

## **Media Statement**

### **A word of thanks and encouragement to teachers in Catholic**

**schools** - Bishop Greg O’Kelly SJ, Chairman, Bishops Commission for Catholic Education

Bishop Greg O’Kelly, Chairman of the Bishops’ Commission for Catholic Education, has paid tribute to the work of teachers, particularly those who work in Catholic schools.

“At the beginning of another school year, I would like to acknowledge the valuable work and the dedication of all teachers. In Australian Catholic schools there are around 50,000 teachers. They have an enormous influence on the formation of young people”, said Bishop O’Kelly.

Bishop O’Kelly is a former long-serving school principal of St Ignatius College Riverview (Sydney) and St Ignatius College Adelaide. He speaks from a deep personal commitment to the values embodied in Catholic education.

“I am grateful for our teachers’ professional commitment to Catholic education and their personal witness to values the Catholic school holds most dear”, he said.

“The Catholic Church has always placed a high value on teaching young people. This goes back to Jesus’ own ministry where he placed children at the centre of his attention (Mark 10:13-14). And this age-old commitment has resulted, in our own country, in one child in five in Australia attends a Catholic school”, he said.

“Teachers have an extraordinary responsibility. A recent Vatican document describes teaching as one of humanity’s ‘most excellent and creative activities’. The personal relationship between teacher and student is neither simply utilitarian nor even just professional. There is a spiritual dimension to this relationship that aids the human formation of the student far beyond the subject matter at hand”, he said.

“My prayer for this school year is that teachers in Catholic schools will rise to the challenge of being outstanding educators. The degree to which the Catholic school achieves its purposes is largely down to them and to the relationships they sustain with their students”, he said.

### **ENDS**

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