



CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENT

August 2006

An occasional newsletter published by the
Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation

Welcome to the first issue of Catholic School Parent, prepared by the Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation.

This publication will be published alternatively to the Federation's Triangle Newsletter and is designed to keep you *in touch* with what occurring within Tasmanian Catholic education, from a parent or carers prospective.

Items referred to in this newsletter, or further information, can be found on the Federation website.

Damian von Samorzewski
State Secretary

Parents are the Primary Educators – Are you?

In the June 2006 Triangle the question was asked, 'if effective learning can be achieved for all our children?' It also proposed that effective learning occurs with effective teachers. But what of the parents?

Time and time again, research findings indicate that **the BIGGEST factor that influences a child's learning is parent involvement in that child's life**, both at school and in general.

In this world of excuses, we find it easier to blame others for our own failures. Next time you have a concern or 'issue' over your child's progress at school ask yourself this question, "**What am I doing to help my child succeed in life?**" The answer to that question will guide you to help your child reach their potential. Do not leave it to the goodwill of others, or even worse still, by chance.

Do you need help in your Mission in life, that is, to help your children reach their potential?

The Federation survey into Catholic education in Tasmania, from a parent perspective, will seek your opinions in relation to this type of question. More details will be in the September Triangle Newsletter.

Parents Matter Seminar

The Rite to Exist and How to Exist
Effective Partnerships to support "What is best for the Children"

National Safe School Framework

In 2003, the then Federal Education Minister, in consultation with the states, developed a framework to ensure schools developed and maintained safe school environments.

The Framework consists of a set of **nationally agreed principles for a safe and supportive school environment** and includes appropriate responses which schools can adopt to address issues of bullying, violence, harassment, and child abuse and neglect.

This **framework should be now implemented in all our schools, as per the Federal legislation**. The Director of Catholic Education in Tasmania, Dr Dan White, informed the 2006 Federation Conference that the CEO was supporting Tasmanian Catholic Schools implement this legislation.

The application of the legislation also requires the local school communities be consulted in reviewing school policy and procedures in relation to a safe school environment. Further information can be found at <http://www.dest.gov.au>

**St Patrick's College,
Launceston
Sunday, 22 October 2006
9:30 – 3:30 pm**



School Reports As Simple as A, B - E

Many of you would have received the new A – E Report Card that was implemented due to Federal funding requirements. These were introduced to simplify some of the reporting systems that were in place. Some of these reports had become jargonistic and politically correct.

The Federation, as reported in The Mercury newspaper in July, supports simpler reporting systems, as long as they provide the parents with information that is accurate, correct and includes useful comments.

The Federation does not believe that ranking students against their peers provides information that is relevant or helpful.

Another question that needs to be asked is, 'What does a C really mean?' Dr Ken Rowe of the Australian Council of Educational Research presented a research paper at the 2005 ACER Research Conference informing the attendees that unless student reporting is based on nationally accepted criteria, then they are in effect, useless. Using norm referenced data to guide reporting allows for a 'more meaningful reports'. *"This report of my child's progress at school is great! For the first time, I have descriptions of what my child has achieved, what is currently being achieved, and what has yet to be learnt and achieved. With the teacher's guidance, I now know how best to help my child at home. Before, I had no real idea of what was expected or how to help."*

The Federation survey into Catholic education in Tasmania, from a parent perspective, will seek your opinions in relation to these reports. More details will be in the September Triangle Newsletter.

National Literacy and Numeracy Testing

National literacy and numeracy testing for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 will begin in 2008, following agreement between the Ministers to work together on the national tests, reporting scales and how the tests will be implemented.

The states and territories will also work with the Federal Government to provide advice to parents, directly and through schools, of their eligibility for the Reading Assistance Voucher program.

Parent / Student Partnerships

Have you considered inviting your school's SRC (Student Representative Council) leaders to a P&F meeting?

This would be a great way to hear what the student issues are within your school and ideally generate joint ideas for community building and fundraising events. Collaborating this way is a great model of strong and effective partnerships within the school community which reaps benefits for the school, parents and children.

National Issues

The Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation is an affiliate of the Australian Parents Council (APC) thereby providing a voice for parents in Tasmanian Catholic schools at a national level.

The Executive Officer, and the Treasurer of the Federation – who is also a Vice - President of the APC - recently attended a briefing in Canberra with the Department of Education, Science and Training. These occur twice a year and are two-way meetings that provide the opportunity for parent bodies to be updated on and to provide the parent voice on key national education issues and initiatives including Student Reports, Values Education, Family/School Partnerships, the Australian Certificate of Education, Australian Technical Colleges, developments in Early Childhood Education and Indigenous Education.

The Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation is YOUR voice in advocating for increased funding for our children's education.

Parenting Websites

Children's Health & Information Services

<http://www.cyh.com>

Ken Rigby – Bullying

<http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/>

Getting Active in Tasmania

<http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/healthyliving/exercise/getactive>

Online Australian Student Assessments

<http://www.iachieve.com.au>

**The more you read,
The more you know,
The more you know,
The smarter you grow,
The smarter you grow,
The stronger your voice,
The stronger your voice,
When speaking your mind or
Making your choice!**

