

Mrs Sheena Barber
Principal-Elect, Mercedes College
Semester Two, 2008

Mrs Sheena Barber has been involved in Catholic Education for over thirty years, first as a classroom teacher, then as leader in a number of different positions, both in schools and in the Catholic Education Office of Western Australian (CEOWA). Her association with the Sisters of Mercy began when she completed Years Eleven and Twelve as one of the first group of students at Mercedes as it currently exists.

Sheena completed her degree at the University of Western Australia, majoring in music and pursued post graduate study in Religious Education.

Sheena and Rob have four children and five grandchildren. They spent twenty years as an RAAF family, during which time Sheena returned to teaching at MacKillop College in Werribee, Victoria, as Head of Music. After six years in that role the family returned to Perth and in the ensuing years Sheena worked in Catholic Education here in WA.

Sheena's first teaching role back in WA was at Santa Maria College (1988 – 1990). From 1991 to 1993 she was Religious Education Coordinator at St Norbert College in Queens Park before going into the CEOWA to work as a consultant with the secondary Religious Education team (1994 – 1996).

Sheena returned to a school, spending the next four years as Head of Secondary at St Brigid's College in Lesmurdie where she became immersed again in the Mercy tradition. It was during this time too, that Sheena developed a passion for curriculum which was to stand her in good stead for her role as Regional Officer for the Catholic Education Office in Geraldton (2001 – 2004). Sheena would say that the most rewarding part of this role was the opportunity to work closely with the Catholic primary schools in the region and to understand the importance for students of good transition through the phases of schooling. She believed that secondary teachers had much to learn from their primary colleagues and vice versa and that developing the relationship between primary and secondary classroom teachers was an imperative.

In 2005 Sheena returned to work in the CEOWA in Perth as coordinator of the Learning and Teaching Team, Years 7 to 12 in that first year; then Kindergarten to Year 12 in the next two years. This was a period of extensive curriculum change throughout Australia and Sheena worked within many Catholic schools across the state, supporting school leaders and their staff in implementing the many changes, while at the same time, developing links with the many education providers in WA and Australia as a whole.

In 2008 Sheena took on the role of Strategic Integration Manager: Strategy and Collaboration within the Catholic Education Office, assisting with the implementation of the CEOWA Strategic Plan.

Sheena is looking forward to returning again to a Mercy school community.

'I have the greatest respect for the history and tradition that is the foundation of Mercedes College and I look forward to journeying with the whole college community in moving Mercedes well into the twenty-first century and to becoming the absolute Catholic school of choice for girls in Perth.'