

Media Release

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Jesuit Communications Australia launches new *Australian Catholics* online Education Hub and Teachers' Networking Forum

Jesuit Communications Australia has today launched the *Australian Catholics* Education Hub and Teachers' Forum to serve the Catholic education sector in this its 200th year – and into the future.

The Education Hub, which at launch serves 400 subscriber school communities around Australia, connects students, parents, teachers and staff with a range of resources including an archive of more than a thousand articles, reflections, quizzes, classroom activities, prayer and liturgy resources. The Education Hub also features , directories of Catholic retreat providers and speakers as well as a downloadable calendar of feast days and days of observance that can be synched to a smartphone or electronic calendar.

The *Australian Catholics* Teachers' Forum, creates a dedicated space where, for the first time, religious education teachers, formators and co-ordinators, as well as directors of faith and mission within the Catholic Education sector around Australia can share ideas and resources within and between their existing networks. It complements online, existing face to face networking opportunities through Religious Education Co-ordinator and other networks, and for the first time extends that networking to staff at 400 schools right around the country.

The Hub and Forum, sit within the AC+ subscriber section of a new *Australian Catholics* magazine website. All AC+ subscribers have access to the Education Hub and all staff from subscriber schools have access to the Teachers' Forum using their usual login details.

"We have over the past two years, been in ongoing discussion with Catholic Education Offices, teachers and formators around the country about their needs, challenges and priorities" said Jesuit Communications Australia CEO Monika Lancucki.

"The last 12 months in particular have shown a need for those responsible for the education and faith formation of young people to have ready access to resources

and a dedicated place to exchange ideas and suggestions about how to engage young people in their exploration of faith and spirituality.

“This new platform responds to that need and, for the first time opens up existing networks to regular intra and inter-diocesan online exchange of ideas and collaboration. Our articles integrate with the various Religious Education curricula around the country and are signed off by a diocesan censor, independent of our ministry, prior to publication, giving comfort to teachers, parents and students that they are safe to use for religious education purposes.”

As well as the Teachers’ Forum, features of the new Education Hub include:

- a comprehensive archive of more than 10 years of *Australian Catholics* content approved by a diocesan censor, searchable by curriculum topic, recommended age of audience, theme, resource type and keyword, and available for use by teachers students and parents in school communities
- a retreats and formation directory
- a speakers’ directory.

A directory of Catholic charities and a jobs board are also planned.

“We are grateful for the opportunity to have accompanied the sector through the challenges of 2020 and are thrilled to be able to offer an enhanced and improved user interface with new features to mark this year’s 200th anniversary of Catholic education in Australia” said *Australian Catholics* Editor Michael McVeigh.

“We thank our long-standing subscribers for their support and welcome those who are new to our subscriber community. The response we received to our outreach last year has enabled us to bring you this new website, a place to engage with the best current thinking, and to network and learn from leading educators around the country. A platform to accompany the Catholic education sector into the future.

“We invite those who are not yet a part of our subscriber community to arrange free trial access to the new platform and invite retreat providers, speakers and Catholic charities right around the country to join our online community and list on the site.”

A webinar to take subscribers and potential subscribers on a tour of the new Education Hub and Teachers’ Forum is scheduled for 4pm Tuesday 8 June. Details of how to access the webinar are available on request:

editor@australiancatholics.com.au.

- Ends -

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About Jesuit Communications Australia

Established in 2005 Jesuit Communications is the Media and Communications Ministry of the Australian Jesuits. Catering not only to Australia's 5.2 million-strong Catholic community, but to anyone with an interest in matters of faith and social and environmental justice and a passion to create a better tomorrow, Jesuit Communications Australia publishes *Australian Catholics*, *Madonna* and *Eureka Street* magazines.

About *Australian Catholics*

With a print circulation of more than 103,000 copies *Australian Catholics* is the largest circulation Catholic print magazine in Australia. It inspires Catholic school and parish communities around the country with thought-provoking and inspirational articles and resources advancing matters of faith and social and environmental justice. At least 25% of each edition is peer-generated content written by students.

AC+ is the corresponding digital subscription to a fully searchable digital database of *Australian Catholics* articles from the past 10 years together with liturgy resources, classroom exercises, quizzes and other useful faith-focused material. It now includes access to the Education Hub and, for staff of subscriber schools, to the Teachers' Forum.

Enquiries about access to AC+ can be made to: subs@australiancatholics.com.au

To list as a retreat and formation provider on the site go to:
<https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/retreatentryform>

To list in the speakers directory go to:
<https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/speakerentryform>

To list your charity in the charities directory go to:
<https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/charityentryform>