

# 2024 Annual Report

Mercy Partners  
Established as an Ecclesial  
Public Juridic Person  
17 November 2008



# Contents

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## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we walk, live and work. We recognise their living culture and their unique role in the life of the areas in which Mercy Partners ministries are located. We pay tribute to all of those who have nurtured this country over many thousands of years, deriving spiritual and physical needs from the seas, forests, soil, rivers, lakes and streams. We join with our First Nations people in honouring this land as sacred.



# Mercy Partners Mission and Values

## Our Mission

To contribute to the emergence of a world where the healing, liberating and life-giving mercy of God is experienced.

## The Expression of Our Mission

- 1 Conduct ministries in the name of the Catholic Church, that:
  - Offer quality services in Aged Care, Community Services and Disability Services, Education, Health and Social Enterprise.
  - Promote the wellbeing of people, encouraging them to realise their God-given potential.
  - Respect and reverence the interdependence of all creation.
- 2 Respond compassionately and creatively to existing and emerging needs within communities.
- 3 Advocate in the public forum on behalf of the poor and disadvantaged.
  - in particular, those associated with our ministries, so that mercy values find expression in policy and practice.
- 4 Provide a pathway in the Catholic Church for canonical leadership of ministries by laypeople.

## Our Core Values



### Compassion

Those who show compassion, demonstrate compassion for self and others. By showing compassion they acknowledge God's presence in all people and honour the dignity of all of God's creation.



### Justice

Those who show justice, live and promote right relationships with God, self, neighbour and creation. By upholding human rights they accept their responsibilities to one another, and strive to provide fair access to the world's resources for all people.



### Respect

Those who show respect, honour the integrity and diversity of creation. By respecting the unique dignity of every human person, they recognise and see in all people and in the created world the image and likeness of God.



### Hope

Those who show hope, live the resurrection story by trusting in the transforming power of God. By cultivating authenticity, a resilient spirit and a focus on gratitude and reflection, they persevere through difficulties, act with integrity, and serve with joy.



## Steward/Member Representatives



**Sr Margaret Endicott rsm**  
**Steward/Member Representative**  
**Chair**

Representative of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea



**Fr Paul Cahill O.Carm**  
Representative of the Carmelite Province of Our Lady Help of Christians, Australia and Timor-Leste (commenced on 18 April 2024)



**Sr Loreto Conroy rsm**  
Representative of the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney



**Sr Karon Donnellon rsm**  
Representative of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea (commenced on 1 January 2024)



**Sr Mary Franzmann pbvm**  
Representative of the Queensland Presentation Sisters



**Sr Peta Goldberg rsm**  
Representative of the Sisters of Mercy Brisbane (commenced on 1 January 2024)



**Sr Margaret Jones rsm**  
Representative of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta



**Mr Micheal O'Sullivan**  
Representative of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea



**Sr Catherine White mfc**  
Representative of the Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

# A message from the Steward/Member Representatives

As required by the Canonical Statutes and the Constitution of Mercy Partners, the Steward/Member Representatives of Mercy Partners resolved to approve the Annual Report to Rome.

**The Steward/Member Representatives confirm that the Board of Mercy Partners continues to successfully undertake its objectives to:**

- Continue to expand the Aged Care, Community and Disability Services, Education, Health and Social Enterprise ministries entrusted to it within the ministries of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Ensure through its governance policies and practices that each of the works for which it is responsible operates in conformity with the teachings, discipline and laws of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Continue to build on the charisms and sound traditions of the Steward/Member Representatives within the Roman Catholic Church.

**Sr Margaret Endicott rsm**

Chair - Mercy Partners Steward/Member Representatives

On behalf of the Steward/Member Representatives of Mercy Partners

24 April 2025

# A message from Mercy Partners

2024 was a year to review and reflect. It was important to take time out to ensure that we are set up for the future to support the continuation of God's mission to serve all in a spirit of compassion, justice, respect and hope.

Mercy Partners continues to evolve, grow and adapt to the changing needs of our ministries. To facilitate this, Mercy Partners and the Steward/Member Representatives met regularly throughout 2024 to build upon their collaborative and effective relationship. Regular meetings with the Steward/Member Representatives ensured that they were fully informed of all governance matters and that the operations of Mercy Partners were undertaken in accordance with the mission and teachings of the Catholic Church and aspirations of the founding Charisms.

Mercy Partners throughout the year made time to review and reflect on their ability to undertake responsible growth and their capacity to sponsor ministries in the future. This was evident in the Board's completion of a Board review to evaluate their governance performance, effectiveness and commitment to continuous improvement in fulfilling their canonical and civil responsibilities.

Mercy Partners understands that it is important to monitor and reassess its alignment of capacity and resources to sponsor ministries. To support this, Mercy Partners completed regular reviews to ensure it has both capacity and the required resources to support its ministries.

To further support this, a survey of Mercy Partners' ministries was undertaken to understand the ministries' satisfaction with the existing level of formation support and published resources available to the ministries. The survey results are being used in the development of a future-focused model of formation that will take Mercy Partners into the future.

Mercy Partners understands and values the importance of providing formation leadership capacity for mission and Catholic identity and has provided formation to Ministry Board Directors and Executive Leaders, in alignment with mission and responsibilities outlined in the Canonical Statutes and Constitution of Mercy Partners.

In 2024, the primary focus of formation initiatives was Personal Spirituality. To support this, Mercy Partners facilitated a range of formation initiatives throughout the year to support our ministries as part of their formation journey.

Mercy Partners values the established relationships it has with the Bishops of the Dioceses in which it operates. Throughout 2024 Mercy Partners ensured that the Bishops were invited to our events, received our regular newsletters and were kept up to date with the work undertaken by Mercy Partners. Mercy Partners participated, at the invitation of the Archbishop of Brisbane, in the Implementation Phase of the Plenary Council, SYNOD24. Mercy Partners also participated in numerous Catholic communities in order to strengthen advocacy and the Catholic voice.

To ensure Mercy Partners is able to continue supporting the continuation of God's mission, it recognises the importance of ongoing financial sustainability. Through strong continual stewardship, Mercy Partners continues to be able to sponsor its existing ministries and also welcome new ministries into the future.

Last but not least, Mercy Partners recognises the hard work, commitment and dedication that takes place on a day-to-day basis within our ministries. Recognition and praise must be given to the people in our ministries as they continue to fulfill the Gospel mission, reaching out with compassion, justice, respect, and hope to their communities in their time of need.

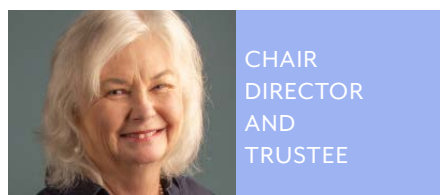
**Dr Ricki Jeffery**  
**Chair**

Board of Mercy Partners

# Board of Mercy Partners

The Board of Mercy Partners are specialists in their respective fields and are highly regarded by the Church. Nominated to the Board by either the Stewards or the Board themselves, the names and backgrounds of our Board Directors in office during 2024 are as follows.

## The Board



### Dr Ricki Jeffery

Mercy Partners Chair (appointed August 2018, elected Deputy Chair in December 2017, appointed as a Board Director July 2014) and Trustee of the Nudgee Trust  
Prof D (Trans Disc Studies)

Dr Ricki Jeffery is former Diocesan Director of Centacare, Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton and has held director positions on the boards of Family Relationships Services Australia, Central Queensland Medicare Local, and Capricorn Helicopter Rescue Service. She previously held the position of Chair of the Board of Directors of St Ursula's College Ltd. She currently sits on the Community Services Industry Reform Council and is the Chair on the Community Services Industry Alliance Board.

Dr Jeffery brings to the Board a working knowledge of education, primary health and community services delivery in regional areas, with particular expertise in building capacity to meet challenges in a conscious and intentional way for ministries operating in regional Australia.



### Ms Catherine Bartolo AM

Board Director (appointed in January 2023) and Trustee of the Nudgee Trust  
GAICD, MSocAdmin, BSocSc, DipTeach (Primary)

Ms Catherine Bartolo AM has worked in community services and education for more than 30 years. Ms Bartolo was the previous CEO of YFS Ltd, a community service organisation based in Logan (Brisbane). Catherine led the organisation to support vulnerable and disadvantaged people to build their independence and participation. Catherine's work has included addressing poverty, homelessness, domestic and family violence, child welfare, youth participation, unemployment and financial capacity.

In 2022 Ms Bartolo was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to youth, to social welfare, and to the community of Logan.

Ms Bartolo has held Board positions with Queensland Council of Social Service, Edmund Rice Flexi School Advisory Board and Logan Together as well as collaborative community leadership teams including the Logan City of Choice.



### Mrs Cheryl Caughley

Mercy Partners Board Director (appointed in October 2022) and Trustee of the Nudgee Trust

Mrs Cheryl Caughley, former Manager of the Archdiocesan Development Fund, completed almost 30 years as an employee of the Archdiocese of Brisbane in 2022. During her career she was involved in partnering with customers within the Archdiocese of Brisbane, as well a number of interstate and national Catholic entities to support their financial goal to sustain their mission. She was primarily working with Catholic service providers in the areas of Education, Health and Aged Care, Social, Affordable Housing and Social Welfare.

In her career she has held a Board Director role with EREA St James' College and Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee for over 10 years. She has also served on various Archdiocesan committees and Advisory councils and national committees from time to time. More recently, in 2019, she was appointed as a Director of the Board of Brigidine College Ltd Indooroopilly and serves on their sub-Committees of Finance and Risk, Property and Building and Strategic Planning.

Mrs Caughley is a generalist and brings to the Mercy Partners Board experience working with the existing and emerging PJPs across various industry sectors within the Catholic Church in Australia.



## The Board



**TREASURER  
DIRECTOR  
AND  
TRUSTEE**

### Mr Leslie Jones

Mercy Partners Board Director and Treasurer (appointed in November 2013), Chair of the Finance, Audit, Risk and Insurance Committee, and Trustee of the Nudgee Trust BCOM and ADMIN VICTORIA University of Wellington NZ, CA, MAICD

Mr Les Jones served as a Grant Thornton Audit Partner from January 1985 to December 2009 where he had wide involvement with not-for-profit organisations. During his time at Grant Thornton, Mr Jones was head of Assurance Services and was the Office Managing Partner for five years. Internationally, Mr Jones was an active member of the international firm's risk management, client acceptance and audit technology groups. Mr Jones has been a director of various not-for-profit organisations. He is currently a director of Brisbane Housing Company Ltd and Chair of Mercy Partners Finance, Audit, Risk and Investment Committee. As a Grant Thornton Audit Partner, Mr Jones has contributed to the Professional Education Program for the Australian Institute of Chartered Accountants as both a group leader and a member of the Institute's Education Committee.



