



OUR LADY OF MERCY COLLEGE PARRAMATTA

MEDIA RELEASE

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New Ailsa Mackinnon Community Centre officially opened at OLMC Parramatta

On Friday February 17, the new **Ailsa Mackinnon Community Centre** at Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta was officially opened by Dr Anne Bunde – Birouste and blessed by the Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFMConv DD, Bishop of Parramatta. The special afternoon event was attended by Sister Ailsa Mackinnon, the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, members of the College Board, and Alumnae, College staff, students and parents, as well as a host of special guests including Dr Geoff Lee MP.

Named after Sister Ailsa Mackinnon, who was Principal of the College from 1990 to 2004, the new community centre is located at the corner of O'Connell Street and Victoria Road; it features an indoor multi-purpose sports and gathering place (seating approximately 1200 people) as well as four teaching and learning spaces, a roof top outdoor sport area and a gymnasium.

Sister Ailsa Mackinnon says she is honoured to have a building named after her and is so pleased that it is a community centre dedicated to physical education; "To call it a community centre speaks volumes about the importance of community to OLMC. It's also a beautifully constructed building that is light and airy with plenty of space for physical activities. Students are encouraged to reach their potential at OLMC and it is important to have facilities such as this building to help enable this. I feel that naming buildings after Sisters of Mercy helps to keep the history of the College alive and reminds the community of the importance of living the Mercy Values."

Internationally respected for her expertise in social change, Dr Anne Bunde-Birouste is the driving force behind *Football United* – a program that uses the magic of the 'World Game', together with other strategies, to inspire young people, to foster their educational engagement and to promote social justice and cross-cultural harmony. The Convener of Health Promotion at the UNSW School of Public Health and Community Medicine, Anne is passionate about demonstrating how sport can help young people build self-esteem and forge strong community bonds.

Principal Stephen Walsh said the community was very excited about the opportunities the brand new community centre will bring; "The magnificent new sports facilities and contemporary learning spaces will perfectly complement the mix of learning areas already in use at the College. It will be especially wonderful to have a space large enough to fit the whole school and guests; it will further enhance our very strong sense of community."

The Ailsa Mackinnon Community Centre is the final element of an ambitious Master Plan which began in 2008 and saw the construction of the Janet Woods Building (featuring multiple, fully-equipped Science labs, a new library, state of the art Food Technology spaces and a botany room), a new dedicated Student Centre, a Dance Studio and the purpose-built Christina Creede Music Centre. Stanton Dahl Architects were the architects for the Ailsa Mackinnon Community Centre project while Reitsma Constructions Pty Limited were the builders.

Established in 1889 by the Sisters of Mercy, OLMC Parramatta is a leading independent Catholic girls' school that provides contemporary learning and academic excellence in the rich Mercy tradition.

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