

August 2025



## August Reflection: The Season of Creation

**Annette Schneider rsm, Formation Coordinator**

Each year from September 1 to October 4, we are encouraged to join in a worldwide celebration of prayer and action to protect our common home – the Season of Creation. It is a special season where we celebrate God as Creator and acknowledge the continuing unfolding of Creation. All people around the globe are called to share in this through their love and care for the gift of all that is created. As we know, our well-being is interwoven with the well-being of the Earth.

This year, the theme for the season is “Peace with Creation”, with the Symbol for 2025 being the Garden of Peace. The symbol is characterised by a dove carrying an olive branch bringing life to the Garden of Peace.

[Read more](#)



## Looking ahead to the feast of Our Lady of Mercy, 24th September

MMC's ministries celebrate Mercy Day, Mercy Week or Mercy Month in a range of ways. There are some excellent resources available on the [Mercy International Association website](#), in the Heritage and Spirituality section, to assist in your planning.

Some generic Mercy Day resources for use or adaptation for use within MMC's ministries are now available. This material was developed with the assistance of the MMC Mission Coordinators' Network in 2023.

[Access Mercy Day resources](#)



## MMC Conference 2025:

### Extending Horizons as people of Hope and Hospitality

Approximately 100 participants will gather at the Catholic Leadership Centre in East Melbourne, on 15th and 16th September to explore the theme which focuses on two of MMC's Core Values – Hope and Hospitality.

Archbishop-elect of Brisbane, Shane Mackinlay, and Dr Sonja Hood, CEO of the Scanlon Foundation, will be the Keynote Speakers. Two rounds of workshops, convened by our Community Service, Education and Health and Aged Care ministries, will enable attendees to learn more about the Conference theme in action at local levels. Next month's Connections will showcase key events and Conference outcomes.

## Mercy Education



## Commissioning of new Principal at Emmanuel College

In a spirit of joy and unity, the Emmanuel College community gathered on Friday 8th August to celebrate the Commissioning Mass of new Principal, Rachel McGennisken. The event brought together over 1,300 students, staff, parish priests, and Mercy Education representatives, marking a significant milestone in the College's 150-year legacy. Led by Fr John Fitzgerald and Fr Lawrie O'Toole, the Mass was a heartfelt celebration of faith, leadership, and community.

"It was a special ceremony," Rachel shared. "I was delighted to have been acknowledged in this way as the next principal of such a storied institution, following in the footsteps of over 150 years of visionary faith and educational leaders."



## Young scholars shine in Premier's VCE Awards

Eight exceptional students from Mercy schools across Victoria have been recognised in the [2025 Premier's VCE Awards](#). These prestigious awards honour the top-performing students across Victoria in their respective VCE subjects, highlighting academic excellence, dedication, and passion for learning. A list of the Mercy students who have been recognised is available [here](#).

[Read more](#)

## Mercy Community Services



## MacKillop Institute's Lead the Way Conference

On the 11th and 12th August, leaders from education, community services, and government came together at The MacKillop Institute's Lead the Way Conference 2025.

Held at Rydges Hotel in Melbourne, the conference featured renowned keynote speakers, including Dr Ross Greene, Clinical Psychologist and New York Times Bestselling Author; Meena Singh, Victorian Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People; Professor Pasi Sahlberg, Educational Leadership



expert; and a diverse program of over 70 presenters, interactive workshops, panel discussions, and evidence-based presentations. Attendees delved into topics such as cross-sector collaboration, workforce wellbeing, child safety and practical approaches to creating inclusive communities.

The conference created a space to explore how to build safer, healthier, and more resilient communities, schools, and sectors. The theme, *Strengthening Safety and Wellbeing through Collaboration*, was powerfully reflected in keynote presentations, break-out sessions, and rich cross-sector conversations.