**DEPUTY  
CHAIR  
DIRECTOR  
AND TRUSTEE**

### Mr Kieran McCarthy

Mercy Partners Board Director (appointed September 2013), Deputy Chair (appointed August 2018) and Trustee of the Nudgee Trust BA(HONS) LLB (UQ) ACC SPEC (FAMILY LAW)

Mr Kieran McCarthy is a nationally recognised Accredited Specialist in Family Law with over 25 years' experience and brings to the Board strong networks throughout the State of Queensland and interstate. He is a Director of Naughton McCarthy Family Lawyers and Mercy Partners representative on the Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (AMPJP). Mr McCarthy also sits on the Board of Brigidine College, Indooroopilly.



**DIRECTOR  
AND  
TRUSTEE**

### Mrs Catherine Parker

Mercy Partners Board Director (appointed in September 2020) and Trustee of the Nudgee Trust LB (QUT), GRADCERTAPP (CORPORATEGOV), GIA, GAICD, LLM (QUT), MBA (UNISA), GRADCERT PSYCHRIK (ACU)

Mercy Partners Stewards appointed Mrs Parker to Mercy Partners Board in September 2020. Mrs Parker is a lawyer, and experienced risk management and governance executive. Her desire to make a tangible difference has seen her engage with a number of not-for-profit enterprises including Lourdes Hill College, where she served as a Director and Chair of the Governance and Risk Committee.

Mrs Parker works with YMCA and has been active in their Youth Parliament program.

The Board



Professor Lee Anne Perry AM

Board Director (appointed in March 2023) and Trustee of the Nudgee Trust  
DUniv, EdD, MEd, BEd (Hons), Dip Christian Lship, GAICD, JP (Qual)

Professor Lee Anne Perry AM is the inaugural Professor of Practice (Educational Leadership and Partnerships) at Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Prior to commencing in this role in February 2023, Professor Perry was the Executive Director (CEO) of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC).

Professor Perry has had a longstanding involvement in school education as a teacher, school and system leader including over twenty-five years as a principal. During that time, Lee Anne held teaching and leadership roles at Mercy, Franciscan and Presentation schools.

Professor Perry has been a member of many state and national associations and committees concerned with school and higher education. She is currently a Director of the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and an Honorary Professor of the Australian Catholic University.

Professor Perry has been actively involved in many educational reviews including as a panellist for the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools led by David Gonski AC, a member of the STEM Partnership Forum chaired by the Chief Scientist, Professor Alan Finkel AO, and a member of the Queensland Premier's Anti-Cyberbullying Taskforce.

Professor Perry is a passionate advocate for education from the early years to higher education, including vocational education and is particularly committed to supporting collaboration, partnerships and connections within and between education sectors and systems.



Mr Steven Rubic

Board Director (appointed in March 2023) and Trustee of the Nudgee Trust  
BHA, MBA, FAICD, FCHSM

Mr Steven Rubic is a health care executive veteran and has held a number of CEO roles including the Healthscope hospital group, I-MED Radiology Network, St Vincent's and Mater Health Sydney and St Vincent's Private Hospital.

Mr Rubic is currently a Board Director at Healthscope and was the Chair of Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College for nine years. He is a past Board Director of the Garvan Institute of Medical Research, the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, the Macquarie University Council, the Plunkett Centre for Ethics and the NSW Private Hospitals Association. Mr Rubic has worked closely with Congregations, boards, industry bodies and private equity firms, has completed an MBA and is a Fellow of the AICD and Fellow of ACHSM. Mr Rubic brings to the Board a working knowledge of the NSW education system, Australian health care system and various government policy and approaches to these important sectors.

Mercy Partners Board Meetings

The number of meetings of the Board of Mercy Partners held during the year and the number attended by each Board Director is displayed in the table below.

Board Director	Attended	Eligible to Attend
Ms Catherine Bartolo	10	10
Ms Patricia Bergin	7	7
Mrs Cheryl Caughtley	9	10
Dr Ricki Jeffery (Chair)	10	10
Mr Leslie Jones (Treasurer)	9	10
Mr Kieran McCarthy (Deputy Chair)	8	10
Mrs Catherine Parker	9	10
Prof Lee Anne Perry	9	10
Mr Steven Rubic	9	10



Ms Patricia Bergin

Board Director and Trustee of the Nudgee Trust (appointed in April 2024)  
BA, Dip Ed, and Grad Dip in Curriculum Studies

Ms Patricia Bergin has qualifications in Behavioural Sciences, Education, Leadership and Curriculum Studies. She taught for many years in Catholic Colleges in Victoria and held senior leadership positions across a range of secondary schools. In 1991, the Catholic Education Office Melbourne employed Patricia as an Education Consultant to work in the areas of leadership and policy development.

In 1999, Patricia established her own management consulting business, Energyforce, to work with Catholic Secondary Schools, Religious Institutes and not-for-profit organisations. She has a particular interest in governance, leadership formation, executive recruitment and organisational renewal and development. Patricia has held the position of member, chair, and director of several Catholic primary and secondary school advisory and incorporated boards and was a director on Mary Aikenhead Education Ltd. Patricia is currently a representative of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart for the Catholic Religious Institute and Ministerial Public Juridic Person Victorian Schools Ltd; is a director on Catholic Capital Grants Victoria Ltd. and Chair of Good Samaritan Inn Board, a specialist service providing crisis, short-term and transitional accommodation and support for women, children and young people who are experiencing family violence or homelessness.



## Executive



CHIEF  
EXECUTIVE  
OFFICER

### Mr John Leahy

Chief Executive Officer  
DipComm (UK), DipBMan (UK)

Mr John Leahy was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Mercy Partners in October 2019. Mr Leahy was previously engaged as Project Manager, One Mater and played an integral part in the development of the One Mater Project plan. Prior to this Mr Leahy had completed some eighteen years working in the Catholic Health and Aged Care sectors in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. His roles have included Director Finance and Administration, Regional Chief Executive Officer Queensland and Chief Executive Officer Aged Care Services. Preceding this, he was with Mayne Health Group in a financial management role.

Mr Leahy has completed studies in finance and commerce in the United Kingdom and has undertaken additional studies in business management and organisational behaviour. He is an Associate Member Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA), and a Member of Brisbane Catholic Education Council.



DIRECTOR OF  
FORMATION

### Dr Caroline Thompson

Director of Formation  
EdD (ACU), MEd, BA, Grad Dip Teach

Dr Caroline Thompson was appointed Director of Formation for Mercy Partners in February 2015. Dr Thompson has worked extensively in secondary education and adult faith formation in Queensland and New South Wales, most recently for the Diocese of Lismore where she served as Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Co-ordinator, Head of Curriculum and Leader of Pedagogy. She completed her doctoral studies in faith leadership in 2011 and has lectured widely in adult faith formation and leadership programs.

As Director of Formation, Dr Thompson occupies an executive position created to provide leadership and strategic direction for formation opportunities offered by Mercy Partners. She co-ordinates and facilitates delivery of Mercy Partners formation for board members, executive, senior staff and others interested in being part of the mission of Mercy Partners.

Dr Thompson is a member of GAICD, the Catholic Health Australia Mission Committee, the National Catholic Education Committee Mission Committee, the Xavier Theological Foundation Reference Group, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy Mission Committee and is a leader of the Mission Leaders Community of Practice and the Mercy Mission Formation Network.



# Strategic and Operational Priorities

## Mercy Partners' five Strategic Priorities for 2023-2025 are:

1. Responsible growth and capacity to sponsor ministries
2. Alignment of capacity and resources to sponsor ministries
3. Formation leadership capacity for mission and Catholic identity
4. Identity and relationships with the wider Church
5. Ongoing financial sustainability.

These Strategic Priorities inform Mercy Partners' decision making processes and activities throughout the year.

Mercy Partners is charged with the responsibility to ensure, through its governance, policies and procedures, that each of the ministries of Mercy Partners acts in conformity with the teachings, discipline, and law of the Roman Catholic Church.

Mercy Partners promotes the idea that a communion of charisms is to inspire people and embrace their roles within the Church. It is the responsibility of Mercy Partners to ensure that all leaders continue the work of the Religious Congregations' charisms and encourage collaboration and positive relationships between ministries.

Mercy Partners continues God's mission through:

- Governance, oversight, and support for incorporated ministries of the Catholic Church entrusted to its care.
- Formation in personal spirituality, governance, mission and Catholic identity for ministry boards and executive leaders. This also includes collaboration between ministries to respond to existing and emerging needs.

At the beginning of 2024, the Board of Mercy Partners reflected on their achievement of Strategic Priorities in 2023. As part of this reflection, the Board reviewed the Strategic Priorities and agreed that they were still current and support the continuation of God's mission.

Achievement of the five Strategic Priorities throughout 2024 are detailed as follows.

### Strategic Priority 1: Responsible growth and capacity to sponsor ministries

Mercy Partners regularly takes the time to review and reflect on their ability to undertake responsible growth and their capacity to sponsor ministries into the future. Examples of responsible growth and capacity to sponsor ministries are detailed below.

#### Board Review

In 2024, Mercy Partners engaged a corporate governance advisory firm to undertake a review of the Board's governance performance, effectiveness and commitment to continuous governance improvement. The Board along with key stakeholders participated in a survey and also completed a workshop with the advisory firm as part of the review process.

The results of the review were positive and identified opportunities for some governance improvement. The recommendations from the review commenced being implemented in October 2024 and will take 12 months to be fully implemented.

#### New Ministries

On 18 April 2024, Mercy Partners became the sole member and canonical sponsor of Whitefriars College, based in Donvale,

Melbourne and is the first boys' school to be welcomed to Mercy Partners.

Whitefriars College was transitioned from the Carmelite Province of Our Lady Help of Christians, Australia and Timor-Leste, and Fr Paul Cahill O.Carm has been appointed as the Steward and Members' Representative. Mercy Partners is delighted to support the Province's commitment to the Carmelite tradition.

Preparation for the transition of Our Lady of Sion College (also based in Melbourne) continued throughout 2024 with the transition now scheduled to take place in early 2025.

Discussions and planning were also undertaken with the Sisters of Mercy North Sydney throughout 2024 to transition the Sisters' social enterprise ministry, Mercy Foundation into Mercy Partners. This ministry is due to transition to Mercy Partners in early 2025.

#### New Board Director

With the growing number of education ministries in Melbourne it was identified there was a need to have a Melbourne-based Board Director. Therefore, a search commenced and in April 2024, Mercy Partners welcomed a new Board Director, Ms Patricia Bergin. Patricia has a strong educational background and collaborates closely with Catholic secondary schools, religious institutes and not-for-profit organisations.



Ministry Support

Throughout 2024, Mercy Partners held two gatherings for their education ministries. The programs for these events were developed by Mercy Partners’ Education Collaboration Committee and facilitated by the Committee Chair, Prof Lee Anne Perry. The events, the Education Ministries Leaders Gathering and the Business Managers Gathering were well attended and were an opportunity to connect, collaborate and build relationships across the education ministries. The events allowed the ministry representatives to discuss common themes and challenges experienced across the colleges and to also identify collaboration and sharing opportunities.

