



Media Release

Embargoed until Friday May 17 2024

Catholic Education Awards shine light on the excellent calibre of educators in SA

Twelve outstanding South Australian educators, including a botanist with a passion for orchids, a wizard mathematician, and a champion of the Arts in regional SA were recognised at the annual Catholic Education Awards ceremony on Thursday May 16. In addition, the teams of two innovative school programs and a dedicated school volunteer were presented with awards for their contributions to Catholic education.

The recipients of the awards share many of the same traits – going above and beyond in their roles, showing commitment to Catholic identity and the teachings of the Catholic Church and being beacons for equity and equality.

Now in its third year the Awards – which are celebrated as part of Catholic Education Week (May 13 – 19 2024) - recognise outstanding achievements and contributions by staff and volunteers across South Australia's 101 Catholic schools.

Some of those honoured in the awards include:

- **Paul Belton**, St Paul's College, Gilles Plains recognised for his Leadership Excellence through a career spanning 43 years.
- **Paul Beltrame**, from Kildare College, Holden Hill recipient of the Laudato Si' Award who demonstrates an exceptional commitment to environmental conservation and has created an Orchid house within the school grounds.
- **Winnie Fitzgerald**, a primary school teacher from Samaritan College, Whyalla who has, for 43 years, passionately promoted the Arts in her region to wide recognition.
- **Chloe Jones**, an Early Years Educator at Nazareth Catholic College, Findon who has worked with young children to petition Parliament on recycling.

- **Alexandra Gavrilidis**, Humanities and Social Sciences Leader at St Mary's College, Adelaide, who has engaged students with the Headstone Project which locates World War 1 veterans buried in unmarked graves and prescribes military headstones on their graves.
- **Kayla Holding**, a dedicated volunteer at St Joseph's School, Payneham who has been instrumental in creating an extracurricular program to educate and entertain students after school.
- **Joseph Burford**, Head of Mathematics at Blackfriars Priory School, Prospect who began his career in 2022 and has already made significant changes to the way students interact with mathematics.
- **Louise Stavrou**, an Education Support Officer, from St Joseph's School, Barmera who has served the community in her role as School Chaplain and has initiated the school Breakfast Club and many charitable fundraisers.

A new category was introduced in 2024 to recognise the outstanding work of the Religious Educators within Catholic schools.

Two recipients received this inaugural award: **Mirella Romeo**, from Nazareth Catholic College and **Lucina Loro Parham** from St Mary's College.

Two innovative school programs were also recognised:

- The 'Limitless Possibilities' Program developed by a team within Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) to inspire students to become social entrepreneurs.
- The 'Being Church Together' Program from St John the Baptist School and Parish in Plympton created to strengthen the bond between the school and parish.

The nominees were across eleven award categories including:

- Religious Education Teacher
- Early Career Teacher (less than five years)
- Experienced Teacher (more than six years)
- Education Support
- Volunteer Supporter
- Innovative Program
- Leadership Excellence
- Laudato Si

The award ceremony was held at Hilton Adelaide on May 16, 2024, attended by The Honourable Blair Boyer MP, Minister for Education, Training and Skills; Dr Neil McGoran, Executive Director for Catholic Education SA; and John Neate, Chair of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS), following a Mass at St Francis Xavier's Cathedral, Wakefield Street led by Archbishop Patrick O'Regan.

Jess Adamson, a well-known face on South Australian television screens, was Host for the evening and the event was proudly sponsored by NGS Super, Switch Education, The Southern Cross, Secondary Schools Deputy Principals & Senior Leaders Association (DEPSLA), SA Catholic Primary Principals Association (SACPPA) and Association of Principals of Catholic Secondary Schools (APCSS).

Commenting on the Awards, Dr Neil McGoran, Executive Director, CESA said:

“Across eleven categories the standard of entries this year was exceedingly high; a testament to the outstanding educators we are privileged to have in South Australia. The impact that these educators and volunteers have on their school communities is huge. They are going above and beyond in the work that they do, and it is important that we recognise and celebrate their achievements. They are instilling so many important values in our students.

“Knowing that these students will graduate, as the best versions of themselves, thanks to the support of these dedicated educators, gives up hope for a bright future. Catholic Education South Australia prides itself in Raising Hearts and Minds and these educators and volunteers embody this in the work that they do.”

A full list of Awardees follows – detailed profiles of the awardees, interviews and photographs are available on request.

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15 Award Recipients:

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Religious Education Teacher	MIRELLA ROMEO
	Nazareth Catholic College, Flinders Park / Kidman Park
Religious Education Teacher	LUCINA LORO PARHAM
	St Mary's College, Adelaide CBD
Early Career Teacher (Primary)	CHLOE JONES
	Nazareth Early Childhood Centre (Nazareth Catholic College), Findon
Early Career Teacher (Secondary)	JOSEPH BURFORD
	Blackfriars Priory School, Prospect
Early Career Teacher (Secondary)	ALEXANDRA GAVRILIDIS
	St Mary's College, Adelaide CBD
Experienced Teacher (Primary)	LAURA DONNELLAN
	St Thomas School and Preschool, Goodwood
Experienced Teacher (Primary)	WINNIE FITZGERALD
	Samaritan College, Whyalla
Experienced Teacher (Secondary)	ROSSLYN MATTNER
	St Francis de Sales College, Mount Barker
Volunteer	KAYLA HOLDING
	Parent Volunteer (P&F Committee member and second-hand uniform shop coordinator), St Joseph's School, Payneham
Education Support	ROB WELSH
	Xavier College, Two Wells / Evanston / Gawler Belt
Education Support	LOUISE STAVROU
	St Joseph's School, Baramba
Innovative Program	LIMITLESS POSSIBILITIES PROGRAM
	Catholic Education Office, Adelaide
Innovative Program	ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND PARISH
	St John the Baptist Catholic School, Plympton

Laudato Si

PAUL BELTRAME

Kildare College, Holden Hill

Leadership Excellence

PAUL BELTON

St Paul's College, Gilles Plain