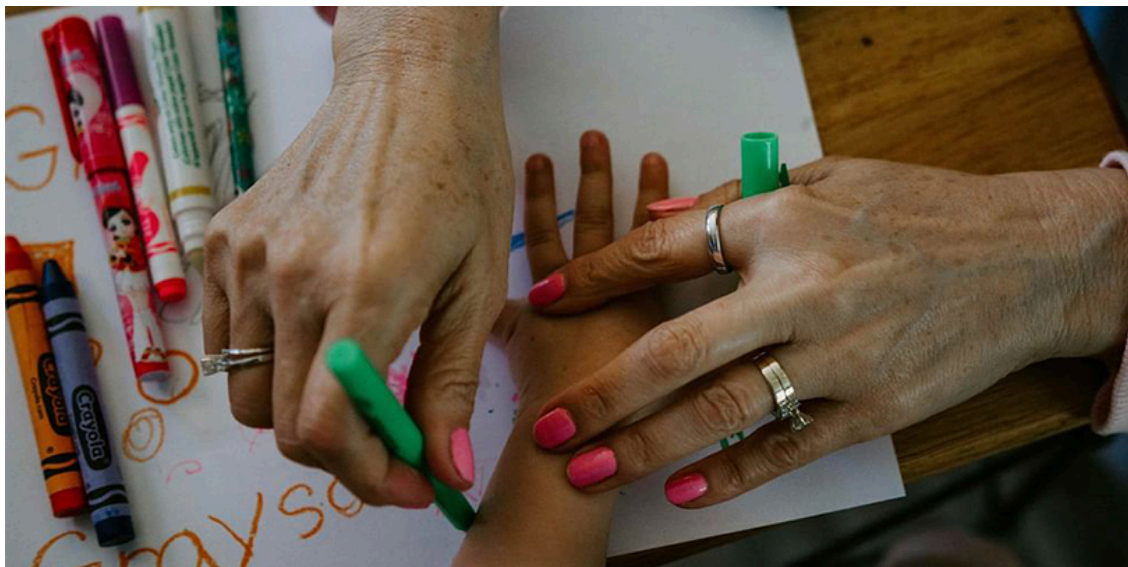
### **Help McAuley to put a spotlight on women's homelessness**

Every night, countless women across Victoria face an impossible choice: stay in a dangerous situation or leave with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Many end up sleeping in cars, couch surfing, or in shelters, searching for safety and stability.

Join the McAuley team on 16th October for the second annual Car Park sleepout at Melbourne Airport raise vital funds for Juno and McAuley, helping provide critical support to those experiencing homelessness across Melbourne.

[Register now](#)

### **Mercy Health**



### **New school program helps bridge generation gap**

A new school program, the Generations of Value, developed by Mercy Health Foundation, Australian Catholic University, Catholic Development Fund and Catholic Health Australia, has been introduced into Catholic primary schools across Australia this term and aims to help children appreciate the unique contributions of people at all stages of life.

The Program consists of eight sessions, each focusing on a Bible verse and activities that encourage reflection on the different roles and generations within a family.

One of the Program's creators, ACU Professor of Healthy Ageing Laurie Buys, said that one of its goals is

reshaping the narrative around ageing. “A stereotypical way of looking at ageing is that ageing is a ‘deficit’ – that when you grow older, you ‘decline’, physically and cognitively. And that’s a very traditional and old-world way of looking at ageing. In fact, older people now are healthier, more educated and more involved than they ever have been in the community. [Babies born now] are likely to have a hundred-year life, so we need to really challenge that view that you’re old at 65.”

[Read more](#)

From the Formation Coordinator

### **Middle Leaders' Projects from the 2024 Cohort**

Six Middle Leaders who completed the Program in 2024 have volunteered to provide a snapshot of their projects for readers of *Connections*. This month, we are delighted to share a snapshot of **Rachel Gould** and **Lucy Dilger's** project.



### **Walking in Catherine's Footsteps: Leading with Mercy in the Final Year**

We were blessed to be invited to participate in the 2024 Middle Leaders' Program. It was such a rich and rewarding experience and the connections we made with others within the Mercy family were very special. We were both renewed with a strong sense of purpose within our work and recognise the importance of continuing Catherine McAuley's work – keeping her mission first and foremost in our minds when working with the young people in our context.

We work at St Aloysius College (SAC), an all-girls Mercy school in Adelaide's central business district. We have students from an array of diverse backgrounds and experiences, but the spirit of Mercy is the link that connects us all.

In our roles as pastoral leaders at SAC, we work closely with the senior students, and our project was focused on re-developing the Year 12 Orientation Day at the start of the academic year, to give a clear emphasis on the work of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy.

By elevating Catherine's story as part of the Orientation, it shifts the focus of the day and sets the tone for the Year 12 students' year ahead. With Mercy at the centre, it takes the focus away from the pressures of academic achievement and allows for a greater sense of purpose. The role of service, compassion and gratitude is given more emphasis, encouraging students to consider what it looks like to be a woman of Mercy heading into the world.

The launch of 'Walking in Catherine's footsteps...', as it was titled, occurred in February this year and was

well-received by the students, establishing a clear vision for what can sometimes be a stressful year ahead.

For more information on this project, please contact [Lucy Dilger](#) or [Rachel Gould](#).

#### **Accreditation of the 2025 Middle Leaders' Program**

Accreditation for participation in the 2025 Program has been approved by Melbourne Archdiocesan Catholic Schools (MACS) for educators in Catholic schools in the four Victorian dioceses and by Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA). We are awaiting approval from Catholic Education South Australia (CESA). Please contact MACS, CEWA or CESA directly for further details about the application processes.

**Please share this Mercy Ministry Companions Newsletter with your colleagues and [opt-in for further communications](#).**

*In the spirit of reconciliation, Mercy Ministry Companions acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the country where we live and work today.*

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