Media Release

15 September 2021

MELBOURNE ARCHDIOCESE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Melbourne Catholic schools and Monash University team up to further unlock the power of problem-solving approaches to learning

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) and Monash University will collaborate on a project – #theSTEMproblem – aimed at building teacher capacity to create challenging, authentic and exciting STEM learning opportunities for their students.

The project will draw together key principles for a successful problem-based learning (PBL) model, and deliver a coherent and sustainable pedagogical framework to inform school-based STEM education.

'This is an extremely exciting project for Catholic education', MACS Acting Executive Director, Dr Paul Sharkey said.

'Our schools and teachers are already highly skilled and invested in problem-solving approaches to learning. However, by combining the expertise of Monash University with that of our teachers, this project will further build capability in this critical area of teaching practice.'

Dr Sharkey said the project will explore and discover optimal classroom environments that develop learners' capabilities to seek and respond to challenges, think critically and creatively, and work collaboratively – all central to future personal and professional success, and effective citizenship in the modern world.

'By explicitly focusing on further enhancing the quality of STEM learning and teaching across our system, this project aligns with our strategic intent to support the full flourishing of all learners', he said.

'Importantly, this work also supports our response to Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, which challenges future generations to live sustainably.'

Dr Sharkey said he is delighted that teachers from five Catholic primary schools and seven secondary colleges have opted to participate in the project.

'The teachers will work collaboratively with Monash academics to develop and share expertise as they co-construct a shared understanding of best practice teaching and learning approaches.

'The project will produce evidence-informed exemplars of powerful school-based PBL practice in STEM education (Years 5–10), which will also help develop a common teacher professional language and shared understanding', he said.

Funded by the Australian Government through the Australian Research Council (ARC), the collaborative phase of the project will commence with an online briefing session for participating teachers today (Wednesday 15 September).

Queensland counterparts Brisbane Catholic Education and The University of Queensland (UQ) will also participate in the project.

More than 20% of all students are educated in one of 333 Catholic primary and secondary schools across the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd ABN 18 643 442 371 ACN 643 442 371
James Goold House, 228 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne VIC 3002 Correspondence: PO Box 3, East Melbourne VIC 8002
T: +61 3 9267 0228 E: execdirector@macs.vic.edu.au **www.macs.vic.edu.au**

Participating Melbourne Catholic schools

Primary:

Clairvaux Catholic School, Belmont

St Fidelis' School, Moreland

St Jude the Apostle School, Scoresby

St Paul the Apostle, Doreen

St Peter's School, Epping

Secondary:

Avila College, Mount Waverley

Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, Braybrook

Kolbe Catholic College, Greenvale Lakes

St Columba's College, Essendon

St Monica's College, Epping

Thomas Carr College, Tarneit

St Peter's College, Cranbourne (Diocese of Sale)

Media contact: Gerard Delaney on 0413 274 176 or gdelaney@macs.vic.edu.au