



# SACRED HEART COLLEGE

## RNDM HISTORY OF SACRED HEART COLLEGE SORRENTO

In 1897, five Sisters from Christchurch, New Zealand were sent to Perth after an invitation from the then Bishop of Perth, Bishop Matthew Gibney. The site for a convent, chapel and school was selected at Highgate Hill and a foundation stone was laid on 18 September, 1898. The facility progressed to become a secondary girl's school and in 1901 the Education Department of Western Australia placed Sacred Heart on a list of approved secondary schools.

Soon after their arrival in WA, the Sisters also moved into the rural areas of the State and established schools in Busselton (1903), Wagin (1914), Narrogin (1915) and Katanning (1926).

During the 1950s and 60s there was increased demand for secondary education across all sectors. The demand for places at the boarding facility at Sacred Heart, Highgate was also increasing, with students from Wagin, Katanning and Narrogin being sent to continue their education "with the Sisters".

In 1958, land was purchased in Sorrento, which in those days was at the extreme limits of West Coast Highway. Eight years later in 1966, building works commenced at the site and in April 1967, the Sisters and boarding students moved to the new buildings at Sacred Heart College, Sorrento.

Over the next 20 years, significant changes occurred which helped form the current face of the College. The first came in 1977 when the College became co-educational. This was followed with the appointment in 1985 of the first lay Principal. Whilst the change in leadership was effected, the Sisters remained directly responsible for the day-to-day management of the College. This arrangement remained until 1989 when the Sisters withdrew and Sacred Heart College became part of the Diocesan System of Schools managed by the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia. At the end of 1998, the doors of the boarding complex closed for the last time. It was the end of one era and the beginning of another. In 2000, the last of the staff members associated with the Sisters, Molly O'Sullivan retired.

The Sacred Heart College of today has changed significantly since its inception. There has been an extensive building and rebuilding program as the College increased in size to the point where it currently caters to some 1200 students.

The College has expanded its facilities to support the four pillars: Spiritual, Academic, Sporting and Cultural. The RNDM Performing Arts Centre, named in honour of our founders, seats 560 persons in a professional theatre and is probably the best school theatre in Western Australia.