Feedback from both gatherings was positive and has resulted in future gatherings being scheduled for 2025.

For the non-education ministries, regular catch ups and support were provided to the Boards and Chief Executive Officers throughout the year in order to assist with challenges being experienced (some of which were inherited issues).

In particular, Mercy Partners provided support to Mercy Community who made the decision to transition away from several smaller services that were no longer financially sustainable without significant investment.

Mercy Community worked with other service providers who were interested in taking on these services and supporting the existing clients with their needs along with providing employment to the transitioning staff.

Annual Ministry Planning Guide

The Board of Mercy Partners provided all of its ministries with good governance, oversight and support as required under their canonical and civil responsibilities. Each year Mercy Partners produces an Annual Ministry Planning Guide which details all of the governance requirements to be undertaken by a ministry of Mercy Partners.

Annual Ministry Planning Guide



			
	2024		
			

Just as the founders of religious congregations responded to the needs of their times with love, respect, compassion, and mercy, we too are called in our age to respond.

Connecting with Ministries

Mercy Partners recognises that there are increased opportunities throughout the year to welcome new ministries to join Mercy Partners. However, Mercy Partners is mindful that it is important to be able to maintain and strengthen the relationships and support they provide to their existing ministries. To build and maintain these relationships, each year Mercy Partners schedules Ministry Update Presentations with each of its ministries. These presentations are an opportunity for each ministry to update Mercy Partners on their strategic plan, current challenges being experienced or future concerns the ministry has identified. In addition, the Board of Mercy Partners made themselves available throughout the year to provide governance support as and when required by its ministries.

Ministry Board Liaisons

To further build strong working relationships with the ministries of Mercy Partners, each ministry has been allocated a Board Director who is their ministry Board Liaison. The Board Liaisons are the ministry’s first point of call, and they are able to provide governance support, chair the ministry’s Annual General Meeting, and attend ministry events.





## Strategic Priority 2: Alignment of capacity and resources to sponsor ministries

Mercy Partners understands that it is important to monitor and reassess its alignment of capacity and resources to sponsor ministries. Examples of alignment of capacity and resources to sponsor ministries are detailed below.

### Organisational Structure

To ensure the effectiveness of its organisational structure and resources, Mercy Partners undertakes regular reviews to ensure it has both capacity and the required resources to support its ministries ensuring that the work undertaken aligns back to Mercy Partners' strategic priorities.

### Formation Support and Resources

To further ensure that Mercy Partners provides the required level of formation support required by its ministries, a survey was undertaken towards the end of 2024. This survey was sent to the ministries of Mercy Partners to understand the ministries' satisfaction with the existing Mercy Partners formation support available along with published resources.

The survey was also an opportunity for the ministries to advise what additional formation support they felt would be beneficial for their ministries to enable them to support and develop mission leadership within their ministries.

The feedback from the survey is being used to develop a new model of formation which will be launched in 2025.

### Ministry Board Formation

Early in 2024 ministry Boards were asked to include in their Board meeting minutes, details of the formation undertaken at each of their Board meetings, referencing the relevant quadrant focus area/s from the Formation Framework. The formation completed by each ministry is reviewed by Mercy Partners upon receipt of each ministry's Board meeting minutes.

The purpose of this reporting was for Mercy Partners to ensure the ministries were working through the Formation Framework and to identify opportunities to provide further formation support to the ministry.

In addition, throughout the year, Mercy Partners facilitated ministry Board formation induction sessions as part of their Formation by Request program.

### Formation Framework

To further support ministry Board Directors, Mercy Partners Formation Framework has been created and is made up of four core elements: Mission, Catholic Identity, Governance and Personal Spirituality. Ministry Board Directors, as part of their appointment, are required to engage with these four elements.

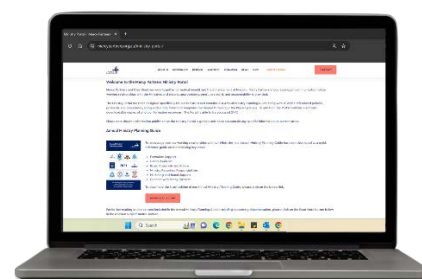
### Guidelines for the Appointment of a Principal

In 2024, Mercy Partners' Education Collaboration Committee developed a detailed guideline for their education ministries to follow when appointing a new Principal. The guideline details the roles and responsibilities of both the education ministry and Mercy Partners.

In 2025, the development of a guideline for the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer within Mercy Partners' non-education ministries will be developed.

### Ministry Portal

To continue supporting the ministries of Mercy Partners, the Ministry Portal has continued to grow. Throughout 2024, formation worksheets from the Charism books were added to the Ministry Portal. The Portal is also updated annually with the latest Annual Ministry Planning Guide, Nudgee Trust Disbursement Policy and Procedure, along with any new formation resources.



### Sustainable and Beneficial Communities of Practice

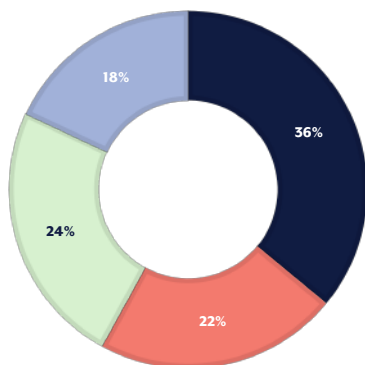
Mercy Partners responds to the existing and identified needs of communities by facilitating sustainable and beneficial communities of practice. This was undertaken in 2024 through its trusteeship of the Nudgee Trust and the Missionary Franciscan Sisters Trust.



**The Nudgee Trust has provided almost \$7M in grants since its transition into a financial Trust**

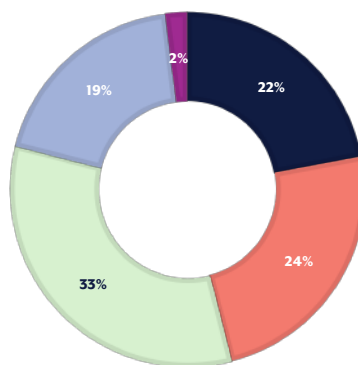
**GRANTS BY SECTOR**

■ Community ■ Education ■ Health ■ Aged Care



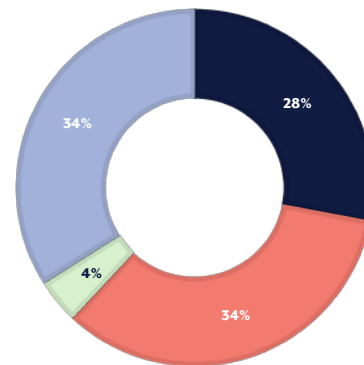
**GRANTS BY ULTIMATE BENEFICIARY**

■ Children ■ Adults ■ Families ■ Aged ■ All Ages



**GRANTS BY TYPE OF ASSISTANCE**

■ Programs ■ Resources ■ Assistance ■ Facilities



The Nudgee Trust awards grants in accordance with the terms of their Trust Deed. The grants were awarded to the ministries of Mercy Partners and were based on applications that were aligned with the priorities of the ministry communities.

The Nudgee Trust has provided almost \$7M in grants since its transition into a financial Trust and the grant process is now well established and the process considered robust. The charts above highlight the application of funds since the transition.

The Trustee felt it appropriate to review its policies and procedures after an initial five years as Trustee, establishing a small working party in 2024 to review the process, documentation and decision-making criteria. The working party will transition into a formal sub-committee in 2025 and implement the recommendations from the review.

The Trustee has also established clear policies and procedures around the management of the portfolio that generates the income for distribution. An investment sub-committee, which includes an independent member and meets at least twice a year to review the performance of the portfolio.

In the 2024-year grants totalling \$1.8M were approved and for the first time all focussed on capital expenditure. Around \$0.8M was to support the installation of solar panels on ministry buildings, \$0.75M to support the purchase of equipment for a new regional hospital with the balance across a number of ministries for smaller capital projects.

The Missionary Franciscan Sisters Trust supports the formation of mission leaders and spiritual leaders through Mercy Partners, along with providing funding to support charities that respond to international and Australian natural

disasters and emergencies, provide support for refugees, bursaries to Franciscan schools, along with a defined list of charities that focus on homelessness, rural healthcare, human trafficking and the protection of animals and the environment.

For the 2024 year, the Missionary Franciscan Sisters Trust disbursed a total of 19 grants, totalling over \$300,000. These grants were administered as per the Trust's Deed.

### Strategic Priority 3: Formation leadership capacity for mission and Catholic identity

Mercy Partners understands the importance of providing formation leadership capacity for mission and Catholic identity.

Throughout 2024, Mercy Partners facilitated the following formation initiatives to support leadership capacity within its ministries.

- Lenten Retreats "Walking on Holy Ground" – A total of 110 ministry leaders, staff and board directors came together to pause and reflect on their spiritual journey and engage with Lenten scriptures and Celtic spirituality.
- Mercy Partners facilitated ministry board workshops covering topics such as Catholic social teachings, Church history, and tradition.



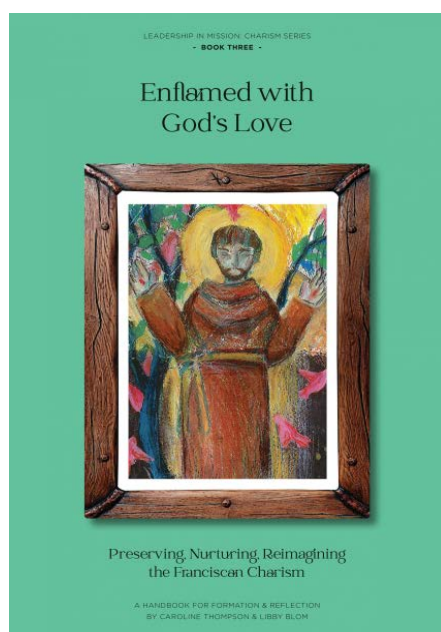
- Mercy Partners Mission Leads gathered in April to network and reflect on the Inner and Outer Journey of Mercy, guided by Fr. Chris Gleeson SJ.
- In collaboration with a First Nations working group, Mercy Partners organised the annual Indigenous Encounter Day in Townsville. The gathering was attended by representatives from the local Mercy Partners ministries, First Nations local communities and local Catholic leaders. Over sixty participants attended and the day focused on prayer, storytelling, building connections, and planning for ongoing partners with ongoing First Nations communities.
- Mercy Partners launched a new book, *Enflamed with God's Love – Preserving, Nurturing, Reimagining the Franciscan Charism*, as part of its commitment to formation.
- The Synodal Way – A new prayer and meeting resource, *The Synodal Way*, was developed for ministry boards and executive leadership teams and is grounded in the principles of synodality.
- Advent Retreats – Seventy-four staff and board directors came together to reflect on the themes of hope, peace, joy and love during the Advent season.

