

New research shows lifelong benefits of Catholic schooling

New research using the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey data has found that people who attended Catholic schools are likely to see lifelong benefits in employment status, general health and life satisfaction.

Professor Elizabeth Labone, Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA), said that 'this innovative research quantifies what people in our sector know intuitively, that Catholic schools do a great job preparing students for life.'

The research was undertaken by a team in the Centre for International Research on Education Systems (CIRES) at Victoria University and commissioned by VCEA.

The research found that on average, there are both personal and community benefits of Catholic schooling. People who attended Catholic schools are on average more likely to be employed, and to earn higher wages, than government school attendees. The average wage difference ranges between four per cent to 11 per cent. In addition, Catholic school attendees are more likely to work in an industry or sector that directly benefits the public and were more likely to donate to charity. The report also found that Catholic school attendance had a positive average impact on personal health and life satisfaction scores. These findings were statistically significant and include adjustments to the data to isolate the impact of attendance at a Catholic school from other individual and family characteristics and influences.

'By educating the whole person, Catholic schools support the development of well-rounded individuals who will succeed and be happy and confident in the world during and after their schooling, whatever path they choose through life,' said Professor Labone.

'Parents are increasingly looking for this kind of holistic approach, which is why a growing number of families are choosing one of the affordable Catholic schooling options available across the state,' she said.

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services, the HILDA Survey is a nationally representative longitudinal study that follows the lives of more than 17,000 Australians each year. The Melbourne Institute at the University of Melbourne is responsible for the design and management of the [HILDA Survey](#). Since 2001 it has collected information on many aspects of life in Australia, including household and family relationships, income and work, and health and education. The same households are surveyed each year.

The research was led by Mr Andrew Wade, who has over 20 years' experience in public policy analysis and research, most of which has focused on education and skill formation among Australians, and the interface with the labour market. The report, plus video commentary from Mr Wade, is available on the VCEA website at vcea.catholic.edu.au/lifelongbenefits.

VCEA is the peak body for Catholic school education in Victoria. There are more than 159,800 families who choose to send 215,300 students to the 495 Catholic schools in Victoria. This represents 1 in 5 Victorian students.

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