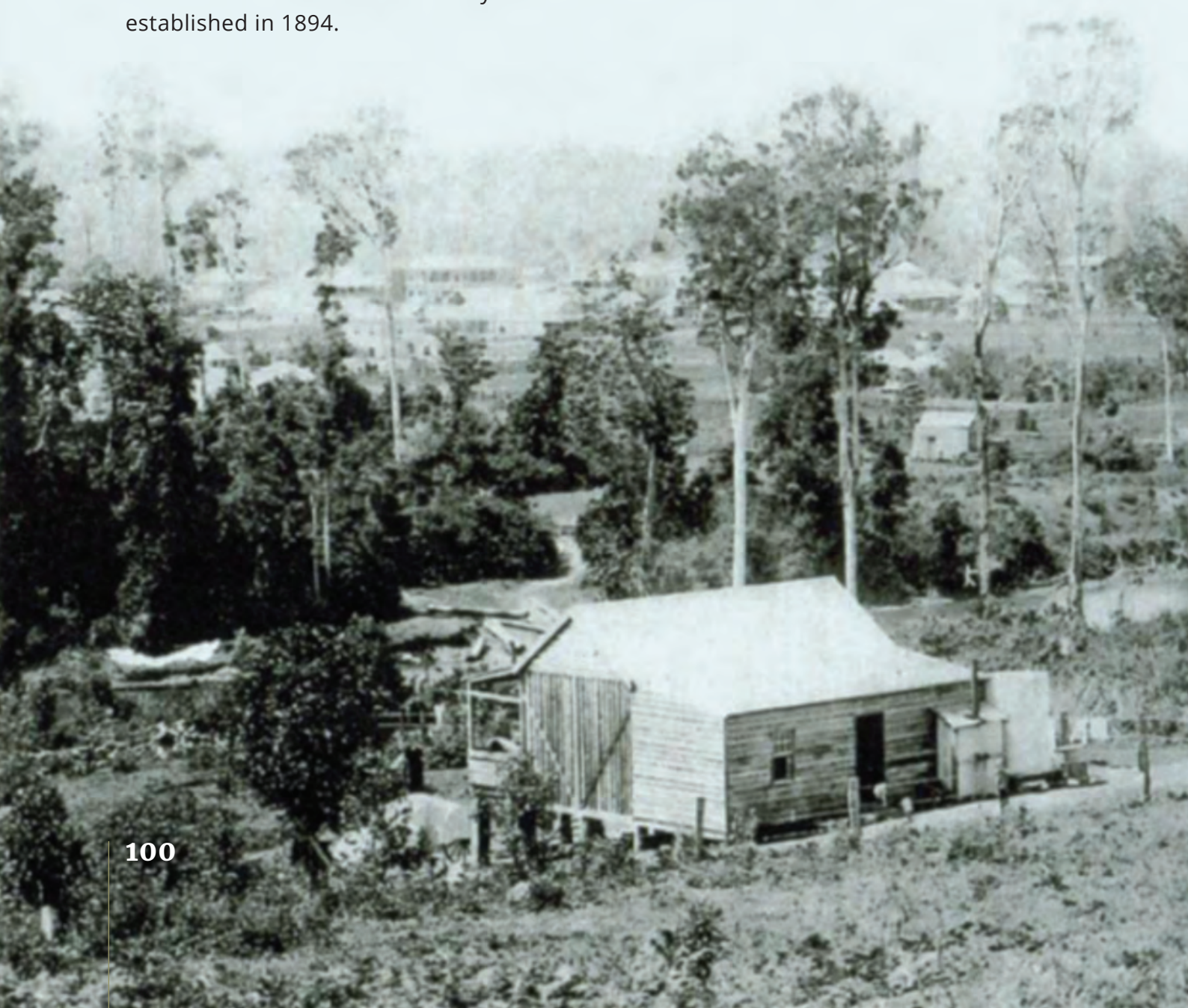
Motto: **'Let Your Light Shine'**

# Mullumbimby Parish

■ established 1917

The Brunswick Valley has a rich history, with timber-getting and boat-building in the 1850s and 1860s being the initial industries in the area, followed later by farming and agriculture. Brunswick Heads became a thriving seaport with large numbers of sail and steam-powered vessels carrying cargo of red cedar to southern markets. From a small village, Mullumbimby prospered after the Lismore to Murwillumbah railway line was established in 1894.

The foundation stone of the Catholic church in Mullumbimby was laid in May 1906, and a cottage near the railway station was acquired for a convent. The first community of three Sisters of St Joseph arrived in 1910 to teach 28 children in a room adjoining the church. As was the practice at the time, children from outlying areas boarded at the convent.



ORIGINAL PARISH LAND FOR ST JOHN'S SCHOOL  
MULLUMBIMBY - C.1900



St Joseph's School was built and opened in 1911 and a new brick primary school was opened in January 1916. A new brick convent was erected in 1920 after the first convent, a timber building, burnt down.

St John's was made a parish in its own right in 1917, and a presbytery was erected and opened in 1920. The parish ministered to those living also in Brunswick Heads and Billinudgel.

Extensions to the original school building were completed in 1938. While documentary evidence is unclear, interviews with former pupils suggest that St Joseph's Convent School changed its name to become known as St John's School around this time.

A new infant's school was built in 1955, and in 1964 more new buildings were erected, and the school gained registration as a high school. New science laboratories were constructed in 1966 as part of an extension to the years of schooling under the Wyndham Scheme.

In 1977, the secondary school closed, but St John's remained open as a primary school. The last Sister of St Joseph to fill the role of principal at the school left in 1992 and was replaced by the first lay principal.