## Strategic Priority 4: Identity and relationships with the wider Church

Mercy Partners recognises the importance of having an identity within the Catholic community and proactively works hard to build relationships with the Bishops and the wider Church. Examples of identity and relationships with the wider Church maintained by Mercy Partners are detailed below.

### Relationships with Bishops

Mercy Partners values the established relationships it has with the Bishops of the Dioceses in which it operates. Mercy Partners always ensures invitations are extended to the local Bishops when organising events in their respective Dioceses. Mercy Partners also ensures that the Bishops receive their regular newsletters so that they are kept up to date with the work undertaken within their region.







## SYNOD24

Mercy Partners was invited to participate, at the invitation of the Archbishop of Brisbane, in the Implementation Phase of the Plenary Council, called SYNOD24: I Am Making All Things New. The sessions invited the Synod Members to discuss, debate and vote on a series of practical and Spirit-led actions with the aim of assisting the Archdiocese of Brisbane to implement the Decrees of the Plenary Council and be a more co-responsible church on mission.

## Relationships with the wider Church

Mercy Partners demonstrates strong networking relationships with its ministries. In addition, Mercy Partners participated in numerous Catholic communities in order to strengthen advocacy and the Catholic voice. These include:

- Mercy Alliance of Australia and New Zealand
- Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (AMPJP)

- Assembly of Catholic Health Professionals (ACP)
- Catholic Health Australia (CHA)
- Australasian Mercy Secondary School Association (AMSSA)
- National Catholic Education Commission (NECE)
- Brisbane Catholic Education Governing Council.

## Strategic Priority 5: Ongoing financial sustainability

To ensure Mercy Partners is able to continue supporting the continuation of God's mission, it recognises the importance of ongoing financial sustainability. Such stewardship is important to ensure that Mercy Partners is not only able to continue sponsoring its existing ministries but is able to continue sponsoring new ministries into the future. To support Mercy Partners' sustainability, the following work was undertaken throughout the year.

## Securing Revenue

As Mercy Partners expands and grows its ministries, the current Stewardship Fee model is being reviewed to ensure it reflects best practice and complies with all relevant legislation.

Mercy Partners' Governance and Stewardship Fee Policy Review Committee have undertaken a review during 2024 and in 2025 will be making recommendations as to any changes that may need to be made to reflect best practice and compliance with all relevant legislation.

## IT Systems and Support Mechanisms

With technology ever evolving, Mercy Partners is constantly reviewing their current IT systems to ensure that they are effective and provide value for money. In addition, significant focus around cyber security and data privacy has been made a priority based on the increased threats within society.

# Ministries sponsored by Mercy Partners

Mercy Partners sponsors ministries in the fields of Aged Care, Community and Disability Services, Education, Health and Social Enterprise.

Mercy Partners embraces four charisms from the Religious Congregations/Orders who have transferred their ministries to our Public Juridic Person (PJP). This community of Mercy, Presentation, Franciscan and Carmelite traditions brings a richness to Mercy Partners, a wealth of knowledge and experience that is shared across Mercy Partners ministries.

## Ministries sponsored by Mercy Partners:

- All Hallows' School Limited
- Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College Limited
- Mount Alvernia College Limited
- Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta
- St Patrick's College Townsville Limited
- St Rita's College Limited
- St Ursula's College Limited
- Whitefriars College Limited
- Holy Cross Services Limited
- Mater Misericordiae Limited
- Mercy Community Services North Queensland Limited
- Mercy Community Services South East Queensland Limited
- Mercy Health and Aged Care Central Queensland Limited

The Board of Mercy Partners, in addition to their governance role to oversee the Mercy Partners' ministries, also undertakes the role of Trustee for beneficial trusts established by a number of Member Congregations of Mercy Partners. These Trusts have been set up to support the charitable works of the founding Congregations.

## Mercy Partners is the Trustee of the following Trusts:

- Nudgee Trust
- Missionary Franciscan Sisters Trust



## Our Ministries



### All Hallows' School Limited

All Hallows' School is a Catholic girls' school within the educational and spiritual tradition of the Sisters of Mercy. As Queensland's oldest secondary school and from its location in the Brisbane CBD, it offers a faith-based, holistic education to 1,700 students from years 5-12.

The school has a long and proud tradition of service to the community and its Mercy Action program continues this work in support of local communities. As service is one of the

school's key values, the Mercy Action program enables All Hallows' students to engage in an extensive social justice program that involves education and outreach components as well as immersion opportunities. In 2024, there were 20 Mercy Action groups.

Each year, All Hallows' School undertakes a Whole School Project, with all funds collected going to the one cause. In 2024 the whole school project, "Pathways of Possibility", raised funds for the Romero Centre's Gateways to Employment program - a program designed to provide skills and support to refugees and asylum seekers seeking employment in Australia. The program adopts a person-centric approach, with Romero Centre case co-ordinators collaborating closely with individuals seeking asylum. It includes free English as a Second Language (ESL) learning, innovative peer mentoring by bicultural tutors, opportunities for vocational competencies

and certificates, and connections to real-world employers. This comprehensive strategy empowers individuals by enhancing language skills, providing practical vocational training, and fostering connections with potential employers. Funds raised by All Hallows' were sufficient to see 25 participants supported by the Romero Centre.

In 2024, All Hallows' School sent a delegation of students to the Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools Association (AMSSA) conference in Bendigo. This conference, the first since the COVID hiatus, provided a long-awaited opportunity for networking and sharing within the Australasian Mercy education network.

All Hallows' School Board Chair, Ms Ann-Maree David continues in the role, supporting the Principal Mrs Catherine O'Kane and Dean of Mission Mrs Claire Easton.



### Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College Limited

The year 2024 has been one of abundant blessings and joy for the Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College community. In February, the College gathered for their Commencement Mass, a meaningful occasion that allowed the College to reflect on their 2024 focus, 'Mercy through Human Dignity', and reaffirm their commitment to the values of Mercy.

The College's ongoing partnership with Project Timor continues to thrive, alongside their work with Colégio Infante de Sagres in Maliana. As a community, the College remain steadfast in their dedication to providing academic pathways for young women attending

Colégio, as well as supporting the construction of a Teacher Professional Learning Centre. The collective enthusiasm of students and staff has been evident through fundraising efforts, raising \$27,000 to support their sisters in Timor-Leste.

A notable milestone in 2024 was the introduction of the redesigned College uniform, the first redesign in over 40 years. This significant change not only marks a momentous occasion in the College's history but also aligns with the College's upcoming Sesquicentenary celebrations in 2025. The new uniform reflects the College's commitment to meeting the evolving needs of the students, enhancing their experience, and celebrating Monte's rich legacy while embracing a modern world.

Throughout the year, the College had the privilege of engaging with parents and carers at various College events, including the Year 7 Welcome Mass and Dinner, Open Day, Coffee Connects, and the International Women's Day Breakfast. The involvement of parents and carers plays an essential role in

fostering a supportive community that understands and values the importance of a Mercy education.

The College's Blue Ribbon Bursary Appeal, launched at the Blue and Blue Lunch on 17 May, received exceptional support. The sale of blue-ribbon pins and contributions from the annual Rugby Lunch attendees further strengthened this initiative, providing vital bursaries for young women facing financial and personal challenges. These efforts ensure that all students have the opportunity to continue their education at Monte Sant' Angelo.

Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College is proud to inherit a profound legacy of social justice and advocacy, built by the Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney. At the heart of a Monte education is the cultivation of courage, compassion, and a deep sense of social responsibility. These core values of Mercy are woven into every aspect of our College life, inspiring the students to embrace their personal identities, spirituality, and a commitment to justice with humility, and respect.

## Our Ministries



### Mount Alvernia College Limited

Mount Alvernia College is an independent Catholic school for girls with an enrolment of approximately 973 students in Years 7 – 12. The College is nearing a seventy-year history which has been enriched by the spirituality of the Catholic tradition: the Gospel of Jesus, the theology and sacramental life of the Church, and the Franciscan charism of the Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (MFIC).

The College recognises three patrons - Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Clare of Assisi and Mother Mary Ignatius (Elizabeth) Hayes, the founder of the Missionary Franciscan Sisters - each of whom discerned the spirit of Jesus

made flesh in another place and time. The College's guiding values – Courage, Respect, Service and Joy – challenge the students to do the same.

Students are taught that they have a responsibility to be changemakers for a socially just and ecologically sustainable future. Such action is an authentic witness to the College motto, Deus Meus et Omnia – My God and My All.

The College has established a reputation as a welcoming and inclusive school community that seeks to build capacity and potential for all. It offers a diverse suite of thirty-four senior subjects (including VET Certificate and Diploma pathways), an array of sporting, academic and cultural co-curricular activities and over twenty student leadership programs and clubs.

In 2024, the College celebrated an array of remarkable achievements:

**Outstanding Academic Outcomes:** Year 12 students at Mount Alvernia College achieved record-breaking results, showcasing their

unwavering commitment to educational excellence. With a median ATAR of 91.85 and 54 diplomas awarded, these results have solidified Mount Alvernia College among the top-performing secondary schools in the state

**Environmental Advocacy:** Mount Alvernia College's La Foresta gardens were proudly featured on ABC's Gardening Australia, showcasing the College's commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. Rooted in its Franciscan heritage, La Foresta reflects a deep dedication to caring for creation and fostering a greener future.

**Global Service Engagement:** Fourteen students and two staff embarked on a transformative Service Expedition to Borneo, actively contributing to community-driven projects and engaging in meaningful cultural exchange. This experience exemplified the College's commitment to service, aligning with the 2024 Franciscan value focus of Service.

**Sporting Achievement:** Participation in CaSSSA Sport increase by 37%, with a 143% increase in District Sport representation.



### Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta

**Courageous Advocates. Limitless Possibilities.**

A leading Catholic Independent girls' school, Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta has always been at the forefront in girls' education and continues to build a culture of young women striving for excellence.

OLMC Parramatta is a Christ-centred learning community established by the Sisters of Mercy in 1889, committed to excellence in education, respect for the dignity of each individual and the development of a strong sense of justice and social responsibility.

The College's vision today is to provide a contemporary Mercy education that empowers young women to lead with courage and act justly, making a difference in whatever sphere of life they choose to move, in the spirit of the Venerable Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy.

A holistic and multi-disciplinary focus inspires each student to achieve her best in the classroom and beyond. To enable lifelong learning for every student, the College offers a transforming community of practice, dedicated to providing personalised high-quality curriculum, wellbeing, and co-curricular programs.

In 2024, the College experienced a 1.3% growth in student enrolments, making it the third straight year of increased student numbers. This positive trend reflects the outstanding academic results and exceptional educational opportunities on offer at OLMC.

