**Statement of Special Religious Character**

**Approved by the Emmaus College Board October 2015**

Emmaus Collegethrough its Vision Statement acknowledges that each person is uniquely created in the image of God and encourages each member of its community to live a life inspired by the teachings of Jesus. To be fully alive means to grow, and growth requires learning. The school values lifelong learning and the development of the whole person.

Through our Mission, we strive to give witness to the defining features of a Catholic school –

*The educational mission of Emmaus College is to provide holistic, relevant, Catholic secondary education to students and families who seek its values.*

*This mission is enacted through a wide variety of learning experiences which are enriching and founded on right relationships.*

*The pastoral mission of Emmaus College is to be a community of care, which gives witness to the message of Jesus.*

*This mission is enacted through pastoral support that encourages each person to accept responsibility for their choices and to live justly.*

*The religious/spiritual mission of Emmaus College is to have a clear Catholic identity that is open and inclusive.*

*As part of a wider faith tradition, this mission is enacted through the provision of opportunities for spiritual growth of the community and all its members.*

St Stanislaus College, founded by the Christian Brothers as a boys’ school, opened in 1958 on the site of the Emmaus College Main Street campus. The Sisters of Mercy pioneered secondary education for girls in North Rockhampton by introducing a secondary section to St Mary’s school in 1961.

In 1964, junior secondary education for girls in North Rockhampton was transferred to Marian Secondary School for Girls, a school founded by Mary MacKillop’s order – the Sisters of St Joseph. This school commenced on the current Yaamba Road site. St Stanislaus College expanded its junior secondary education to the Yaamba Road site, with its primary department continuing to operate on the Main Street site.

Emmaus (Senior) College was established on the Main Street site in 1983 as a Years 11 and 12 co-educational college. The decision to unite the two junior secondary colleges, St Stanislaus College and Marian Secondary School for Girls, was ultimately carried out in 1985. The new college, Marian/St Stanislaus College, provided co-educational junior secondary education. Both Marian/St Stanislaus College and the original Emmaus (Senior) College ceased operation in December, 1992. The current Emmaus College was established in 1993.

Bishop Bernard Wallace D.D. chose the name “Emmaus College” with particular regard to the significance of the decisions made by young people of senior secondary age. Such times of decision, represented graphically by the cross roads of the Emmaus badge, are informed by knowledge of Christ journeying with these students and providing guidance in their choices.

Emmaus College strives to build upon the values and traditions of its predecessor colleges to provide quality Catholic education in Rockhampton.

Emmaus College operates on two sites. While there is some sharing of facilities and student travel between sites to use specialist areas, the Yaamba Road site is the home of Years 7-9 students, and Main

Street Years 10-12 students. This division of one school allows for the provision on each site of a style of education and a way of dealing with students that best suits their developmental stages.

Reflection on the Emmaus story in Luke’s Gospel anchors our school’s practices in the teachings and way of life of Jesus. The central ideas taken from the Emmaus Story are –

**Journey** Seeing every human life as an on-going exploration and discovery.

**Welcoming** Understanding that God might be encountered in each person whose path we cross.

**Community** Promoting a faith based on the community’s openness to recognising God in the events of daily life.

**Hope** Providing nurture and encouragement for those who struggle.

**Commitment** Developing an environment where people are prepared to commit themselves to doing

 what God calls them to do.

**Enthusiasm** Acting out the dictates of our hearts. Emmaus College stands for the liberation of

 Christ’s holy fire that burns within every disciple.

The journey of discovery, enlightenment and commitment made by the disciples on the road to Emmaus can be repeated in all our lives. A student’s time at Emmaus will be an important part of his/her journey of life, and the college is structured to meet the needs of students at different stages of their lives. The pre-eminent belief of the college is that the person and teachings of Jesus can give direction, strength and joy to all who participate in the Emmaus journey.