



## CAMPUS QUIETLY THRIVING THROUGH COVID CHALLENGES

The Ballarat (Aquinas) Campus of Australian Catholic University (ACU) is starting to see a gradual return of staff and students after almost two months of working and studying remotely.

The university had adapted quickly to COVID-19 restrictions, moving the bulk of classes online from the end of March, with most staff working from home. However, the campus has stayed open to essential staff and for students to access facilities like the library. ACU is slowly bringing people back to Aquinas, within government guidelines. From May 25, nursing and paramedicine students will return to take up practical work that had been delayed so they can finish before the end of Semester 1.



During that time, the university looked at the best ways to support both our student and staff communities. All support services like Campus Ministry, counselling, advocacy, IT and other amenities have been made available online, many expanding their hours to accommodate greater demand. An urgent relief fund was established and funds were quickly raised by the university, staff giving and donor contributions to help students in immediate need.

ACU introduced a range of measures to offer personal, practical, academic and financial support for students who have experienced disruption to their studies as a result of the pandemic.



In preparation of having more people on campus, we have taken steps to ensure health and safety. Some services, thoroughfares and amenities have been modified to provide maximum safety for staff, students and visitors and we are continuing to enforce strict social distancing. Classes in Semester 2, which begins at the end of July, will be a hybrid of on-campus and online.

Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Greg Craven said it was a measure of our

ACU community's fortitude and resilience in how they have responded to so many changes with little notice. It is not always easy but I am encouraged by our ability to continue work and studies through the pandemic.