Ms Kerrie Walshaw is the current Chair of the Board and Ms Lucie Farrugia is the Principal. Ms Farrugia provides excellent leadership and focus to the College community as the school continues to grow in providing a Mercy education to students in Western Sydney. The Spiritual Life of the College is led by the College Leadership Team with the guidance of College Chaplain, Fr Walter Fogarty (Parish Priest, Sacred Heart, Westmead) and the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta

## Our Ministries



### St Patrick's College

St Patrick's College Townsville is an independent Catholic secondary day and boarding school, established by the Sisters of Mercy with values set forth by their founder, Catherine McAuley. With over 120 years of experience in educating young women, the College serves as a nurturing and transformative environment where students are encouraged to embrace curiosity, vision, creativity, and imagination. The College fosters an inclusive and diverse community, where each student is empowered to grow intellectually, spiritually, and personally.

The College remains deeply connected to the Mercy ethos, embodying the College values of courage, compassion, respect, hospitality, integrity, joy, justice and love. Set against the beautiful backdrop of an oceanfront campus, the College offers an intimate and supportive environment where young women can explore a variety of academic, cultural and sporting opportunities.

In 2024, the College's Board and Leadership Team collaborated to create a new 2025 - 2027 Strategic Plan, ensuring a clear path forward for continued growth and success.

During the same year, Principal Amber Hauff announced her resignation, as she plans to return to her hometown of Brisbane. The College expresses its deep gratitude to Amber for her leadership and dedication over the years. Following this, the College announced the appointment of Ms Kathleen Little as the new Principal, who will begin her tenure in 2025. Kathleen brings a wealth of experience from her current role at Mount Alvernia College and is poised to lead the College into the next chapter of its history.

The College is also guided by the leadership of Sister Helen Mary Peters rsm, who chairs a dedicated local Board of Directors, alongside Deputy Chair Josephine Gabrielli. Their commitment to the mission and vision of the College is vital in ensuring that St Patrick's College Townsville remains a place of excellence and integrity.

Looking ahead, the College is eagerly anticipating the celebration of its 120th Anniversary in 2025, a significant milestone in its rich history. This anniversary will provide an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy and to celebrate the vibrant, forward-looking community that continues to thrive.



### St Rita's College Limited

St Rita's College Limited is a Catholic day school located in Brisbane's inner-north. It offers education to 1240 girls and young women from Years 5 to 12. St Rita's College was established by the Sisters of the Presentation

of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1926, and the College was named after St Rita of Cascia who was canonized in 1900. Students are encouraged to live out Christian values in the spirit of Nano Nagle, the founder of the Presentation Sisters and St Rita of Cascia.

At St Rita's, students experience a modern school with a rich tradition in academic and sporting excellence, cultural diversity, and an unfailing commitment to social justice. Change is embraced, expectations are high, and lessons learnt last long beyond the classroom. In teaching the students the courage to stand alone and the power of standing together, the College challenges

them to be women of action and not just words – *Virtute non Verbis*.

The Board has commissioned a new master plan for the College for the next 30-year period to take advantage of the changes in the region that will be brought about by the 2032 Olympics.

The College Principal Mrs Maree Trims has completed her first year as the leader of the College. Together with a rejuvenation of the Board they are charting a course to endure the stewardship of the College and increasing engagement with the Clayfield Community.

## Our Ministries



### St Ursula's College Limited

St Ursula's College, Yeppoon, an independent Catholic Boarding and Day Secondary College located in Central Queensland, is a Ministry of Mercy Partners. Founded in 1918 by the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (PBVM), St Ursula's offers an education for young women of the future based on gospel values and Nano Nagle's vision.

The College's dynamic culture produces strong, confident young women, capable of forging a positive path for themselves by embracing the College motto of "Perfice Gressus Meos" (Perfect My Steps).

In the pursuit of excellence, continuous growth, and empowerment of staff and students, St Ursula's College embarks on a purposeful journey guided by a strategic plan built upon four foundational pillars: Live, Love, Learn, and Lead. These pillars represent the College's commitment to fostering a holistic and dynamic educational experience that prepares students for an ever-changing world and instils in them a sense of purpose and community. Live, Love, Learn, and Lead are a reflection of our College Values, deeply embedded in the Catholic and Presentation traditions, and supporting the mission:

- The promotion of, and education for, justice;
- The development of leadership;
- Encouraging students to strive towards reaching their potential; and
- Preparing students to participate fully and responsibly in society.

Mrs Ann Marie Pawsey is the appointed Chair of the Board and Mrs Deborah Ryan is College Principal. The College continues in the Presentation tradition under the guidance of Mrs Pawsey, the St Ursula's College Board, and Mrs Ryan. Mrs Ryan provides exemplary leadership to staff and students. Ms Kathy Strelow commenced in the new role of Assistant Principal - Mission and Identity in 2024 and is responsible for the provision of an educational environment that reflects the mission, values and goals of the College and the Strategic Plan



### Whitefriars College Limited

Whitefriars College was established on Wurundjeri land in 1961 as a secondary school for boys through the vision of the Carmelites, a Catholic order of priests and brothers. The unique and expansive natural bushland environment purchased by the Carmelites has provided the context for rich and extensive learning programs for over six decades.

In the peace and tranquillity of the College grounds, the Carmelites promote being aware of the presence of God in the still and silent moments of the everyday and walking in allegiance with Jesus. This has remained a constant within the life of the College.

Similarly, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, as the patroness of the Carmelites holds a treasured place in the College community as an inspiration for finding and knowing Jesus through her example of care and devotion. Within this Marian quality, the spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical growth of students has always continued to be at the centre of Whitefriars' educational philosophy.

2024 saw the launch of the Whitefriars College Board Strategic Directions Document which has been embraced and enacted by the school.

The document presents the purpose of Whitefriars College as a school which provides a quality education for young men grounded in the Carmelite tradition that emphasises critical thinking, the search for meaning and how to contribute to the common good of society.

The College supports every student to seek and achieve excellence in their learning, their relationships and their participation in the community. Students are invited to appreciate

the Christian worldview and see the goodness of God in themselves, all others and the natural world.

Following two years of discernment and development by a committee of students, parents and staff the College launched its Inclusivity Statement at the heart of which recognises that all in the College community are made in the image and likeness of God.

Whitefriars continues to reach out to those most in need in their community through such initiatives as our annual immersion to Carmelite schools and centres in Timor Leste, support for Rosies Street mission and fund raising for Carmel impact.

The Whitefriars Board Chair continues in this role led by Board Chair Margaret McKenna. The College Principal is Mark Murphy. The spiritual life of the College is led by Deputy Principal of Mission, Joshua Vujcich



## Our Ministries



### Holy Cross Services Limited

Holy Cross Services, a Brisbane-based ministry of Mercy Partners, provides the dignity of work, focusing on those who are disadvantaged, thereby contributing to a more equitable and compassionate community. By facilitating meaningful employment opportunities, we aim to affirm their commitment to the values of Dignity, Respect, and Integrity, inspired by the charism of the Sisters of Mercy and the principals of Catholic Social Teaching.

In 2024, Holy Cross Services employed a total of 416 individuals, equating to 351 full-time equivalent positions. Notably, 17 employees have celebrated over 20 years of service. The organisation prides itself on fostering a positive and inclusive employment environment within the commercial laundry and cleaning divisions, which provide transformative opportunities for their employees. To boost workplace morale and improve communication, Holy Cross Services conduct monthly team-building events that celebrate significant milestones and achievements.

Under the leadership of the Chair Dr John Gilmour AM, the Board welcomed new directors—Mr Chris Grover, appointed January 2024 and Mr Jayram Vasudevan, who was appointed in July. Holy Cross Services also recognise the contributions of Toni Casey, who resigned as Director and accepted a new role as Chief Operating Officer on April 2, 2024.

Holy Cross Services has consistently met the high standards set by their partners in the health and community services sectors. Holy Cross Services' focus on the *Laudato si'* encyclical, emphasising the moral responsibility to care for the environment, was demonstrated by the installation of solar panels on the roof of their Banyo facility. By harnessing clean, renewable energy from the sun, Holy Cross Services will significantly reduce their carbon footprint,



mitigate air pollution and contribute to a sustainable future. The system will reduce grid dependence by 36%, with the added benefit of reducing the interior temperature of the laundry facility, enhancing the overall well-being of their employees. Holy Cross is very grateful to the Nudgee Trust for enabling the continued improvement of their environmental, social and governance responsibilities.

## Our Ministries



### Mater Misericordiae Limited

Like not-for-profit healthcare providers across Australia, Mater faced many challenges throughout 2023-24.

However, thanks to the resilience and commitment of Mater People, these challenges were met – allowing Mater to continue its Mission of responding to unmet community needs and providing compassionate care to those most in need.

Across its 11 hospitals, Mater admitted almost a quarter-of-a-million patients and performed 120,681 procedures – an increase of 9651 on the previous year.

The Mater Mothers' services remained as busy as ever, supporting 11,635 births and providing critical care for more than 1700 premature and sick newborns.

This important work occurred across a backdrop of rising costs and increasing inequities in the funding of private health services by insurers.

Mater responded by working with Catholic Health Australia to lobby the Federal Government for fairer private insurance funding arrangements – a campaign which has had some success but continues – and by working with its workforce to identify and implement efficiency measures.

A key initiative was a major consultation exercise with the Mater's Visiting Medical Officers and staff on improving the efficiency and capacity of Mater Private Hospital Brisbane.

A number of significant infrastructure projects have since begun, including planning for two state-of-the-art Cardiac and Vascular Interventional Suites, which will strengthen private services going forward.



Mater continued to strengthen its relationship with the Queensland Government, securing additional funding to ensure the pay of Mater staff providing public health services matches that of staff in equivalent Queensland Health roles.

Mater also received funding to ensure the future sustainability of the Mater Refugee Complex Care Clinic, which has been providing free healthcare services for more than 20 years to people from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds.

The new public hospital for the Greater Springfield community—the result of a landmark partnership between Mater and the Queensland Government—has progressed significantly and is on track for a phased opening, starting in early 2026.

In June 2024, Archbishop Mark Coleridge officially opened Mater Health Hub Springfield, Mater's first purpose-built combined education, health and wellbeing facility.

The hub became the third Mater Education centre to offer a Diploma of Nursing (DoN) course. In total, 752 students were enrolled to study fee-free at Mater Education's Brisbane, Townsville and Springfield study locations.

The new facilities at Mater Health Hub Springfield also enabled Mater Education to expand its provision of its Certificate III in Pathology Collection course and the Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) program.

During the year, Mater Research continued its impressive contribution to medical research in Australia and globally, securing \$15.5 million in external funding and running 148 clinical trials.

At the forefront of transforming healthcare for people with intellectual disabilities, Mater Research became home to the Queensland and National Centres of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health.

Mater Foundation also enjoyed a record year of community engagement and fundraising, providing \$37.4 million for clinical equipment, medical research, and education programs.