ST JOSEPH'S CONVENT, MULLUMBIMBY,  
OPENING BY BISHOP CARROLL

R. Y. GOURLAY  
Mullumbimby

OFFICIAL OPENING OF SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH'S CONVENT SCHOOL BY BISHOP CARROLL - LIKELY 1911



STUDENTS OF ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, MULLUMBIMBY - 1930s







Schools of Mullumbimby Parish



**St John's Primary School**

**Mullumbimby**

Founded: **1911**

First principal: **Sister Malachi Reardon**

Motto: **'Servus Christi (Hail Christ)'**

# Murwillumbah Parish

## ■ established 1889

The first year of the baptismal register for the Parish of Murwillumbah was 1889, and that year is taken as the commencement year of the parish. There were several 'priests in charge' appointments for the district, including Father J. Dalton from 1900, who was appointed 'Rector Irremovable' in 1905.

For many years, Murwillumbah and Tweed Heads were considered one parish, and the Redemptorist Fathers administered to the needs of the Tweed. The boundary line between Murwillumbah and the Tweed was not drawn until 1917.

The Presentation Sisters came from Lismore when their convent was built in Murwillumbah in 1903, the Sisters' Community was founded in 1904, and the Mount St Patrick School opened in that year.<sup>6</sup> The nuns led the school until the first lay principal was appointed for the 1984 school year.

## //

***...Local farmers donated weekly provisions to the convent and the Catholic community took it upon themselves to provide for the nuns who taught their children...***

## School Fees

When schools were first established by religious orders in parishes, a small weekly school fee was paid by those families that could afford it. In many places one nun taught music to individual pupils and music fees were a source of revenue for the convent. Local farmers donated weekly provisions to the convent and the Catholic community took it upon themselves to provide for the nuns who taught their children and visited those in need in the community.

A Presentation Sister, remembering her days in Murwillumbah in about 1917, wrote later; *'We did all our own housework and one Sister was assigned to the cooking. The music teachers kept us going; the music fees were our bread and butter. We can never forget the generosity of the Murwillumbah people for their gifts and providing us with food and whatever we needed'*.

MT ST PATRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL CENTENARY 2004 PUBLICATION, P.12.

Education for the Catholic communities in the villages around Murwillumbah grew over time; the Sisters of St Joseph opened St Brigid's Burringbar in 1921 (closed in 1969) and St Columba's in Uki in 1923 (closed in 1964). St Columba's also offered secondary school classes from 1950 until it closed in 1963.

The Presentation Sisters also opened the Little Flower School at Tumbulgum in 1942 (closed 1969).

<sup>6</sup> Kelly, E cites 1905

The Presentation Sisters expanded into secondary education in Murwillumbah when Mount St Patrick High School was opened in 1926.

The school attracted increased enrolments following the introduction of the Wyndham Scheme in 1966, and in that year, the school became known as Mt St Patrick Regional High School. The closure of three smaller local Catholic secondary schools in the area occurred around this time.

The first lay principal was appointed in 1990, ending 64 years of continuous leadership by the Presentation Sisters. In 1992, the first Year 11 students were enrolled, and 64 of those students sat for the first Higher School Certificate Examinations in 1993.

The Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, South Murwillumbah, was established in 1955, and the Sisters of St Joseph opened St Joseph's School in 1970, and the nuns stayed until 1982. The parish was reunited with Murwillumbah Parish in 1998.

**ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, MURWILLUMBAH - 1960s**





Schools of Murwillumbah Parish



**Mount St Patrick Primary School  
Murwillumbah**

Founded: **1904**

First principal: **Mother M Stanislaus D'Arcy PBVM**

Motto: **'With Heart and Pride'**



**Mount St Patrick College  
Murwillumbah**

Founded: **1926**

First principal: **Sister M. Gabriel Weir**

Motto: **'In Hoc Signo Spes Mea'**

**(In this sign is my hope)**



**St Joseph's Primary School  
South Murwillumbah**

Founded: **1955**

First principal: **Sister Magdalen McDonald**

Motto: **'Trust in God, Pride in Self, Dignity of All'**

# Nambucca Valley Parish

■ established 1998

The Nambucca Valley was first settled in the 1850s, originally because of the rich stands of red cedar, and later for the use of the valley for dairying and agriculture. The three larger settlements were in Bowraville, Macksville and Nambucca Heads.

The Catholic settlers were serviced from the Macleay parochial district before the districts of the Bellingen and Nambucca valleys were made into a separate parish in 1880. It was not until 1908 that the Nambucca district was formed into its own Parish of Bowraville, although the first church had been built in 1873.

Macksville, Nambucca Heads and the Taylor's Arm district were excised from Bowraville in 1943 and became a separate parish.

The first school was established in Bowraville in 1905 by four nuns from the Kensington (Sydney) community of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The nuns continued in the school until the end of 1950.

A FIRST COMMUNION GROUP IN FRONT OF THE  
GOOD SAMARITAN CONVENT, MACKSVILLE  
- 1920s





\*See note overleaf

### **Bowraville – first church 1873**

*'The first church in Bowraville was built by three local men by the names of Howie, Crispin and Byrnes. These men found the timber, pit sawed it and erected the church. It cost about 250 pounds, and was partly paid for by a levy of corn on the Catholic settlers. The corn, when collected, was marketed in Sydney...'*

*'...the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart came from Kensington to Bowraville (in 1905)...The coming of the Sisters marked an epoch in the history of the Nambucca.....The women of Bowraville promoted entertainments and raised the necessary funds to ensure the comfort of the nuns.'*

UPON A STRONG ROCK, PP. 98-99.

