Date: 9 September 2016

Subject: Becoming a Principal in the west is the opportunity of a lifetime

Becoming a Principal in the west is the opportunity of a lifetime, according to Nicole de Vries, Principal of Our Lady’s Catholic Primary School in Longreach, as she reflects on her time in the small rural community.

After two years in Longreach, Mrs de Vries will take up a leadership position in Maroochydore in 2017, but says she will miss the wonderful Longreach community and the warm, welcoming hospitality of the west.

“People embrace you and are excited to share their home with you. I had heard that there was something special about the west and it didn’t take long to understand why,” Mrs de Vries said.

Catholic Education, Diocese of Rockhampton, recently advertised Principal positions at Our Lady’s and at St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School, Clermont, and Ms de Vries was quick to endorse the position to potential applicants.

“Being a Principal in the west has been extremely rewarding. There are challenges, but these challenges enable leaders to make a difference in the lives of the students and their families. Schools in the far west are considered remote and as a result, they are well supported, offering small classes and fantastic resources. Connections between the school and parish are very strong and this provides a fantastic support network both professionally and personally,” Mrs de Vries said.

“Rural towns are a hive of social and sporting activity – everyone loves to come together for community events whether it’s playing sport, going to the races, participating in charity activities or simply getting together for a backyard barbeque or to enjoy the great outdoors.”

“Modern, well-maintained accommodation and significant allowances make the overall package very attractive and there is tremendous support from Catholic Education so you are never alone,” Mrs de Vries said.

“If you want to experience leadership in every sense of the word whilst developing friendships for life, come teach in the west,” Mrs de Vries said.

Catholic Education Assistant Director: Schools - Western Region, Ross Jones, said leadership positions in the west brought with them unique opportunities for professional development and an amazing opportunity to experience the charm, history and way of life in Australia’s iconic outback.

“Leaders in western schools have access to well-established, strong professional networks and opportunities to gain skills and experience that are perhaps not as readily available in metropolitan centres,” Mr Jones said.

“Mentoring and coaching new staff and making a real difference in the lives of families in rural and remote communities is tremendously rewarding,” he said.

“These communities have a way of life all their own, combined with friendly people, spectacular scenery, amazing wildlife and a vibrant, social lifestyle. It really is a fantastic opportunity,” Mr Jones said.

More information regarding Principal vacancies in rural and remote schools in the Diocese of Rockhampton is available on the Catholic Education website at www.rok.catholic.edu.au or by contacting the Catholic Education Office on 49313600.

Pictured above from left: Ryker Slade, Parish Priest Fr Robert Hollow SM, Olivia Palmer and Principal Nicole de Vries