This funding enabled the introduction of new technology for surgery in breast cancer, the launch of orthopaedic surgical robots in Bundaberg and Springfield, the increased capacity for neurosurgery in Townsville, the expansion of ophthalmology services at Redland and the additional operating theatre in Mackay.

Mater Foundation's successes also included a new five-year partnership with Channel Nine to co-host the Nine Telethon, raising funds for Mater Little Miracles.

Held in April, the Telethon raised an astonishing \$6.8 million raised to enhance care for sick and premature babies.

As the Mater looks forward to another year of delivering their Mission, all of Mater's ministries can be rightly proud of the work they have undertaken in the previous 12 months.



## Our Ministries



### Mercy Community Services North Queensland Limited, Mercy Community Services South East Queensland Limited and Mercy Health and Aged Care Central Queensland Limited

At the heart of Mercy Community is an unwavering commitment to the mission of mercy, deeply rooted in the Catholic heritage and legacy of the Sisters of Mercy. Mercy Community's services span a broad spectrum, supporting families and young people, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.

With a network extending across both urban and rural communities from South-East to North Queensland, Mercy Community brings hope and support to thousands of individuals each year.

In November 2023, Justin Lorenz was appointed CEO of Mercy Community. He brings a wealth of expertise in commercial and strategic leadership, alongside a profound understanding of the challenges faced by not-for-profit organisations.

In 2024, Mercy Community continued the development of Mercy Haven, a three-story, 90-bed residential aged care facility



in Rockhampton. This vital new building will enable Mercy Community to provide exceptional care and enhanced experiences for residents in the Capricorn region.

Mercy Community opened a new Allied Health Centre in Yeppoon, providing services including physiotherapy, group therapy classes, occupational therapy, and social support.

They also maintained their tick of approval from the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, for meeting all 42 requirements of the eight aged care Quality and Safety Standards — a testament to high-quality care through best practice and improvement.

As part of ongoing efforts to ensure long-term

sustainability and adapt to evolving challenges, the Board of Mercy Community also conducted a strategic review, leading to the difficult decision to transition out of certain services. This decision was necessary to secure a solid foundation for the future, while also addressing the impact of rising inflationary pressures.

Amid organisational renewal and transformation, Mercy Community remains strong—an agile and resilient organisation with a deep commitment to compassion, always focused on the people and communities it serves.

Mercy Community takes great pride in the ongoing work that continues to support some of Queensland's most vulnerable people.

### Nudgee Trust

The Nudgee Trust was established on 8 October 1869 by the Sisters of Mercy Brisbane Congregation and provides grant to ministries sponsored by Mercy Partners. These grants enable ministries to extend the range of depth or mission as they provide critical support to those most vulnerable in our community.

In 2018, the Sisters of Mercy Brisbane Congregation successfully applied to the Courts to transfer the Trustee role to Mercy Partners.

Since acquiring responsibilities as Trustee for the Trust on 1 January 2019, Mercy Partners has approved grants that have supported indigenous family services, health and

community services, health and community services for refugees, health initiatives for the wider community, along with providing mental health counselling to students.

Each year the Trustees review and approve grant applications received from the ministries of Mercy Partners

### Missionary Franciscan Sisters Trust

In 2023, the Board of Mercy Partners were appointed as the Trustee of the Missionary Franciscan Sisters Trust. The Trust was founded by the Institute of the Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

The Trust supports the formation of mission leaders and spiritual leaders through Mercy Partners, along with providing funding to support charities that respond to international and Australian natural disasters and emergencies, provide support for refugees, bursaries for Franciscan schools, and a defined

list of charities that focus on homelessness, rural healthcare, human trafficking and the protection of animals and the environment.

Mercy Partners is responsible for administering funds to the list of grants and disbursements as defined in the Trust's Deed.

# Committees

The Board of Mercy Partners maintains three Committees: the Education Collaboration Committee, the Finance, Audit, Risk and Insurance (FARI) Committee and the Formation Committee. In addition, Mercy Partners also has one Review Group. The Board acknowledges the invaluable contribution of the individuals who generously donate their time and expertise to assist Mercy Partners achieve their strategic priorities.

## Education Collaboration Committee

The Education Collaboration Committee is responsible for identifying opportunities for the education ministries to work more effectively together for the betterment of all of the schools. The Committee is chaired by Mercy Partners' Board Director, Prof Lee Anne Perry, and is supported by Board Directors, Mr Kieran McCarthy and Mr Steven Rubic, along with CEO, Mr John Leahy.

In addition, in June 2024 the Education Collaboration Committee welcomed Mercy Partners' Board Director, Patricia Bergin onto the Committee. Patricia has a strong educational background and was a welcome addition to the Committee.

The Education Collaboration Committee focused on the organisation of two gatherings to support their education ministries in 2024 – the Education Leaders Gathering and a Business Managers Gathering.

### Education Ministries Leaders Gathering

On 10 April 2024, Mercy Partners held an Education Ministries Leaders Gathering in Brisbane. The gathering was facilitated by the Chair of the Mercy Partners Education Collaboration Committee, Prof Lee Anne Perry and was an opportunity to connect, collaborate and build relationships with the Chairs and Principals of each of the education ministries.

The purpose of the day was to discuss common themes and challenges experienced across the education ministries and to also identify collaboration and sharing opportunities. The key topics discussed were financial and data analysis, artificial intelligence in schools, foundations, fundraising and other philanthropic giving, National School Policy – Implications for RI/MPJP schools along with emergent issues being experienced by the education ministries.

The feedback from the gathering was very positive and as a result, a Business Managers Gathering for education ministries was scheduled later in the year.

### Education Ministries Business Managers Gathering

On 10 July 2024 the Business Managers from the education ministries of Mercy Partners came together online for a two-hour gathering to listen, connect, collaborate and discuss shared learnings. Mercy Partners' Board Director Prof Lee Anne Perry facilitated the gathering and was joined by fellow Board Director Ms Patricia Bergin and CEO, Mr John Leahy.

The gathering provided an opportunity for the education ministry Business Managers to discuss benchmarking and federal funding issues. In addition, the gathering provided an opportunity for the Business Managers to discuss the various software they use to automate their internal processes and support their finance, human resources, student management, governance and risk functionalities within their schools. The Business Managers also discussed opportunities to share resources and create common templates.

The feedback received from the Business Managers was very positive and plans are underway to hold another gathering in 2025.





## Education Collaboration Committee Members



### Professor Lee Anne Perry AM

Committee Chair

Professor Lee Anne Perry AM is the inaugural Professor of Practice (Educational Leadership and Partnerships) at Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Prior to commencing in this role in February 2023, Professor Perry was the Executive Director (CEO) of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC).

Professor Perry has had a longstanding involvement in school education as a teacher, school and system leader including over twenty-five years as a principal. During that time, Lee Anne held teaching and leadership roles at Mercy, Franciscan and Presentation schools.

Professor Perry has been a member of many state and national associations and committees concerned with school and higher education. She is currently a Director of the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and an Honorary Professor of the Australian Catholic University.

Professor Perry has been actively involved in many educational reviews including as a panellist for the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools led by David Gonski AC, a member of the STEM Partnership Forum chaired by the Chief Scientist, Professor Alan Finkel AO, and a member of the Queensland Premier's Anti-Cyberbullying Taskforce.

Professor Perry is a passionate advocate for education from the early years to higher education, including vocational education and is particularly committed to supporting collaboration,

partnerships and connections within and between education sectors and systems.



### Mr John Leahy

Mr John Leahy was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Mercy Partners in October 2019. Mr Leahy was previously engaged as Project Manager, One Mater and played an integral part in the development of the One Mater Project plan. Prior to this Mr Leahy had completed some eighteen years working in the Catholic Health and Aged Care sectors in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. His roles have included Director Finance and Administration, Regional Chief Executive Officer Queensland and Chief Executive Officer Aged Care Services. Preceding this, he was with Mayne Health Group in a financial management role.

Mr Leahy has completed studies in finance and commerce in the United Kingdom and has undertaken additional studies in business management and organisational behaviour. He is an Associate Member Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA), and a Member of Brisbane Catholic Education Council.



### Mr Kieran McCarthy

Mr Kieran McCarthy is a nationally recognised Accredited Specialist in Family Law with

over 25 years' experience and brings to the Board strong networks throughout the State of Queensland and interstate. He is a Director of Naughton McCarthy Family Lawyers and Mercy Partners representative on the Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (AMPJP). Mr McCarthy also sits on the Board of Brigidine College, Indooroopilly.



### Mr Steven Rubic

Mr Steven Rubic is a health care executive veteran and has held a number of CEO roles including the Healthscope hospital group, I-MED Radiology Network, St Vincent's and Mater Health Sydney and St Vincent's Private Hospital.

Mr Rubic is currently a Board Director at Healthscope and was the Chair of Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College for nine years. He is a past Board Director of the Garvan Institute of Medical Research, the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, the Macquarie University Council, the Plunkett Centre for Ethics and the NSW Private Hospitals Association. Mr Rubic has worked closely with Congregations, boards, industry bodies and private equity firms, has completed an MBA and is a Fellow of the AICD and Fellow of ACHSM. Mr Rubic brings to the Board a working knowledge of the NSW education system, Australian health care system and various government policy and approaches to these important sectors.



### Ms Patricia Bergin

Ms Patricia Bergin has qualifications in Behavioural Sciences, Education, Leadership and Curriculum Studies. She taught for many years in Catholic Colleges in Victoria and held senior leadership positions across a range of secondary schools. In 1991, the Catholic Education Office Melbourne employed Patricia as an Education Consultant to work in the areas of leadership and policy development.

In 1999, Patricia established her own management consulting business, Energyforce, to work with Catholic Secondary Schools, Religious Institutes and not-for-profit organisations. She has a particular interest in governance, leadership formation, executive recruitment and organisational renewal and development. Patricia has held the position of member, chair, and director of several Catholic primary and secondary school advisory and incorporated boards and was a director on Mary Aikenhead Education Ltd. Patricia is currently a representative of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart for the Catholic Religious Institute and Ministerial Public Juridic Person Victorian Schools Ltd; is a director on Catholic Capital Grants Victoria Ltd. and Chair of Good Samaritan Inn Board, a specialist service providing crisis, short-term and transitional accommodation and support for women, children and young people who are experiencing family violence or homelessness.



## Finance, Audit, Risk, and Insurance (FARI) Committee

Mercy Partners' Finance, Audit, Risk, and Insurance (FARI) Committee is responsible for providing advice to the Board of Mercy Partners on finance, investment, insurance and risk. The Committee is chaired by Mr Leslie Jones and supported by the CEO, Mr John Leahy and external Committee members, Mrs Gabriele Power West and Mr Steven Wright.

The FARI Committee supported the Board of Mercy Partners throughout 2024 ensuring financial sustainability by providing advice on the policies, projects and investments.

