Courses cater for people both within and beyond the mainstream, and aim to awaken awareness in students of the needs of people who have been marginalised, or have disabilities.

“Although we have one of the largest faculties of education in Australia, the student population is small on each campus,” said Dean of Education Professor Marie Emmitt.

“There is a very strong caring community on each campus. Staff know students as individuals, not just numbers, and students get to know and help each other in ways which will extend well into their professional careers.”

Head of the School of Education (NSW) Dr Marea Nicholson said many of the School’s programs were designed with social justice in mind. These include Teach our Mob, fostering excellence in the education of Indigenous students (see page 9); quality teaching programs in physics and mathematics; inclusive education and disability services (see page 8); and modelling and shadowing programs to welcome students from underprivileged backgrounds to the world of higher education.

In addition, the School values its close links with policy-making bodies within the public and Catholic education systems, ensuring graduates’ degrees are relevant to the needs of diverse communities, and effectively preparing them for careers in education and related fields.

‘Committed and passionate’ teachers

Close professional links are appreciated by partner organisations such as Catholic Education Offices (CEOs) across Australia.

“We want committed and passionate teachers who can make a difference for the children in our schools, and ACU National has been providing them for a long time,” said Catholic Education Office Sydney representative Mr Mark Rix.

Historical links between Catholic schools and the University’s predecessor colleges mean many current principals and teachers have strong associations with ACU National, and a host of collaborative projects continue at all levels, involving a range of CEOs.

CEO representatives help review the University’s courses, a number of CEO staff further their own higher education through the University’s Flagship for Creative and Authentic Leadership and other programs, and many ACU National education students undertake their field experience in Catholic schools.

“The University’s staff are very committed,” Mr Rix said. “We appreciate their dedication and see first hand the impact of their work.

“We like the students’ strong sense of social justice and the fact they have experienced community engagement in their second year of study.

“The embedding of religious education is also critical to us. We need teachers who can tell the Catholic story to their students. That is very much about who we are.”

CEO Sydney donates up to $200,000 each year in scholarships and incentives to current or prospective ACU National students as part of its teaching scholarship program. “There is no question: graduates from ACU National are highly regarded.”

Catholic Education Office of Parramatta and the Catholic Schools Office, Broken Bay, also offer scholarships.
Meeting the needs of schools and communities

**Brisbane Catholic Education Employees Services Director Mr Kevin Twomey:** “Brisbane Catholic Education values the quality of the education graduates at the Australian Catholic University as their courses prepare students for our Catholic and ecumenical schools. These graduates are highly regarded and competitive with other universities in the current job climate.”

**Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Director of Religious Education Mr Liam Davison:** “Graduates from ACU National are very attuned to the culture of schools in the Ballarat diocese, and we appreciate the quality of those graduates who come into our schools. The Ballarat Campus of ACU National is a valued part of our diocesan education community. The predecessor college, Aquinas College, was a much-loved institution in the city of Ballarat and the diocese, and the quality of that relationship has continued. There is a very close degree of collaboration between ourselves and the University in practical and symbolic ways through that link.”

**Catholic Diocese of Sale Director of Catholic Education Dr Therese D’Orsa:** “We always find the graduates from ACU National to be very well prepared. We have excellent relations with the ACU National staff who support them. Our bursary programs support four new education students every year over their four-year degree. We feel we have a real partnership with the University, and are very positive about the graduates.”

**Archdiocese of Melbourne Catholic Education Office School Services Assistant Director Ms Debra Punton:** “Catholic primary and secondary schools aspire to the employment of competent, dedicated and creative teachers who have a passion for learning and teaching. Australian Catholic University, through the courses, programs and opportunities it offers, well supports Catholic schools in this endeavour.”

**Queensland Catholic Education Commission Executive Director Mr Mike Byrne:** “I know that graduates from ACU National are very highly regarded. We are always delighted to welcome them in our school communities in their formative years and as teachers. They bring with them strong professional credentials to teach effectively in Catholic schools and to live their faith within our school communities.”