Exciting news – a new Catholic School at Edmondson Park

Bishop of Wollongong, Most Rev Peter Ingham and Director of Schools, Mr Peter Turner, are pleased to formally announce that the name of the intended new P-12 Catholic school, to be opened in Edmondson Park in 2017, will be ‘St Francis Catholic College’.

The newest Catholic school in the Diocese of Wollongong is being planned for establishment at Edmondson Park. Located in the Mary Mother of the Church Parish Macquarie Fields, St Francis Catholic College will be a P-12 school with an eventual enrolment of more than 1600 students.

Bishop Peter Ingham said he was delighted to officially announce the name of the new school, “The name chosen recognises the inspired leadership and call of our Pope, who adopted the name Francis after his election to the papacy. Pope Francis has become a model of inspiration to Catholics and non-Catholics throughout the world. With this inspiration taken from the life of St Francis of Assisi, I pray that the future students of our newest Catholic school will be similarly motivated and encouraged to live lives of joyful hope and generosity just as St Francis did.”

To be established in collaborative partnership with Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), the school will be a Diocesan Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition.

Bishop Ingham said, “I was delighted that EREA accepted my invitation to be involved with our Diocese in this way. This collaboration shows the way of the future for our Church, working together in the true spirit of unity as one Church in Christ.”
Executive Director of EREA, Dr Wayne Tinsey said, “We are very proud of this relationship with Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong and to be in partnership where there is such strong alignment in mission makes this a very exciting opportunity for EREA.”

We acknowledge that the proposed new school will be established on Tharawal land of the Dharawal People. It will be located near the new Edmondson Park railway station and in close proximity to a number of residential land release areas.

St Francis Catholic College will be the first P-12 Catholic school in the Diocese of Wollongong. A school establishment Steering Committee has already commenced work in relation to planning and preparing for the new school. Foundation Principal, Mr Simon Abernethy added that he is thrilled to be part of this new Catholic school community and looks forward to developing strong, lasting links with the parish and the wider community. He said, “We are determined to build a culture where community is central to the life and vibrancy of the school”.

Director of Schools, Mr Peter Turner, said he is very pleased with the name of the new school and is passionate about the prospect of offering quality Catholic education to families of young people in the rapidly growing SW Sydney Growth area. “Reflecting the Pope’s spiritual guidance and zeal, the name is fitting and I welcome the news that our newest school will be called ‘St Francis Catholic College’”, Mr Turner said.

He also said, “In the spirit of our Diocesan Pastoral Plan, Bearers of Christ’s Love, our Catholic Education Vision & Strategic Direction, Lighting The Way, and the EREA Charter, our objective is that this school will be a practical and lived expression of the evangelising mission of our Church”.

“Our Pope chose Francis as his papal name to honour Saint Francis of Assisi, who abandoned everything from wealth and prestige to become poor himself. As a hero of the Church, Francis of Assisi is known especially for connecting with fellow Christians and with so many people outside the Christian family. What better inspiration for our newest Catholic school to strive to be a community of young people who can give witness as ‘bearers of Christ’s love’?”
Parish Priest of Mary Mother of the Church Parish Macquarie Fields, Fr Linh Nguyen SVD, is also delighted at the prospect of the very first Catholic school being established in the parish. Fr Linh said, “I’m so happy that the families and young people in this area will soon have their own Catholic school. They deserve to have a good Catholic school. I just know our whole parish community will be very proud of St Francis Catholic College”.

The Catholic Education Office is encouraging parents to register their interest early in the new year due to expected high demand for enrolments in the school. Initial planning indicates that the school will commence with an intake in the Primary years, including Kindergarten, as well as Year 7, and is expected to reach its full capacity by 2022.

“We anticipate very strong interest from the community sure to be excited about the prospect of a new Catholic school being built in the region,” Mr Turner said. “Whilst 2017 may seem a way off, I encourage parents who may be considering enrolling their children at St Francis Catholic College to discern their options now. We will begin taking expressions of interest very soon and will accept completed enrolment applications in February 2016. We encourage parents to contact us if they have any questions about the new school and what it will offer.”

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Proposed site for intended new school St Francis Catholic College, in Edmondson Park, NSW