FIRST COMMUNION DAY, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS  
MACKSVILLE - C. 1920s

ST PATRICK'S SCHOOL, MACKSVILLE -1950







ST MARY'S SCHOOL, BOWRAVILLE - 1940s

\*See note

The Good Samaritan nuns, also from Sydney, established a convent in Macksville in 1918, and taught classes in the presbytery 'car shed' and the church until 1928, when a new school was built. The new school was to serve children from kindergarten to intermediate years.

The original St Patrick's School opened with an enrolment of 46 students who came from the Nambucca Valley and included boarders from outlying areas. The Good Samaritan Sisters continued teaching in the parish for the next 35 years, and then in January 1954, the Sisters of Mercy from Grafton replaced them. When the Sisters of Mercy began teaching at Macksville, there were 150 pupils.

In 1957 there was an enrolment of 250 students from kindergarten to Year 10. At the end of 1965, the high school was closed. The first lay principal was appointed in 1991 after the Sisters of Mercy withdrew their administration and full-time presence in 1990, although the nuns continued to be involved in the school until 1998.

In 2014, a building project commenced relocating St Patrick's School to a greenfield site 3.5 km south of the town site. The building project was completed at the end of 2015, and the new school opened on the new site at the beginning of 2016.

\* The 'Bowraville Students' image above and the 'First Communion Day 1952' image on page 113 are presented with the permission of Elders in Bowraville and Macksville.



Schools of Nambucca Valley Parish



**St Mary's Primary School  
Bowraville**

Founded: **1905**

First principal: **Father Coleman and  
Sister Bernard**

Motto: '**Let Your Light Shine**'



**St Patrick's Primary School  
Macksville**

Founded: **1918**

First principal: **Sister Mary Francis Goold**

Motto: '**Truth Conquers**'

# Port Macquarie Parish

■ established 1888

In 1887, when the new Diocese of Grafton was established, the Port Macquarie parochial district was transferred from Maitland Diocese to the new diocese, finalising for almost 100 years the formal boundaries of the new diocese: from the Tweed Heads/ Queensland border in the north, east of the Great Dividing Range, following a line in the north to south-western ranges at Mt Seaview, then to Diamond Head, embracing Port Macquarie in the south. With the later addition of the Kendall/ Laurieton Parish to the diocese, the southern boundary was adjusted appropriately.

A year later, in 1888, the Port Macquarie Parish was established, but the first Catholics to live as residents in the Hastings Valley were those among the convicts and troopers who settled the area as a penal outpost in 1821. It is also likely that the first Catholic families were some of the early free settlers.

Port Macquarie became a convict settlement in 1824. It is very likely that priests visited the settlement as soon as they were permitted. Records indicate that many priests served the Port Macquarie area's communities before a Maitland Diocese priest was appointed to be in charge of the Manning and Hastings districts in 1873.

At the height of early settlement in 1836, the population of convicts, troopers and some free settlers in Port Macquarie was 1,300, a total not to be exceeded again, after the

During all this time there was no Catholic church at Port Macquarie, and Mass was celebrated in the gaol, in a large room which the authorities placed at the disposal of the priest. The education of Catholic children was described in the Freeman's Journal in 1937, *'There is living in Port Macquarie at the present time, Mrs Bourne, who arrived in the early (eighteen) seventies. She was then Miss McDonald, and came to take charge of the school. ... This grand old Catholic lady, from the time of her arrival in the district, played an important part in Catholic life. She used to gather the few catholic children of the district in the room at the old gaol and instruct them in Christian doctrine. ... In our historical survey of the Diocese we have come across many examples of men and women, who, like Mrs Bourne, kept the faith alive in the days when priests were few and churches were rare'*.

THE CATHOLIC FREEMAN'S JOURNAL, JULY 1937,  
IN BURROWS, P.30.

closure of the penal settlement in the 1830s, until some 100 years later, in 1936.

Catholic immigrants and freed Catholic convicts largely settled in the south of NSW. While there was a very large rural project known as the Australian Agricultural Company covering a vast area stretching from Newcastle to Tamworth, there was a policy to exclude Catholics.

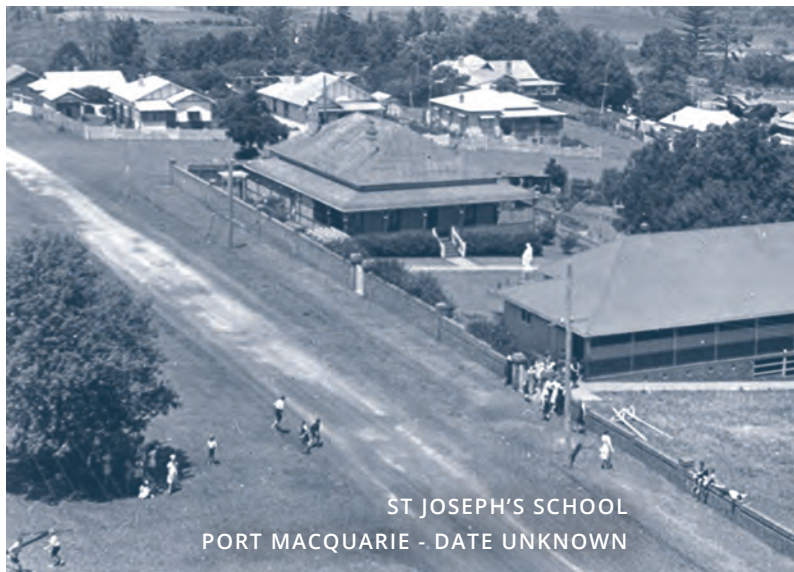
It was not until the Catholics engaged from the Maitland area to build the railway northwards to Kendall/Telegraph Point from 1910 to 1920 that larger numbers of Catholic families came to join the pioneers.

