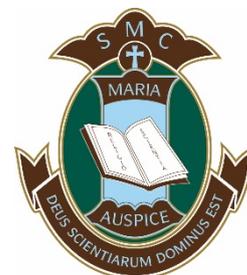


MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 15 March 2018



ST MARY'S
COLLEGE

St Mary's College a 'sea of green' to celebrate Irish heritage

St Mary's College will be bathed in a sea of green on Saturday 17 March 2018 (12.00-3.00pm) as the school celebrates 150 years of its Irish beginnings with a community 'fun day'.

Past and present students, teachers and parents are set to take part in the festivities, which will centre on a program of Irish music and dancing, colonial dress-ups and old-fashioned games that hark back to the school's 19th century heritage.

Historic tours of the College and green food and beverages will also be on offer, with other features of the day to include a fancy dress parade showcasing St Mary's College uniforms through the ages and the cutting of a giant birthday cake.

Officially opening its doors on February 3, 1868, St Mary's College – or Mount St Mary's as it was then known – has a range of events and activities planned to commemorate its 150th anniversary.

The first Presentation school in Australia, St Mary's College was founded by Irish Presentation Sisters led by Mother Francis Xavier Murphy, sister of Tasmania's then-Archbishop Daniel Murphy, in response to a need for Catholic education.

Celebrations commenced in February 2018 with a staff reunion attended by current and former staff members of the College, and the blessing of a commemorative sculpture and leadlight window created in the image of Nano Nagle, the foundational leader of the Presentation Sisters.

The highlight of the milestone year is a College Mass on Saturday 12 May 2018, followed by an Anniversary Gala Dinner to be held that evening at the Hotel Grand Chancellor.

St Mary's College Principal, Helen Spencer said it was a special time for the school, which prided itself on the Presentation pillar of 'hospitality'.

"Our 150th anniversary is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the school's past, as we continue to build powerful futures for young women," she said.

There have been a number of changes to the College over the past century and a half, with recent additions being a new purpose-built early learning centre for the school's Kindergarten and Prep students and a fully refurbished performing arts facility.

"With 150 years of history behind us, it is also timely to honour the many people who have helped form the rich and colourful landscape of St Mary's College," Ms Spencer said.

"St Mary's College is very fortunate to have the support of generations of parents, friends and community members, each of whom have made a profound impact to the foundation of the school that we know today."

As part of the school's 150th anniversary celebrations, St Mary's College Archivist, Margaret Rootes has been writing a book that will highlight the school's rich history from the viewpoint of individuals.

The book, which will be published later this year, will feature images and stories about 150 people who have made significant contributions to the College community during its years of operation.

“Those individuals are made up of students who went on to make their mark in the world, outstanding teachers at the school and amazing volunteers who gave so freely to St Mary’s College,” Mrs Rootes said.

A student of St Mary’s College before returning later to teach, Mrs Rootes said she has ‘always been grateful’ for the sacrifices her parents made to send her and her sister to St Mary’s College.

“In retrospect, I think we received a very sound education, especially in languages, literature and history. Implicit in everything was the fact that women were strong and that the world was our oyster,” she said.

“The way the sisters ran a large school and made big decisions showed us what women could do. We were encouraged to find our strengths and to try to use our advantages to enhance the lives of others.”

The school’s sesquicentenary will culminate with a Grand Bazaar (school fair) on October 21, 2018.

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