

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## *Good education depends on shared values*

A shared moral purpose and a sense of community values are fundamental necessities for effective education, says Australian Catholic University academic Michael Bezzina.

Michael Bezzina will present the findings of his study into the connection between moral purpose and shared leadership at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) annual conference in Melbourne on Tuesday.

According to the study, an explicit, shared moral purpose is needed to bring about the kind of change and improvement that will deliver desirable student learning in schools.

The study reinforces the importance of a shared sense of purpose, and emphasises the need for this purpose to be clarified through a common conceptual framework and consistency in the use of language. There needs to be clarity and detail in the way the purpose is understood – and in particular about the values that underpin it.

“There is a need for this shared sense of purpose to be grounded in a shared commitment to explicit values,” says Bezzina.

“It is not sufficient to have a broad aspiration. The challenge is to find a way to surface this moral purpose and then to make it part of the discourse of the school so that it can be embedded in practice.”

Bezzina advocates the need for an important shift in the meaning, perspective and scope of leadership in schools in order to build organisational cultures that promote, nurture and support shared leadership that goes beyond the practice of investing control solely in individuals, and that is based on whole-school vision, community values and a shared moral purpose.

Michael Bezzina is an Associate Professor in the School of Educational Leadership at the Australian Catholic University and an author of the Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners program.

The ACER Research Conference 2007, on the theme *The Leadership Challenge: Improving Learning in Schools*, takes place in Melbourne from 12 to 14 August.

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