The first Catholic church in Port Macquarie was the former guard's room situated outside the large convict gaol and had been built in the 1830s. The first St. Agnes' Church was built in 1878, served as a Sunday school, and remained standing for 62 years. It was demolished and replaced by the present church, which opened in 1941.

While there is evidence of instructions for children in these early days, formal education was not introduced until the Sisters of St Joseph arrived from Lochinvar in 1913. The school opened with 31 students, including boarders (until 1971), but St Joseph's Primary did not have its purpose-built buildings until 1926 when the school was built near the convent in Hay St.

By the time of the introduction of the Wyndham Scheme, St Joseph's had grown to a school of 250 students, of whom 70 were in secondary classes.

In 1969 the first Year 7 to 10 school, St Joseph's Hastings Regional School, was opened, run by the Sisters of St Joseph. In 1979 St Joseph's Vocational College was started, offering alternative Year 11 and 12 curricula for students wishing to go from school to employment.



ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL  
PORT MACQUARIE - DATE UNKNOWN



FIRST BOARDERS, ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL  
PORT MACQUARIE - 1913

On the occasion of the centenary of the Port Macquarie Parish in 1988, Father Leo Donnelly, the parish priest since March 1970, wrote an article for the centenary publication; it was titled, *Towards the Year 2000*. He reflected upon the growth of the parish, and here are a few of his thoughts about the development of education from the 1960s: *'During those years, there were signs of changes to come, some of which were to have an enormous impact on the Catholic Church throughout the world, an impact that was felt all the way through to the town that had been called a 'sleepy fishing village'*.

First of all, there were signs that the coastal towns of the North Coast were becoming desirable tourist destinations and places of retirement for large sections of the Australian population resulting in a population explosion in those towns.

The early Sixties saw the Second Vatican Council, bringing in its train profound changes in the Church, a new and re-invigorated liturgy, a new approach to a whole range of attitudes and practices, welcomed by most Catholics, and accepted only slowly by others.

CENTENARY OF A PARISH, PORT MACQUARIE  
1888-1988, PP. 95-96.

It speaks volumes for the devotion and loyalty of the parishioners that the task of change was achieved as successfully as it was at that time. This was in no small part due to the work of the Sisters in the schools.

It has been suggested that Catholic schools at this time were a vital medium of change, the children becoming the teachers of their parents in things such as new approaches to liturgy and catechesis.

During the Sixties, the demands on small primary and secondary schools in the parish began to escalate, and additions were made to meet this demand. This, in turn, placed a heavy burden on the Sisters of St Joseph who provided the entire staff for the schools.

During the Seventies and Eighties, the town of Port Macquarie had grown at an explosive rate. It was providential that the Second Vatican Council was held before this era because this growth was to place extraordinary demands on the parish. Prior to this time, much of the initiative in the parish was left in the hands of the pastor and their assistants, ably assisted by the Sisters of St Joseph. Vatican 11 let loose the enormous talents and enthusiasm of the laity in the Church just at a time when these were most needed'.

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, PORT MACQUARIE,  
DATE UNKNOWN





ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, PORT MACQUARIE - 1931

The first lay deputy principal in the diocese was appointed to St Joseph's Primary School in 1973; Michael Egan was the first lay person to hold an executive position in the schools across the diocese.

The parish vision to support all ages in education saw the opening of the parish preschool in 1973, and not unexpectedly, by 1982, demand for places in primary years exceeded capacity at St Joseph's and the new St Agnes Primary was opened. A decade later, as demand continued to grow, a third primary school was needed in the parish, and St Peter's was opened in 1993.

By 1988, when MacKillop Senior College opened, offering a traditional HSC curriculum for students in Years 11 and 12, the number of Sisters of St Joseph in Port Macquarie had fallen to only four; three in primary schools and one in secondary.

St Paul's High School, a Year 7 to 10 school, opened in 1995, across the road from MacKillop Senior College, and they went forward to form one school in 2015.

In 2006, St Joseph's Vocational College was renamed Australian Technical College and moved to purpose-built facilities in Boundary Street, Port Macquarie. The College became Australia's first and largest technical college. It was renamed Newman Senior Technical College in 2009.

During 2009/10, St Joseph's Regional College, hitherto St Joseph's Regional High School, was relocated to the west of Port Macquarie to an area known as Sovereign Hills, when the construction of the first five stages of a greenfield site college marked a new beginning with a Year 7 to 12 school.



## Schools of Port Macquarie Parish



### St Agnes' Primary School

Port Macquarie

Founded: **1982**

First principal: **Sister Peter Julian**

Motto: '**Grace and Truth in Christ**'



### St Joseph's Primary School

Port Macquarie

Founded: **1913**

First principals: **Sisters M Rose Philson, M Dorothea Kealy, M Dominic Barry, M Alacoque Gallagher**

Motto: '**One in Christ**'



**St Peter's Primary School**

**Port Macquarie**

Founded :1993

First principal: **Don Farrell**

Motto: '**Strength in Christ**'



**MacKillop College**

**Port Macquarie**

Founded: **2015**

First principal: **Anne O'Brien**

Motto: '**Summa Tentabo**'  
(Strive for excellence)



**Newman Senior Technical College**

**Port Macquarie**

Founded: **1979**

First principal: **Sister Marie Boland**

Motto: '**Respect for Self, Respect for Others,**  
**Skills for Life**'



**St Joseph's Regional College**

**Port Macquarie**

Founded: **1969**

First principal: **Sister Mary Vincent**

Motto: '**Veritas Liberabit**'  
(The truth will set you free)



# Sawtell Parish

■ established 1983

**M**ary Help of Christians Parish, Sawtell, was established in July 1983. Before that time, the community of Catholics in the area was part of the Parish of St Augustine's, Coffs Harbour.

