



Brother R Julian McDonald
Chancellor CFC AO

Chancellor's foreword

As we begin 2009, it is my pleasure to report on the first full year of Australian Catholic University under the leadership of our new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Greg Craven, who joined us with an already distinguished career in academic, legal and public life. Professor Craven has built upon the extraordinary work of his distinguished predecessor, Professor Peter Sheehan AO.

As a notable social commentator, Professor Craven joins a strong tradition of ACU staff, including Professor Father Frank Brennan SJ, Professor Raimond Gaita, Dr Neil Ormerod and Professor Jude Butcher CFC, commenting incisively on Australian life and its practical and moral dilemmas. It is significant that both Professor Craven and Professor Father Frank Brennan were both invited to participate in the Prime Minister's Summit held in Canberra in April.

This year, Australian Catholic University has had its own summit discussions. Numerous inclusive meetings have been held, discussion papers circulated and staff ideas elicited. It has been a year of review for the Vice-Chancellor, opening the way for him to initiate constructive change, particularly in the University's administrative structure and in the introduction of new courses and programs.

Most of these changes will not become completely effective until 2009 and they will be included in the 2009 Annual Report. Some significant changes, however, have already been introduced. Among these was the Early Achievers' Program. This was designed to attract wider enrolment interest in the University, while demonstrating its Mission in a commitment to community.

The program takes into account documented involvement in church, school, cultural and sporting endeavours for both school leavers and non-school leavers, as well as university entry scores or, in the case of older applicants, professional experience and tertiary study capacity.

The inclusion of community engagement among entry criteria is in keeping with the underlying ethos of a Catholic university – the unity of faith and reason, of strong academic learning and purposeful social action, of a concern for intellectual and cultural growth with an equal Christian concern for those less fortunate.

The program, itself innovative in the Australian university scene, has been met with great interest by the broad community, with a far greater number of applications than anticipated and, as detailed by the Vice-Chancellor, a substantial growth in enrolments for 2009.

A second significant initiative has been the establishment of the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy in recognition of a central area of the University's research, teaching and traditional strengths. All our endeavours are enriched by the University's commitment to theology and philosophy, crucial to a Catholic university's very existence. It is fitting therefore to have a faculty where our long-standing teaching, research and outstanding staff in philosophy and theology are to be focused on a new tradition of opportunity and achievement. This, our fourth faculty, will begin offering courses in 2009.

There has been a focus during the year on research, in each of our three faculties – Arts and Sciences, Health Sciences and Education – as well as in our research centres, flagships and institutes. A significant proportion of this research has been collaborative, with academics at other universities

and institutions, with our partners in Catholic education and health, or with other overseas and local community partners.

This research and related awards are detailed in the pages of this report. Whether the research has been into methods of raising the numeracy levels of indigenous children in northern Queensland or into improving screening practices for depression in heart-attack victims in Melbourne, it is gratifying to note that it is imbued with the University's Mission and values.

I express my gratitude to all who have worked so hard to make the year of 2008, with its challenges and changes, a shared success. I commend this annual report of The Australian Catholic University as, not just a financial document of the institution's year, but as a clear picture of the community we value so greatly.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Julian McDonald". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brother R Julian McDonald CFC AO
Chancellor