

Short Histories

Use this fact sheet to learn more about St Mary's Cathedral after your visit.

Catholic Education

Education was one of the very first ministries of the Catholic Church in Western Australia. When John Brady returned from Europe in 1846, having been made the first Bishop of the Diocese of Perth, he brought with him a group of Sisters of Mercy.

The Sisters of Mercy created schools almost immediately after arriving and this was beginning of what has become a thriving Catholic education system in Western Australia. The Sisters also made a significant contribution to Western Australia more broadly in establishing the first continuous surviving school. Many of the other schools established in Western Australia during the 1840s were very short-lived. Below there are some newspaper articles included which detail early development of the Catholic education in the Cathedral precinct and surrounding area.

TO BUILDERS AND OTHERS

TENDERS for the erection of a Catholic Seminary in Perth, will be received by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Brady, Catholic Bishop, until 2 P. M. on Friday the 20th inst. Plans and specifications of the intended building may be seen on application to Mr. B. Smith. The Tenders may include the whole or be only for separate portions of the work. Perth, Feb. 3, 1846.

Perth Gazette, 7 February 1846.

PERTH CATHOLIC COLLEGE

March 6, 1846

The Public are hereby respectfully informed that the Right Rev. Dr. Brady has opened a Literary Institute in Perth, which has already the faculties and advantages of affording general instruction, not only to the rising youth of Perth and its vicinity, but to all lovers of Literature throughout the colony, who may avail themselves of the opportunity of receiving a solid, useful, and ornamental education, as well in Mathematics and Philosophy, as in the various Languages commonly taught in the Colleges of Europe.

For the establishing of this new College, Dr. Brady has brought from Europe, Professors, whose Literary qualifications and experience, it is hoped, will insure success for the College, and merit, under his auspices, the esteem of a discerning and enlightened public. The College is open for students of all religious denominations, who can produce testimonial of character and be recommended by some respectable men of known standing in the Colony...

The site of the College is in the suburbs of Perth, retired from the bustle of the town and sequestered from every distraction; immediately over it is a rising and beautiful hill, which commands a delightful prospect of Perth, the Swan River, and all the variegated and picturesque scenery which environs the town; this will serve for recreation grounds, and is exceedingly well adapted for invigorating the spirits and preserving the health.

Classes shall be arranged in the following departments, viz:—Orthography, Reading, Penmanship, Arithmetic, Book-keeping, English grammar, Rhetoric, Elocution, Logic, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Algebra, Geometry, Plane and Spherical Trigonometry, Conic Sections, Differential and Integral Calculus, Mensuration, Navigation, Theory and Practice of Land Surveying, Geography, History, and the Use of the Globes; also the Greek, Latin, French, and Italian languages.

Terms:—For Boarders £25 per annum, payable half yearly in advance; Day students, £4 per annum, payable quarterly in advance.

Perth Gazette, March 1846.

The Inhabitants of Perth and its vicinity, are hereby informed that Public Lectures on Grammar and Logic will be given every Saturday evening in the Catholic College, by John O'Reilly, Professor of Mathematics and Philosophy. Those disposed to attend should be there by 5 o'clock, p.m.—Free admittance.

March 21, 1846.

Perth Gazette, 21 March 1846.



First Teachers Conference at Loreto Convent, Adelaide Tce Perth. Archbishop Clune with Senior Inspectors Clubb & Klein from Education Department, 1924.
Archives Office, photograph ALB 32_47



Catholic Schools seen from the steeple of St Mary's Cathedral: Door on Victoria Square to old St Joseph's School, now Mercedes College.
Archives Office, photograph, ALB 28_62



St Pat's Boys School corner Lord and Wellington Streets, Perth, 1966.
Archives Office, photograph Alb 33_31



J. M. Barry, headmaster, with students outside the government assisted school in Irwin Street in January, 1894. The school later became St Patrick's.
Archives Office, photograph ALB33_28