The first church was built originally as a church hall in about 1951, renovated and restored by volunteers with the assistance of a government grant in 1974, and was later transformed into a youth camp. With the establishment of the Sawtell Parish, the building became the parish church.

The first stage of Mary Help of Christians Primary School opened in Bayldon in 1980 under the leadership of the Sisters of Mercy, while the community was still part of the Coffs Harbour Parish, and the school became part of the Sawtell Parish when it was established in 1983.

The school opened with 130 pupils in six classes. Over the years, it has undergone much work to extend and upgrade the facilities, and there are now more than 400 students attending the school.

With the establishment of John Paul College in 1983, a combined parish board (Coffs and Sawtell) was established to oversee the overall policies of the college until 2016, giving Sawtell Parish both a financial and educational say in the conduct of the college.





Schools of Sawtell Parish



**Mary Help of Christians Primary School  
Sawtell**

Founded: 1980

First principal: **Sister Anne Hannigan**

Motto: **'Walk worthy of God'**

# South Lismore Parish

## ■ established 1939

Work began on the first church in South Lismore in 1916 when the area was part of the Parish of Lismore. The church was on the site presently occupied by the parish hall in Rhodes Street, and Bishop J Carroll blessed the foundation stone of the building in December 1917.

A church school was established at the same time, and the Presentation Sisters came across the river from Lismore each day in a horse-drawn buggy to lead the school from 1917 to 1924.

In March 1924, the foundation stone of St Joseph's Convent was laid, work progressed rapidly, and the convent was opened in July of that year. The Sisters of St Joseph arrived soon afterwards to take over the running of what became a complete primary school, although not in purpose-built school buildings at that time.

A new school, Our Lady Help of Christians School, was built by voluntary labour adjacent to the convent and was occupied at the beginning of the 1932 school year. Gravel from the Three Chain Road Quarry was transported to the site to fill the swampy land on which the school was being constructed, although floods continued to be a problem for the precinct for many years.

## Floods – South Lismore 1954

Over the years, many floods affected the convent and school in South Lismore. In 1954 floods entered the presbytery, church, school, convent and hall buildings to a depth of three feet.

The Convent – waters flooded the whole building, damaging everything and endangering the lives of the Sisters, who were caught unawares by the floodwaters when the river broke its banks. Three Sisters had to perch in a small loft above the bathroom, while the remaining two stood on a small cupboard filled with books. They remained there for 24 hours, during which time the floodwaters rose four feet inside the convent. The Sisters were rescued after the waters subsided gradually throughout the night and next morning: at 5.30am they were taken by boat across the flooded street to the stage of the hall. The following year the convent was raised eight feet for safety.

The School – During the years floodwaters have entered the school buildings and have caused extensive damage to furniture, books and other equipment. In 1958 the school was raised out of flood reach, in fact, it was raised nine feet, putting it completely above any recorded flood levels.\*

70 YEARS OF FAITH – OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS SOUTH LISMORE, P. 48.

\* Record flooding in 2022 completely inundated the school, forcing its temporary relocation to East Lismore.

A violent storm in 1938 did irreparable damage to the church, and the decision was taken to build a new brick church on the present site. South Lismore was established as a separate parish in 1939, and individual identity and pride quickly grew in the newly formed parish. The new church was opened in 1941.

The school also continued to grow, and with the addition of secondary classes, there was a need for more building works, all done before the days of government funding.

In 1965, with the advent of the Wyndham Scheme, the secondary department of O.L.H.C was closed. The Sisters of St Joseph ended their association with the school in 1993 but maintained a presence in the parish until December 1998.

**//**  
*... Three Sisters had to perch in a small loft above the bathroom while the remaining two stood on a small cupboard filled with books...*

ST JOSEPH'S CONVENT, SOUTH LISMORE







**Schools of South Lismore Parish**



**Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School  
South Lismore**

Founded: **1932**

Founding Order: **Sisters of St Joseph**

Motto: **'Unity, Friendship, Success'**

# Tweed Heads Parish

■ established 1912

The first resident priest on the NSW North Coast, Father J. Murphy, arrived in Grafton in 1862, and his area of responsibility, the 'Grafton parochial district', extended from Coffs Harbour in the south to Tweed Heads in the north and west to Tenterfield. Father Murphy held the position for less than a year and was succeeded by Father William Xavier Johnson. Neither priest managed to visit the Tweed in the years before 1867 when Father Johnson divided the parochial district, forming the 'Richmond Tweed parochial district', with Father John O'Neill its first parish priest. It was not until the 1880s that the first Catholic church was built on the Tweed.

The Redemptorist Order established the Mount St Joseph monastery in Tweed Heads in 1912 and stayed until 1917, the year of the appointment of the first parish priest, Father Henry Van Riel. The year also marked the arrival of the Ursuline nuns who opened a branch house in Tweed Heads from their convent already operating in Armidale.

The blessing of the new convent and St Joseph's School was performed by Bishop Carroll, the second Bishop of Lismore, in September 1917. The school opened with an enrolment of 60 students in primary level classes, and later secondary classes were added. Father Cornelius Hanley was appointed parish priest in 1918, holding the position for more than 50 years.