The Financial Statements for 2024 demonstrate the continued financial stability of Mercy Partners with a cash flow surplus. The audited financial statements confirm that Mercy Partners is able to meet its canonical and financial obligations.

The Committee met twice during 2024 and provided advice to the Board on a number of ongoing matters, analysis of ministry annual financial statements and recommendations regarding risk management, insurance and statutory compliance. Additionally, the Committee provided advice on the following to the Board in 2024.

### Term Deposits

The FARI Committee investigated and continued to recommend to the Board of Mercy Partners that they should invest cash reserves with the Brisbane Archdiocese Development Fund in order to support the wider Church and the initiatives they undertake. The Board of Mercy Partners in accordance with their Investment Policy resolved to support the Archdiocese Development Fund and invest cash reserves with them.

### Strategic and Operational Risk Register

The FARI Committee reviewed and updated the Strategic and Operational Risk Register for Mercy Partners in 2024. The Strategic and Operational Risk Register includes potential risks impacting revenue, property, reputation, assets, IT and cyber security. The Strategic and Operational Risk Register is monitored throughout the year and updated accordingly.

### Nudgee Trust

Mercy Partners is the Trustee of the Nudgee Trust. The Trust is a pool of funds set up in a capital guaranteed trust with objectives. It is the responsibility of Mercy Partners to administer the Trust in accordance with the Trust Deed.

The income stream from the Trust provides Mercy Partners' ministries with financial support towards activities that fall within the objectives of the Trust. Throughout 2024 the FARI

Committee continued to provide assistance and advice to the Board of Mercy Partners regarding the operation and administration of the Trust.

### Missionary Franciscan Sisters Trust

Mercy Partners is the Trustee of the Missionary Franciscan Sisters Trust. The Trust supports the formation of mission leaders and spiritual leaders through Mercy Partners, along with providing funding to support charities that respond to international and Australian natural disasters and emergencies, provide support for refugees, bursaries to Franciscan schools, and a defined list of charities that focus on homelessness, rural healthcare, human trafficking and the protection of animals and the environment. Mercy Partners is responsible for administering funds to the list of grants and disbursements as defined in the Trust's Deed.

Throughout 2024 the FARI Committee provided assistance and advice to the Board of Mercy Partners regarding the operation and administration of the Missionary Franciscan Sisters Trust.

## Finance, Audit, Risk, and Insurance (FARI) Committee Members



### Mr Les Jones

Chair - Finance, Audit, Risk and Investment Committee

Mr Les Jones served as a Grant Thornton Audit Partner from January 1985 to December 2009 where he had wide involvement with not-for-profit organisations. During his time at Grant Thornton, Mr Jones was head of Assurance Services and was the Office Managing Partner for five years. Internationally, Mr Jones was an active member of the international firm's risk management, client acceptance and audit technology groups. Mr Jones has been a director of various not-for-profit organisations. He is currently a director of Brisbane Housing Company Ltd and Chair of Mercy Partners Finance, Audit, Risk and Investment Committee.

As a Grant Thornton Audit Partner, Mr Jones has contributed to the Professional Education Program for the Australian Institute of Chartered Accountants as both a group leader and a member of the Institute's Education Committee.



### Ms Michelle Berghan

Ms Michelle Berghan contributes to the committee as a consultant, providing financial reports and advice to the Treasurer and FARI Committee.

In her career she has been a senior accountant at Pricewaterhouse Coopers and the Finance Manager at Freeport McMoRan, Sigma Retail Solutions and Official Pty Ltd.



### Mr John Leahy

Mr John Leahy was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Mercy Partners in October 2019.

Mr Leahy was previously engaged as Project Manager, One Mater and played an integral part in the development of the One Mater Project plan. Prior to this Mr Leahy had completed some eighteen years working in the Catholic Health and Aged Care sectors in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. His roles have included Director Finance and Administration, Regional Chief Executive Officer Queensland and Chief Executive Officer Aged Care Services. Preceding this, he was with Mayne Health Group in a financial management role.

Mr Leahy has completed studies in finance and commerce in the United Kingdom and has undertaken additional studies in business management and organisational behaviour. He is an Associate Member Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA), and a Member of Brisbane Catholic Education Council.



### Mr Steven Wright

Mr Steven Wright is a Director of Morgans Financial Limited with over 30 years' experience in banking and financial markets. He oversees Morgans' Risk and Governance functions as well as the Specialist Advice and Fixed Interest businesses. Mr Wright has been instrumental in helping investors diversify investment portfolios through the use of debt, hybrid and interest rate products; becoming a dominant participant in this sector. He provides specialist advice to the not-for-profit sector and private foundations as well as working closely with a range of corporate and financial services sector borrowers looking to raise debt and hybrid capital. He chairs Morgans' Risk and Governance Committee and is a member of its Compliance Committee.

Mr Wright's previous experience includes domestic and international portfolio management responsibilities with Queensland Investment Corporation and IOOF. Prior to this time, he worked with National Australia Bank in its global treasury and corporate banking divisions.



### Ms Gabrielle Power West

Ms Gabrielle Power West's career was in secondary education. She held positions as a teacher of accounting and economics, head of department, deputy principal and principal. In recent years, she worked at the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) in the role of Director of Corporate Services until her retirement in January 2017.

Currently, Ms Power West is the Vice President of the University of the Third Age (U3A). In the recent past she was a Trustee Director on the Board of the Australian Catholic Superannuation and Retirement Fund (ACSRF) for a period of 12 years; a member of the Remuneration Committee; and the Insurance Claims and Dispute Resolution Committee of ACSRf. Also in the recent past, President and Vice President of the New Farm Probus Club. Ms Power West was appointed to the Mercy Partners FARI Committee in February 2014.



## Formation Committee

The Formation Committee supports the Mercy Partners Board and the formation team in providing formation to ministry board directors and executive leaders, in alignment with the mission and responsibilities outlined in the Canonical Statutes and Constitution of Mercy Partners.

Mercy Partners' formation framework is built around four core elements: Catholic identity, mission, governance, and personal spirituality. In 2024, the primary focus of formation initiatives was Personal Spirituality.

### Personal Spirituality

Key highlights of the 2024 Personal Spirituality formation initiatives included:

- **Lenten Retreats – “Walking on Holy Ground”**

A total of 110 ministry leaders, staff, and board directors participated in face-to-face and online gatherings. These retreats provided participants with an opportunity to pause, reflect on their spiritual journey, and engage with Lenten scriptures and Celtic spirituality.

- **Advent Retreats**

Seventy-four staff members from Mercy Partners ministries and the Board participated in retreats centred on the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love during the Advent season.

- **Introduction of Carmelite Charism**

With the addition of Whitefriars College, a Carmelite school, to Mercy Partners' ministries, Fr. Paul Cahill, O.Carm, shared insights into the Carmelite charism with Mercy Partners' Stewards, Board Directors, and formation staff. His presentation included reflections on the story of Elijah, Marian devotion, and the core tenets of Carmelite spirituality: contemplation, community, and service.

- **Launch of “Enflamed with God's Love”**

Mercy Partners introduced a new book, *Enflamed with God's Love – Preserving, Nurturing, Reimagining the Franciscan Charism*, as part of its ongoing commitment to formation.

- **The Synodal Way**

A new prayer and meeting resource, *The Synodal Way*, was developed for Mercy Partners' ministry boards and executive leadership teams. This resource, grounded in the principles of synodality, supports individuals and groups in embracing a synodal approach to ministry, encouraging spiritual conversation, discernment, inclusivity, and valuing every voice, in line with Pope Francis' call for open, co-responsible leadership guided by the Holy Spirit.

### Catholic Identity

Ministry boards participated in workshops covering topics such as Catholic social teaching, Church history, and tradition. These sessions explored Catholic leadership and the actions that help deepen and express Catholic identities within personal and organisational contexts.

### Governance

Formation staff and Mercy Partners board directors led governance-focused formation sessions with ministry boards. These sessions addressed the emerging significance of Public Juridic Persons (PJPs) in the Church, as well as civil and canonical governance responsibilities of Catholic boards and ministry leaders. Topics also included the application of canon law to PJPs, sponsorship and accountability, and the stewardship of resources for mission.

### Mission

- **Mercy Partners Ministry Mission Leads**

In April 2024, Mercy Partners' Ministry Mission Leads gathered to network and reflect on the Inner and Outer Journey of Mercy, guided by Fr. Chris Gleeson SJ.

- **4th Annual Indigenous Encounter Day**

In collaboration with a First Nations working group, Mercy Partners organised the annual Indigenous Encounter Day in Townsville. It featured a dialogue led by Fr. Frank Brennan SJ, titled, *Where to from No*, after the unsuccessful referendum to endorse a First Nations voice to the Australian parliament. The gathering, attended by over sixty participants, including Mercy Partners' ministries, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Catholic leaders such as Bishop Tim Harris, and diocesan clergy, focused on prayer, storytelling, building connections, and planning for ongoing partnerships with First Nations communities. Feedback indicated that it was a deeply reflective experience.

### Review of Formation Directorate

In the latter half of 2024, the Mercy Partners Board initiated a review of its formation services. The objectives of the review included developing a model that aligns with the growth of Mercy Partners ministries, responding to the evolving needs of ministries across health, community services, and education, and clarifying and defining the key formation responsibilities for Mercy Partners and ministry boards.

### Acknowledgments

In the first quarter of 2025, Dr Caroline Thompson and Mrs Libby Blom will conclude their employment at Mercy Partners. Their contributions will leave a legacy, positioning Mercy Partners for the next phase of its formation journey. We are grateful for their work in developing high-quality resources, creating impactful formation programs, mentoring mission leaders, and fostering connections with the wider Church and social justice partners.

We also wish to express our sincere gratitude to the members of the Formation Committee for their expertise, time, and generous contributions.



## Formation Committee Members



### Ms Catherine Bartolo AM

Formation Committee Chair

Ms Catherine Bartolo AM has worked in community services and education for more than 30 years. Ms Bartolo was the previous CEO of YFS Ltd, a community service organisation based in Logan (Brisbane). Catharine led the organisation to support vulnerable and disadvantaged people to build their independence and participation. Catharine's work has included addressing poverty, homelessness, domestic and family violence, child welfare, youth participation, unemployment and financial capacity.

In 2022 Ms Bartolo was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to youth, to social welfare, and to the community of Logan.

Ms Bartolo has held Board positions with Queensland Council of Social Service, Edmund Rice Flexi School Advisory Board and Logan Together as well as collaborative community leadership teams including the Logan City of Choice.



### Mr John Leahy

Mr John Leahy was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Mercy Partners in October 2019.

Mr Leahy was previously engaged as Project Manager, One Mater and played an integral part in the development of the One Mater Project plan. Prior to this Mr Leahy had completed some eighteen years working in the Catholic Health and Aged Care sectors in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. His roles have included Director Finance and Administration, Regional Chief Executive Officer Queensland and Chief Executive Officer Aged Care Services. Preceding this, he was with Mayne Health Group in a financial management role.

