



Network Launches: Youth+ Schools and Services

In 2013 Edmund Rice Education Australia, Youth+ officially launched two networks of Flexible Learning Centres (FLCs) in Queensland following a period of growth and consolidation. Paul Flanders and Tim Young are the Principals of these two networks. Another interstate network of schools and new initiatives in Queensland operates across Western Australia, Victoria, Northern Territory and New South Wales. These FLCs are supported by the Youth+ National Team under the leadership of Dale Murray.

This article documents the speech presented at the launch of the Queensland Flexi Schools Networks (FSN) including Marlene Moore FSN and Xavier FSN. Brother Terry Kingston, the founding Principal of the very first Flexible Learning Centre in Queensland in the 1980s, Centre Education Programme, addressed the Youth+ staff and the family of Marlene Moore, at the Whole Staff Conference in July 2013. Further details of the background stories of Marlene Moore and Francis Xavier are included.

The Queensland Flexi Schools Networks (FSN): Marlene Moore FSN and Xavier FSN Br Terry Kingston

In honour of Marlene Moore

I am really pleased to be here tonight – to be part of the Youth+ group. It is great to gaze out at this gathering and to realise that so many young people are in such capable hands.

Marlene Moore epitomised what the Flexible Learning Centres (FLCs) are about. She herself endured much suffering both as an aboriginal woman of the stolen generation, and also from the many sicknesses she had to contend with. She had a unique ability to attract those who were suffering or in trouble, and her great gift was to help them see the beauty behind all of the brokenness.

Let me tell just one Marlene story. She took the five young ones on a holiday to Cairns. Frederick and I went in to Roma Street Station to meet the

Sunlander train and pick up the holiday mob. Here was Marlene, the kids and all the luggage on the platform surrounded by a big mob of people. I'll guarantee that at least half the passengers on the train came up to say goodbye. That was another of Marlene's great gifts: when she met someone she made them feel special.

It is also the great gift you all continue to bring to the FLCs; you make these young people feel special and, for many it is the first time they have experienced that feeling.

The brochure for Marlene's funeral had on the front: "her beauty lingers". It is very fitting that her beauty will continue to linger in the work of the FLCs she loved so dearly.



Photo published with permission of the Moore Family

The naming

We are naming our group of schools *The Marlene Moore Flexi Schools Network* because Marlene was a wonderful and inspirational key worker in the very first Edmund Rice Education Youth+ Flexible Learning Centre.

She embodied the spirit that continues to live on in these nurturing, supportive and loving learning communities. Marlene Moore showed that it is never too late to re-engage in and continue your education even when to do so involves strength, resilience and work to overcome the conditions that society and others impose on you. She devoted her life to enriching the lives and realising the potential of those she served both in her family and in her community.

The person behind the name

Marlene Moore (nee Willmot) was a strong and determined Aboriginal woman who faced and overcame significant adversity in her life. She was born in 1945, the seventh of eight children and a member of the Wakka Wakka people of Gayndah in Queensland. One of the *Stolen Generation*, Marlene, at only two years of age, along with her brothers and sisters, was taken from her mother and relocated in the Cherbourg Mission. She was kept at Cherbourg until she was approximately 15 years of age and was then sent out to work as a domestic. Despite her considerable academic potential (eg Honours in the 1956 National Sunday School Exam, Junior A section), during her decade at Cherbourg, she only received the equivalent of a Grade 3 education and was trained in domestic duties.

From 1969, Marlene and her husband Ray Moore raised their family, mostly in the Brisbane area and moved to Logan in 1975. When her children were all at school, Marlene decided to return to study at Kangaroo Point TAFE College (now part of Southbank Institute of Technology), where she completed studies in Welfare. She also went on to complete early childhood studies through the Creche and Kindergarten Association. With these tertiary qualifications and a strong motivation to help her people, community and family, Marlene spent much of her later life working with various groups and organisations to improve human services within the Logan area. These roles included work within: the Aboriginal Medical Centre, the Logan Creche and Kindergarten Association, the Burragah School, Youth and Family Services (YFS), and the Logan Brothers and Sisters organisation. Marlene was appointed Indigenous Liaison Worker within Centre Education where she also worked as live-in caretaker. Her last few years were spent proudly working as the Indigenous Liaison Officer at Logan Hospital.

"She touched many lives and she filled our lives with colour and joy. ... She lived her life in technicolour – it was full of drama and adventure, laughter and loudness but also gentleness and love. ... She was interested in everyone and invariably made everyone feel so special."