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, TWEED HEADS - 1917



The history of the site of St Joseph's School in Tweed Heads shows that the parish acquired the land for the pastoral activities of the parish, one of which has been education. For over a century the site, or part of it, has been used for a school. Parish records show that *'The blessing of the new convent in Francis Street and the school in Enid Street, both of timber construction, was performed by Bishop Carroll on Sunday 16 September 1917'.*

UPON A STRONG ROCK, P.172.

As the school grew in size more of the site was used by the school. *'The annual convent ball was not the only form of fundraising employed by the supportive Catholic community in order to bolster the school funds. Bazaars, card parties and dances were just some of the functions held to pay for the school's educational needs and building maintenance'.*

UPON A STRONG ROCK, P. 173.



URSULINE CONVENT, TWEED HEADS - DATE UNKNOWN





REDEMPTORISTS, TWEED HEADS - DATE UNKNOWN

In 1952, when the Ursuline Sisters withdrew from the school, the Lismore Presentation Sisters answered an invitation from the bishop and the parish priest to continue the great work already begun. In the years that followed, the Tweed population's growth resulted in the school's continued expansion.

Father Anthony Hoade was appointed parish priest in November 1971 following the death of Father Hanly. As all parish buildings generally languished over the years, the financing of new buildings in the parish largely came from the proceeds of a most successful 'Bingo' program. He rebuilt not only the life of the parish community but also constructed the new church, new school and its extensions, and a preschool.

At the conclusion of 1987, the Presentation Sisters withdrew their principalship of St Joseph's School. The school came under the leadership of a lay principal, but the Presentation Sisters continued to live and work in the parish.

Because of the increased demand for places in Catholic primary schools, the decision was made to establish a second primary school in the parish. Banora Point was chosen as the location, and through the generosity of parishioners and the vision and hard work of the Parish Finance Council, stage 1 of St. James, Banora Point was completed in 1993, and by 1997 there were two years K to 6 primary schools operating in the parish.

Given the demand for Catholic education in the Tweed, the decision was also taken to build a secondary college at Banora Point, and in 1993 St Joseph's College was opened with enrolments in Years 7 and 8. The first Higher School Certificate class graduated from the college in 1997.



ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH, TWEED HEADS - DATE UNKNOWN



## Schools of Tweed Heads Parish



### St James' Primary School

**Banora Point**

Founded: **1994**

First principal: **Elaine Ryland**

Motto: **'Family in Christ'**



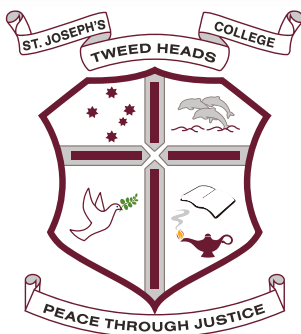
### St Joseph's Primary School

**Tweed Heads**

Founded: **1917**

First principal: **Mother Superior Angela Dalton**

Motto: **'Always Faithful, Always Proud'**



### St Joseph's College

**Banora Point**

Founded: **1993**

First principal: **Chris Shirley**

Motto: **'Peace through Justice'**

# Wauchope Parish

■ established 1955

The area around Wauchope was settled early in the 19th century, as nearby Port Macquarie had been established as a penal colony in 1821. The settlement of Wauchope was originally part of the Archdiocese of Sydney, later part of the Diocese of Maitland, and became part of the newly formed Diocese of Grafton (later to become the Diocese of Lismore) in 1887.

**//**  
*... the new school  
also opened free of debt,  
despite costing some eighty  
four thousand pounds, a  
substantial amount in that  
time ...*



ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, WAUCHOPE

### **St Joseph's Convent School, Wauchope.**

It was in response to a request from the bishop of Lismore, Bishop Carroll, that in 1927 four Sisters of St Joseph of Lochinvar took up residence at St Joseph's Convent Wauchope. The convent was opened free of debt, supported by the generosity of parishioners.

St Joseph's Convent School opened on January 23, 1928, with an enrolment of eighty two pupils in various grades. The nuns also conducted a boarding school for boys.

By 1930 the secondary school had started and some pupils sat for the Intermediate Certificate. The Church was used as a church, school and meeting place until a purpose built school was constructed in 1954. The new school also opened free of debt, despite costing some eighty four thousand pounds, a substantial amount in that time, especially for a small parish which was separated from Port Macquarie in 1955.

CENTENARY OF A PARISH, PORT MACQUARIE  
1888-1988, P.23.

It was not until 1955 that a separate Parish of Wauchope was established, although education had already been part of the town for many years.

The first Catholic school in Wauchope was opened with the arrival of the Sisters of St Joseph in January 1928, and St Joseph's Convent School opened in the old church building, which is now the school's assembly hall.

Boys from remote areas were offered to board, being housed in a dormitory beside the convent. The school closed to boarders in 1961.

St Joseph's also catered for secondary students until 1969, when the school returned to primary education only.

St Joseph's continued as a kindergarten to Year 6 primary school in the hands of the Sisters of St Joseph until the end of 1982, when the principal was transferred and the first lay principal was appointed. At the end of 1984, the last two members of the Josephine Congregation to work in the school were withdrawn.



Schools of Wauchope Parish



**St Joseph's Primary School  
Wauchope**

Founded: 1928

Founding Order: **Sisters of St Joseph  
(Lochinvar)**

Motto: 'In God we trust'

# Religious Orders



# Religious Orders

- **Sisters of St Joseph**  
&  
● **Sisters of St Joseph** (Lochinvar)

The Sisters of St Joseph had their original foundation in NSW in North Sydney. In 1873, at the invitation of the Bishop of Bathurst, the Josephites established a convent at Perthville in the Diocese of Bathurst. The congregation was independent within the limits of the diocese, and this led to the formation of other congregations, such as at Lochinvar in the Diocese of Maitland in 1883.