Mr Leahy has completed studies in finance and commerce in the United Kingdom and has undertaken additional studies in business management and organisational behaviour. He is an Associate Member Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA), and a Member of Brisbane Catholic Education Council.



### Ms Lisa Eastment

Ms Lisa Eastment was appointed to the committee in September 2018. She is currently Executive Manager – Mission at St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane. Her

previous experience includes Mercy Community Services SEQ Director of Mission Integration and executive roles within the education and government sectors.

Ms Eastment has significant experience as a not-for profit board member. She holds a Master of Ethics and Law from Charles Sturt University, Master of Arts from Australian Catholic University leadership and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



### Mr Geoff Gowdie

Mr Geoff Gowdie was appointed to the committee in October 2017. He had a significant leadership career in Queensland Catholic Schools before moving into Church administration roles for the Archdiocese of Brisbane and then to the position of Church Life and Mission Services Director for the Diocese of Townsville.

Mr Gowdie has served as the Executive Officer for the Centre for Church Life and Mission and then as Director and, subsequently, as Executive Director of Church Life and Mission. In 2014, he served as the Director – Corporate Services for the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC).

Mr Gowdie completed his tenure on the Formation Committee at the end of 2024.



### Dr Caroline Thompson

Dr Caroline Thompson was appointed Director of Formation for Mercy Partners and commenced duties in February 2015. Dr Thompson has worked extensively in secondary education and adult faith formation in Queensland and New South Wales, most recently for the Diocese of Lismore where she served as Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Co-ordinator, Head of Curriculum and Leader of Pedagogy. She completed her doctoral studies in faith leadership in 2011 and has lectured widely on this topic in adult faith formation and leadership programs.

As Director of Formation, Dr Thompson occupies an executive position created to provide leadership and strategic direction for formation opportunities offered by Mercy Partners. She co-ordinates and facilitates delivery of Mercy Partners formation for board members, executive, senior staff and others interested in being part of the mission of Mercy Partners.

Dr Thompson is a member of GAICD, the Catholic Health Australia Mission Committee, the National Catholic Education Committee Mission Committee, the Xavier Theological Foundation Reference Group, the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy Mission Committee and is a leader of the Mission Leaders Community of Practice and the Mercy Mission Formation Network.

## Formation Committee Members



### Ms Lana Turvey-Collins

Ms Lana Turvey-Collins was appointed to the committee in October 2017. She has studied in the areas of mission, Theology and Church, holding bachelor degrees in commerce and

arts and a master's degree in development and human rights. Her present position is the Plenary Council Facilitator for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

Prior to this, Ms Turvey-Collins worked with Catholic Mission, initially as the Diocesan Director for Sydney Archdiocese and Broken Bay Diocese, then with the national team in Zambia and more recently as the National Program Manager for Mission Formation and Professional Development with the national team in Australia.



### Ms Vicki Ward

Ms Vicki Ward has been principal of a number of Catholic secondary schools including Mount Alvernia College, a college in the Franciscan tradition.

Since her retirement, she has worked with the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) in the area of industrial relations and has undertaken many consultancy roles in Catholic schools and other organisations.

Ms Ward completed her tenure on the Formation Committee at the end of 2024.

## Governance and Stewardship Fee Policy Review Working Group

The Governance and Stewardship Fee Policy Review Working Group was established in August 2023 under the authority of the Board of Mercy Partners. The membership of the Working Group is made up of Mr Leslie Jones as the Chair and supported by Mercy Partners' Board Directors Mrs Cheryl Caughley, Mrs Catherine Parker and CEO, Mr John Leahy.

The Working Group have been tasked with reviewing the Governance and Stewardship Fee Policy and make recommendations as to any changes that may need to be made to reflect best practice, trends and possible future ministries joining Mercy Partners.

The Working Group undertook a review of the current methodology for the calculation of Governance and Stewardship Fees and engaged external consultants, BDO, to look at options for the largest ministry. BDO advice considered a number of options and the preferred option is being considered with final decisions to be made in 2025.

In relation to the education ministries, the outcomes from an external review of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission will determine future models



## Governance and Stewardship Fee Policy Review Group



### Mr Les Jones

Chair - Finance, Audit, Risk and Investment Committee

Mr Les Jones served as a Grant Thornton Audit Partner from January 1985 to December 2009 where he had wide involvement with not-for-profit organisations. During his time at Grant Thornton, Mr Jones was head of Assurance Services and was the Office Managing Partner for five years. Internationally, Mr Jones was an active member of the international firm's risk management, client acceptance and audit technology groups. Mr Jones has been a director of various not-for-profit organisations. He is currently a director of Brisbane Housing Company Ltd and Chair of Mercy Partners Finance, Audit, Risk and Investment Committee.

As a Grant Thornton Audit Partner, Mr Jones has contributed to the Professional Education Program for the Australian Institute of Chartered Accountants as both a group leader and a member of the Institute's Education Committee.



### Mrs Cheryl Caughley

Mrs Cheryl Caughley, former Manager of the Archdiocesan Development Fund, completed almost 30 years as an employee of the Archdiocese of Brisbane in 2022. During her career she was involved in partnering with customers within the Archdiocese of Brisbane, as well as a number of interstate and national Catholic entities to support their financial goal to sustain their mission. She was primarily working with Catholic service providers in the areas of Education, Health and Aged Care, Social, Affordable Housing and Social Welfare.

In her career she has held a Board Director role with EREA St James' College and Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee for over 10 years. She has also served on various Archdiocesan committees and Advisory councils and national committees from time to time. More recently, in 2019, she was appointed as a Director of the Board of Brigidine College Ltd Indooroopilly and serves on their sub-Committees of Finance and Risk, Property and Building and Strategic Planning.

Mrs Caughley is a generalist and brings to the Mercy Partners Board experience working with the existing and emerging PJPs across various industry sectors within the Catholic Church in Australia.



### Mr John Leahy

Mr John Leahy was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Mercy Partners in October 2019.

Mr Leahy was previously engaged as Project Manager, One Mater and played an integral part in the development of the One Mater Project plan. Prior to this Mr Leahy had completed some eighteen years working in the Catholic Health and Aged Care sectors in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. His roles have included Director Finance and Administration, Regional Chief Executive Officer Queensland and Chief Executive Officer Aged Care Services. Preceding this, he was with Mayne Health Group in a financial management role.

Mr Leahy has completed studies in finance and commerce in the United Kingdom and has undertaken additional studies in business management and organisational behaviour. He is an Associate Member Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA), and a Member of Brisbane Catholic Education Council.



### Mrs Catherine Parker

Mercy Partners Stewards appointed Mrs Parker to Mercy Partners Board in September 2020. Mrs Parker is a lawyer, and experienced risk management and governance executive. Her desire to make a tangible difference has seen her engage with a number of not-for-profit enterprises including Lourdes Hill College, where she served as a Director and Chair of the Governance and Risk Committee.

Mrs Parker works with YMCA and has been active in their Youth Parliament program.

# Conclusion

Throughout 2024, Mercy Partners has continued to remain focused on serving the mission of the Church through its sponsorship of its Aged Care, Community and Disability Services, Education, Health and Social Enterprise ministries.

The Board of Mercy Partners acknowledges and is thankful for the trust the founding Congregations/Orders have placed in Mercy Partners and pledge to continue the work of the Congregations/Orders and the great affection they have for their ministries. All ministries remain committed to the mission of Jesus to serve all in a spirit of compassion, justice, respect and hope.

Mercy Partners continues to steadily grow and expand their ministries as they are called upon by the Congregations/Orders who are looking to transition their ministries. The Board of Mercy Partners is aware of the responsibilities involved in the governance of ministries that have been transitioned from religious Congregations/Orders and takes great care to ensure their Catholic identity is preserved and ongoing stewardship is maintained.





Significant achievements and events in 2024 included:

- Completion of a review of the Board's governance performance, effectiveness and commitment to continuous governance improvement. Recommendations from the review commenced being implemented in October 2024 and will take 12 months to be fully implemented.
- On 18 April 2024, Mercy Partners become the sole member and canonical sponsor of Whitefriars College, based in Donvale, Melbourne and is the first boys' school to be transitioned into Mercy Partners.
- Preparation for the transition of Our Lady of Sion College and the Mercy Foundation continued throughout 2024 with the transitions now scheduled to take place in early 2025.
- Mercy Partners' Education Collaboration Committee organised two education ministry gatherings – the Education Ministries Leaders Gathering and the Business Managers Gathering and provided an opportunity to connect, collaborate and build relationships across the education ministries. Regular catch ups were scheduled with the non-education ministries to assist with challenges being experienced. In addition, each ministry was invited to present to the Mercy Partners Board an update on their strategic plan, current challenges being experienced and any potential future concerns.
- To ensure the effectiveness of Mercy Partners' organisational structure and resources, a review was undertaken. As part of this, a survey was undertaken of its ministries to understand the ministries' satisfaction with the existing Mercy Partners formation support available along with published resources. The results of which will be used to design a future-focused formation model which will be launched in 2025.
- A request to ministries was undertaken for them to report in their Board meeting minutes, details of the formation undertaken as each Board meeting. The outcome of this is that it confirms that the ministry is working through the Formation Framework and to identify opportunities to provide further formation support to ministries.
- Mercy Partners Education Collaboration Committee developed detailed guidelines for their education ministries to follow when appointing a new Principal.
- The Nudgee Trust and the Missionary Franciscan Sisters Trust continued to award grants in accordance with the terms of their Deeds. In 2024, the Nudgee Trust awarded grants totaling \$1.8m and for the first time all focused on capital expenditure. The Missionary Franciscan Sisters Trust disbursed a total of 19 grants, totaling over \$300,000.
- The primary focus of formation initiatives in 2024 was personal spirituality which forms part of Mercy Partners' formation framework. Key highlights included the holding of Lenten and Advent Retreats, introduction of the Carmelite charism and launch of the book, *Enflamed with God's Love – Preserving, Nurturing and Reimagining the Franciscan Charism*, and new prayer and meeting resource, *The Synodal Way*. Mercy Partners also held workshops on Catholic social teaching, Church history, and tradition.
- Ministry boards directors were invited to participate in governance-focused formation sessions on the emerging significance of Public Juridic Persons (PJP) in the Church, as well as civil and canonical governance responsibilities of Catholic boards and ministry leaders.
- Mercy Partners continued to build upon the valued established relationships it has with the Bishops of the Dioceses in which it operates. Mercy Partners has also demonstrated its strong networking relationships with its ministries and continue to participate in numerous Catholic communities in order to strengthen advocacy and the Catholic voice.
- Mercy Partners continues to recognise the importance of ongoing financial sustainability and has undertaken the relevant steps to ensure it is sustainable both now and into the future.





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