Terry Kingston,
Founding Principal, Centre Education Programme



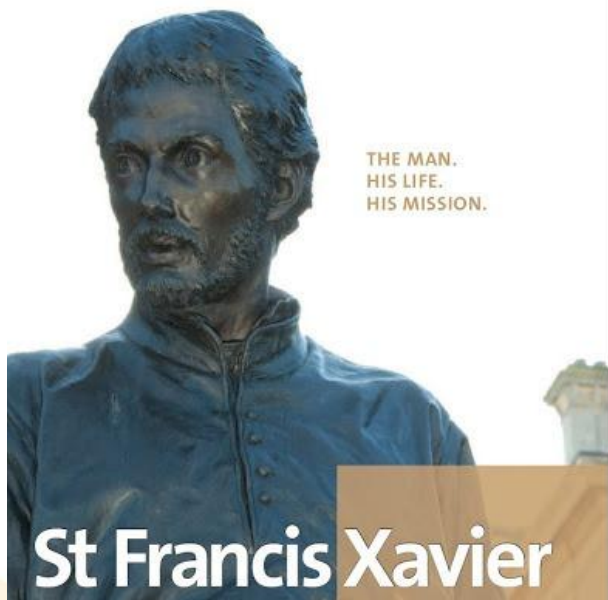
Artwork:
Artist, Hazel Cowburn, *Wakka Wakka woman, Gayndah, Qld*

The schools in the Marlene Moore Flexi Schools network:

- Albert Park FLC (Milton),
- Deception Bay FLC,
- Noosa FLC, and
- Gympie FLC,

For approximately thirty years EREA Youth+ Flexible Learning Centres have provided a place for young people disenfranchised by mainstream education systems, to re-engage with a holistic and flexible learning experience.

The Centres at their heart have an ethos that is inclusive, just, relevant to its time and centred in the social justice framework of the Catholic Church. For many who attend, it is the sole connection with community and becomes a place to participate in the acquisition of common global values based on four principles of operation.



(Br Terry Kingston's speech continued)

The legacy of Xavier

If I could just add a couple of thoughts to Tim Young's introduction to Xavier. Xavier Province of the Christian Brothers (Queensland; Northern Territory; East Timor) lasted for 40 years, from 1967 to 2007, before being incorporated into our present Oceania Province. It was named after St Francis Xavier, a Catholic Saint, but I want to venture a word on Xavier the man.

Francis Xavier was born in Spain in the 1500s, and after becoming a Jesuit priest, he travelled to India; Japan; Borneo; Indonesia; and died on the island of Shangchuan while waiting for a boat to take him to mainland China. All of this in the 1500s!!

I think you will all agree that Xavier was a man prepared and willing to go beyond the expected. It is still the great tradition of the FLC staff to take that step beyond mainstream schooling: indeed, not an easy step at all! So, when you take that step, you do indeed walk in the tradition of Xavier.

These two names of Queensland Flexi Schools Networks, Marlene Moore and Xavier plunge us into our history: they take us back to our beginnings. When we can understand and appreciate our past, then we can begin to move with confidence into our future.

Br Terry Kingston

The schools in the Xavier Flexi Schools network:

- Centre Education Programme (Logan),
- Ipswich FLC,
- Mt Isa FLC
- Townsville FLC

An Overview of the Xavier Flexi Schools Network

Xavier Flexi Schools Network in 2013 comprises four separately registered Non State Schools; the Mount Isa Flexible Learning Centre, the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre, the Ipswich Flexible Learning Centre and The Centre Education Programme. In the near future Inala Flexible Learning Centre will join the network.

Why the name Xavier? The name Xavier recognizes a great Saint of the Church, the enormous contribution of the Christian Brothers to education generally throughout Queensland and the vision and courage of the Brothers to respond to the contemporary needs of young people disenfranchised from education. St Francis Xavier was the patron Saint of the former Christian Brothers Queensland province. St Francis Xavier (1505-1552) was born in Spain and was co-founder of the Jesuits, a teacher and a missionary in India, Indonesia, China and Japan. Following this inspiration it was in Queensland where the Brothers travelled long distances and worked, at one time, from the South East corner and throughout regional Queensland in more than thirty schools. It was the Xavier Province which commenced the Centre Education programme in 1987 and started four more Flexible Learning Centres in 2006 before the commencement of Edmund Rice Education Australia in 2007.

The aim of the Flexible Learning Centres (FLCs) is to respond to the complex needs of young people who have been marginalised from mainstream education. Each school achieves its aim by building honest and authentic relationships with young people and their families, supporting and celebrating the uniqueness and dignity of each individual young person. FLCs provide holistic learning experiences that address the social needs of young people, and promote their emotional, cognitive, spiritual and academic development. The purpose of the learning experiences is to empower young people to take personal responsibility for their actions and learning, achieve greater

autonomy and self-reliance and to engage in the transition to further education and/or employment.

Today the Xavier Flexi Schools cater for over 400 students (aged between 12 and 20 years of age) offering them an exciting and diversified curriculum designed to encourage and support re-engagement with the education system.

Youth+ National Team Network of Schools

- Geraldton FLC, Western Australia
- North Melbourne FLC
- Wollongong FLC
- Alice Springs FLC
- Inala FLC, Brisbane
- Hemmant FLC, Brisbane
- Rockhampton Flexible Learning Arrangement (FLA)
- Southport FLA