It was from these congregations that the nuns went to small rural towns in groups of three and four to serve the needs of the Catholic families. In isolated places where there was a need for religious instruction and education for poor children, the nuns chose to found convent schools.

They taught classes in churches, church halls, and an assortment of parish buildings and convents before local parishioners could provide purpose-built schools.

From their first school (in what was later to become the Lismore Diocese) at Swan Bay in 1883, the Sisters went on to establish 17 more schools in the diocese.

- **Daughters of Charity**

The Daughters of Charity was founded by Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint Louise de Marillac in France in 1633. They arrived in NSW in 1857 and quickly established themselves as a leading provider of healthcare and education services. They established the now-closed Holy Family School of North Lismore and St Michael's Infants School in Casino South.

- **Sisters of Mercy**

The Sisters of Mercy were established as a religious order in Dublin, Ireland, in 1831. Their mission was to help the poor young women of Dublin and assist with their education.

Bishop Torreggiani, the second Bishop of Armidale, had worked with the Sisters of Mercy in Kent in England before coming to Australia in 1879. The local superior of the Sisters of Mercy was to later accept the invitation of the bishop to be the foundress of a convent and school in his diocese in Australia.

The band of nuns arrived in Grafton in 1884 and, from the outset, were supported by the community in which they lived, leading some 20 schools in the Lismore Diocese.

- **Presentation Sisters**

The Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary were founded in Cork, Ireland, in 1775. Their mission was to help the poor, especially girls and young women, in their education.

The Presentation Sisters first came to Australia in 1866 when they established a convent in Tasmania. Victoria (1873), Western Australia (1891) and New South Wales (1874) welcomed communities of nuns before they were invited to Lismore. The three nuns, accompanied by eight postulants, arrived in Lismore in August 1886, and St Mary's College, teaching both girls and boys, was opened ten days later. From these humble beginnings, the Presentation Sisters went on to staff some 14 schools in the Lismore Diocese.

### ● **Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart**

The Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart were founded in France in 1874 with a missionary focus, and in 1885 five nuns arrived in Australia to serve in Oceania. They accepted an offer from the archbishop to work in the Parish of Botany, where they established a school.

It was from Sydney that the Sisters came to the Lismore Diocese to establish schools in Bowraville and Bellingen at the start of the new century.

### ● **The Sisters of the Good Samaritan**

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan was the first women's religious congregation founded in Australia. Established in 1857 by the Archbishop of Sydney, the Sisters began caring for the early colony's poor and destitute, particularly women and children.

The Sisters' work spread to regional areas as they accompanied Archbishop Polding on his missionary work, and it was through this work that they were asked to open schools. Education became one of their main ministries.

It was in the early years of the 20th century that they established schools in Coffs Harbour and Macksville in the Lismore Diocese.

### ● **The Ursuline Sisters**

The Company of the Ursuline Sisters was founded in Italy in 1535 and became a monastic order in France in 1612, taking a vow to educate girls as part of their rule. At the invitation of the Bishop of Armidale, thirteen

nuns arrived in Australia in 1882 to assist with the opening of schools in the diocese.

In 1917 the Ursuline Sisters established a school in the Lismore Diocese in Tweed Heads.

### ● **The Christian Brothers**

While the Order of Christian Brothers was established in Ireland in 1808, the Brothers had established schools for disadvantaged youth since 1802. The Australian Province has operated since 1885, although there had been Brothers in Australia from as early as 1843.

The Christian Brothers established St Paul's High School in West Kempsey in the Lismore Diocese.

### ● **The Marist Brothers**

The Marist Brothers were established in France in 1817 to educate the young and most neglected in post-revolutionary France. The Marist Brothers arrived in Australia in 1872 and opened their first school in Sydney. The Marist Brothers' contribution to the schools of the Lismore Diocese has been in Lismore, Casino and Grafton.

### ● **The Marist Fathers**

The Society of Mary, or the Marist Fathers, was established in France in 1816, with the main thrust of the work being missionary as well as education. Their missionary work took Marist priests to Oceania and New Zealand in the 1830s, and it was from New Zealand in 1931 that they established St John's College Woodlawn, an all-boys boarding school, in the Lismore Diocese.

# Religious Orders in Schools in the Diocese of Lismore

The dates below indicate when religious orders were working in the schools. Sometimes, the leadership changed to lay principals, as nuns and Brothers stayed on as teachers after they handed over the school's administration. While the nature of their ministry changed, many religious continue to be involved with their schools and attend school masses, liturgies, assemblies, graduation ceremonies and events.

## Sisters of St Joseph (Lochinvar)

- **Kendall** | St Joseph's 1952-1976 closed
- **Laurieton** | St Joseph's 1977-\*
- **Port Macquarie** | St Joseph's 1913 - \*  
St Joseph's Regional High School 1931-1993, St Agnes' Primary School 1982-1984, St Josephs Vocational College (later Newman College) 1979-1985
- **Wauchope** | St Joseph's 1928-1984 secondary school from early years to 1969 closed

## Sisters of St Joseph

- **Swan Bay** | St Joseph's 1883-1893 closed.
- **Kempsey** | St Joseph's 1884-1895.
- **Mullumbimby** | St Joseph's/St John's 1910-1992; the name was changed to St John's when extensions to the school were built in 1938, secondary school 1943-1977.
- **Bangalow** | St Kevin's 1914-1971, primary and secondary School closed.
- **Woodburn** | St Joseph's 1914-76.
- **Byron Bay** | St Finbarr's 1917 - \*, secondary school 1939-1964 closed.
- **Alstonville** | St Joseph's 1919-1987.
- **Burringbar** | St Joseph's 1921-1969, the school was moved to South Murwillumbah in 1970.
- **Uki** | St Columba's 1923-1964, secondary school 1950-1963 closed.

