



26 November 2020

## Fertilising learning

The Council of Catholic School Parents NSW/ACT is proud to announce St Joseph's Primary School, Uralla as the recipient of the 2020 Roger O'Sullivan Memorial Award for Family, School and Community Partnerships for Learning.

The genesis of the "St Joseph's School Sheep Manure Business and School Garden Project" was in 2016 after the school identified a need to further support students' learning needs by involving them in a practical yet meaningful project.

While participation in the Sheep Manure Business is open to any students wishing to join, the core group is usually those students whose learning needs an added "boost". The "business" operates with a student "CEO" under the guidance of a teacher's aide who assists the group in communicating with their customers and organising collection and delivery of bags of sheep manure. The students learn about keeping track of expenses and ensuring that there is a profit which can then be donated back to the school.

The "Snack Patch Garden" fully funded by the profits from the Sheep Manure business, enables students to pick and eat healthy snacks such as strawberries, snow peas and beans during breaks, and harvest fresh produce to take home for their family.

This genuinely collaborative community partnership is an excellent example of parent engagement benefiting student outcomes. Parents and Parishioners assist the project by sourcing shearing sheds for collection of manure and assisting with deliveries.

Mary Hull, teacher St Joseph's Primary School Uralla, said "The sheep manure business has been a valuable learning tool. It connects the participating students to the community, the students have learnt how to express themselves in phone calls, conversations and letters of thanks. Most of all, it has contributed to their self-esteem and value of self-worth in being able to delve into a real-life project."

In recognition of the high standard of submissions the judging panel recommended two new awards. Congratulations to St Catherine's Catholic College, Singleton recipient of the Highly Commended Award and St Joseph's Primary School, Laurieton an Encouragement Award. Peter Grace, Executive Director Council of Catholic School Parents NSW/ACT, thanks the judging panel and congratulates all communities for their initiatives to improve student learning outcomes.

For more information please contact Clare Dunstan Media and Communications Officer CCSP  
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## VIDEO

We spoke to students, staff, parents and community members about the Sheep Manure Business and the impact it's had on everyone involved.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW](#)



## Background for Media

- ... The Council of Catholic School Parents CCSP NSW/ACT assists parents and carers by advocating on relevant issues that have an impact on the education of Catholic school students.
- ... More than 50 years of research has shown that family, school and community engagement improves student learning outcomes.
- ... In 2014 to encourage the development of strong family and school partnerships CCSP created the Roger O'Sullivan Memorial Award for Family, School and Community Partnerships for Learning.
- ... This award is for a school community, including parents and carers, that can demonstrate exemplary practice in bridging the gap between home and school to enhance the learning outcomes of students.
- ... At the heart of this award are family, school and community partnerships in which the family and community are authentically engaged.

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- ... Roger O'Sullivan was the first Executive Officer of the Council of Catholic School Parents.
- ... Roger O'Sullivan made an extraordinary contribution to Catholic education in NSW and nationally throughout his long and distinguished career as an educator, leader and advocate.
- ... The award recipient will receive a trophy and \$4,000 to support the further development of the project.

#### Presentation of the Award

**Date:** Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December

**Time:** 11am

**Location:** St Joseph's School, Wood Street Uralla

(Photographs can be provided after the event)

#### Testimonials from St Joseph's Primary School Uralla

##### **A Parent**

I was so happy to see how my children blossomed with a stronger self-esteem through their participation in the Joey's Sheep Manure Business. It also gave us a chance to be involved as a whole family when we'd go collecting and delivering the manure. My son and daughter learnt so many things about themselves and society that they might not have learnt in the classroom alone. My children loved the practical side of this activity and learnt about communicating with adults and many things about running a little business. But most of all, they were able to take pride in their new abilities and feel good about themselves.

*Nicola*

##### **A Student**

The sheep manure business has helped me to be in touch with the community because of the phone calls to the customers to ask if they need manure for their gardens. I also enjoy the family time Mum and I had together when we went to a farm to collect the manure. It was great to have an experience together where I could teach her how to shovel manure!

*Malakye*





### **A Customer**

I would like to thank the students of St Joseph's School for their service to our community with their 'sheep manure' project. It is so good to have a source for collecting manure to improve the quality of our vegetable garden and to help the environment by reusing a product that is not damaging to the environment. This natural fertiliser helps us as a family to produce organic vegetables, therefore living a healthier life. Many thanks.

*Dawn Toomey  
Warwick Street  
Uralla*

### **A Farmer**

Having worked alongside some of the students from St Joseph's gardening group (and their parents) cleaning sheep manure from under a shearing shed, I was very impressed with their enthusiasm toward the job at hand and their plans to enhance the school grounds with trees, shrubs, flower beds and a vegetable garden. This extra-curricular project which is overseen by the staff and parents with the students collecting the sheep manure and bagging it ready for sale is a wonderful community building experience within the school and the wider Uralla community as the students also have to talk to their clients and organise pickup and delivery of bagged or bulk sheep manure.

*Gerard Ryan  
URALLA*