- **Lismore South** | Our Lady Help of Christians 1924-1993, secondary school 1946-1965 closed.
- **Murwillumbah South** | St Joseph's 1970-1982.
- **Nimbin** | St Joseph's 1937-1959, secondary school 1953-1956 closed.
- **Wardell** | St Patrick's 1913-1967.

## Sisters of Mercy

- **Cowper** | St Joseph's 1891-1913 closed - orphanage became operational in 1914.
- **Grafton** | St Mary's 1884-1989
- **South Grafton** | (Parish Catholic School 1860-1888). Sisters of Mercy at St Joseph's 1889-1987.
- **Casino** | St Mary's Primary 1887-1992, and secondary school 1887-1979.
- **Ullmarra** | St Joseph's 1897-1950 closed.
- **Kempsey** | St Joseph's 1900-1992.
- **Dorrigo** | Mt St John's 1981-1989.
- **Maclean** | (Catholic Parish School 1896-1897 closed). Sisters of Mercy at St Joseph's 1898-\*, secondary school 1930-1964 closed.
- **Tatham** | St Patrick's 1906-1950 closed.
- **Smithtown** | St Joseph's 1912-82 closed.
- **Macksville** | St Patrick's 1954-1990 under the administration of the Sisters of Mercy, who stayed in the school until 1998 after a lay principal was appointed.

secondary school 1954-1965 closed.

- **Coffs Harbour** | St Augustine's 1973-1986.
- **Sawtell** | Mary Help of Christians 1980-2019
- **Woolgoolga** | St Francis Xavier 1994-2004.
- **Harwood** | St Dominic's 1898-1957 closed
- **Kyogle** | St Brigid's 1914 - \*
- **Yamba** | St Joseph's 1900-1964 closed.

### Presentation Sisters

- **Ballina** | St Francis Xavier's 1892-1987, secondary School 1934-1966 closed.
- **Bangalow** | St Kevin's 1909-1913.
- **Bellingen** | St Mary's 1950-1979, secondary school 1950-65 closed.
- **Coffs Harbour** | St Augustine's 1987-1993,
- **Coraki** | St Joseph's 1896-1986,
- **Dorrigo** | Mt St John's 1924-80, 1990-\*,
- **Kempsey** | St Joseph's 1896-1899,
- **Kingscliff** | St Anthony's 1968-1979.
- **Lismore** | St Carthage's 1886 - 1998, St Mary's College 1886-1984 closed. Trinity Catholic College 1985-2018
- **Lismore North** | 1967-1971, when the school became an annexe of St Carthage's, Lismore.
- **Lismore South** | Our Lady Help of Christians 1917-1924.
- **Mallanganee** | St Mary's 1924-1971 closed.
- **Murwillumbah** | Mt St Patrick's 1904 -\*,
- **Tumbulgum** | Little Flower Convent School 1942-1969 closed.
- **Tweed Heads** | St Joseph's 1952-1987, Secondary school 1952-1965 closed.
- **Urunga** | Holy Name Convent School 1923-75.

### Daughters of Charity

- **Casino South** | St Michael's Infants school
- **Lismore North** | Holy Family School 1941-1966.

### Daughters of Our Lady

#### of the Sacred Heart Sisters

- **Bellingen** | St Mary's 1911-1949, secondary school 1926-1949.
- **Bowraville** | St Mary's 1905-1950.

### (Sisters of) the Good Samaritan

- **Coffs Harbour** | St Augustine's 1913-1972,
- **Macksville** | St Patrick's 1918-1953, secondary school 1942-1953.

### Christian Brothers

- **Kempsey** | St Paul's 1965-1987.

### Marist Brothers

- **Casino** | Primary and secondary school 1946-79, St Mary's High School 1978-1985.
- **Grafton** | St Aloysius 1965-1989, Catherine McAuley College 1990-1995.
- **Lismore** | St Joseph's 1911-1976 closed. St Joseph's High School 1911-1984 closed. Trinity Catholic College 1985 - a Marist Father continues in a planning role.

### Marist Fathers

- **Woodlawn** | Woodlawn College 1931-2000. A Marist Father continued as chaplain at the college until 2019, after the first lay principal had started in 2001.

### Ursuline Sisters

- **Tweed Heads**, St Joseph's 1917-1951, secondary school 1929-1951.

\* Year of withdrawal uncertain at date of publication.

# Acknowledgements

The editors extend their heartfelt gratitude to Paul O'Brien for the countless hours of research, fact checking and original written content used in this publication. Our appreciation goes to Father Frank Devoy for his invaluable contributions and guidance. The help and support of the priests of the diocese, whose review and feedback improved the accuracy of the book, is also acknowledged.

We would like to recognise the support of the schools of the diocese and the Catholic Schools Office, who provided valuable assistance and provided remarkable photographs of students and schools. Our thanks to the young people who appear in the book for their cooperation and heart-warming images. A special mention to Malcolm Ford for sharing the previously published images in *Upon a Strong Rock*.

Many historical images were provided courtesy of the archives of the Diocese of Lismore. We thank them for this contribution. The editors are grateful to everyone who played a role in creating this book and hope it will serve as a valuable resource for many years to come. Warwick Forster provided editorial oversight of this publication.

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