



CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENT

March 2007

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

Welcome to the new year and a particular warm welcome to those parents and carers that have chosen Tasmanian Catholic Education to support you in your life's Mission.

This will be a busy year ahead for your Federation. Archbishop Adrian's address at last year's annual conference laid the foundation to what turned out to be a very constructive year for the State Council. His request for Tasmanian Catholic Education to focus on 'What is best for the children' found the Federation signing a partnership agreement with the Tasmanian Catholic worker's union, the Independent Education Union – Tasmanian Branch in December. At the signing, the Archbishop told those gathered that he was pleased to see action from his words and that he wished to see Tasmanian Catholic education refocus on spreading the Gospel's message.

November also saw the Federation office finalise the 'P&F Manual' to help school P & F office bearers in their role at their local level. These manuals will be distributed at the Federation's annual conference. This initiative was a result of a request made at the 2006 annual conference for the Federation to provide more help and resources for the 'grass roots' of the Federation. Again, the Federation will do whatever it can to help local school P&F's in their Mission.

This year's conference planning is well underway and is to be held at MacKillop College, Mornington on the 28 & 29 of April. Please read the adjoining column to see why this year's conference should not be missed. For registration details, see your school P&F executive, ring the Federation's office or visit our website @ <http://tascathpf.d2.net.au>

Damian von Samorzewski
State Secretary

THE SURVEY.... WE NEVER HAD

Many of you will have noticed that out term 3 survey did not occur in 2006. This is because it looks like the Federation has secured funding to be a part of a federal survey of parent views on Education in the Catholic sector. This funding will allow us to visit regions and open up a personal dialogue with local school communities. More news to follow in the May Triangle.

Please Note - Your opinions, concerns or thoughts can always reach the State Council through your local P&F or you can contact us directly on the below numbers.

NORTH-WEST REGION

Local P & F representatives from the north-west of the state, discussed at the State Council meeting held at Stella Maris Burnie on the 24 / 25 of February, the possibility of holding a 'gathering' once a term for school P&F office bearers in the north-west region. Your thoughts on this will be canvassed at the annual conference.

2007 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MacKillop College, Hobart

28 & 29 April 2007

Theme

Parents Matter
**The Changing Nature of Parent
Engagement & Involvement in
Catholic Education**

Guest Speaker

Andrew Mullins
Principal

Redfield College, Sydney
Our key note speaker for the conference is **Andrew Mullins**. Andrew is the Principal of Redfield College, Dural NSW. This school is a non-systemic Catholic school that was developed and is managed by parents. We have sought his expertise to help the Tasmanian Catholic parent community better understand how parents and friends can develop better working relationships with their schools.

To help this process become a reality, we also have a special guest presenter, **Terry O'Connell**, OAM, Australian Director of Real Justice. Terry will guide us in how we can develop school wide relationships that have their foundation grounded in respect and empathy.

The Federation draws its guidance for this year's conference from the Catholic Church's writing, **The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 1997** and in particular.....page 2



CEO POLICIES – CODE OF CONDUCT

Employees must not behave in ways that a reasonable person would consider to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening. Such conduct might include, but not be restricted to, targeting students with unfair and continued criticism; making excessive or unreasonable demands of others; and making any form, either oral or written (including electronic communication), of derogatory comments to students, parents, work colleagues or the general public. Should such unacceptable behaviour occur, then all recipients of such behaviour have recourse to the processes contained within the school's Grievance Policy.

<http://www.ceo.hobart.catholic.edu.au/documents/CODEOFCONDUCT.pdf>

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*"Parents have a particular important part to play in the educating community, since it is to them that primary and natural responsibility for their children's education belongs. Unfortunately in our day there is widespread tendency to delegate this unique role. **Therefore it is necessary to foster initiatives which encourage commitment, but which provide at the same time the right sort of concrete support which the family needs and which involve it in the Catholic school's educational project. The constant aim of the school therefore should be contact and dialogue with the pupils' families, which should also be encouraged through the promotion of parents' associations, in order to clarify with their indispensable collaboration that personalized approach which is needed for an educational project to be efficacious.**"*

**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!**

QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

In the October Triangle I eluded that parents, as primary educators, need to better support our Catholic school staff if we want to see improved educational outcomes for ALL our children. Why did I say this? Quite simply, because the research says time and time again, that quality teaching and learning can ONLY occur in supportive learning environments.

To highlight this point, Teaching Australia released in February this year a report exploring what recent Australian and international research says about quality teaching and school leadership. **"Quality teaching has a measurable impact on students' cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes"** (page 4). The report also goes on to identify what quality teaching may look like, what effective teachers do differently and the attributes and capabilities of quality teachers and leaders may have.

"Alton-Lee (2003) reported that alignment in practices between teachers and parents/caregivers supported students' skill developments and optimised their achievements. Collaboration and partnership with parents and caregivers with open, honest and two-way communication and participatory decision-making makes an important contribution to quality teaching and improved student outcomes. Quality teaching, therefore, includes encouraging, scaffolding and enabling dialogues between students and their parents/caregivers around school learning." (page 6)

The full report can be access at www.teachingaustralia.edu.au

LATEST AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH ON AUTISM

February this year saw two reports into Autism Spectrum Disorders released. One was by the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders and the other by the Australian government, titled **Early Intervention for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders : A Parents Guide**. (Current Australian research suggest one child in 160 has some form of ASD.)

After reading the research findings from these reports, I wondered how we as a Catholic community can REALLY help those families that need to implement the recommendations and strategies from these research findings. I find it strange at times, that our schools (and we as parents) seem to 'find' funds for fancy gyms, trips overseas etc, but fail to find the extra funds to **"Reach out to the marginalised and disadvantaged"** (TCEC Day of Discernment 30 November 2006) in our own schools. I sometimes wonder if our Catholic schools have been too successful for our own good. Have we forgotten why we are really here.....and why we have our Faith. Sorry, I must go, there's a sale on.....

See <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-child-autbro> and <http://www.autismaus.com.au/aca/pdfs/PrevalenceReport.pdf>

THE NEW TASMANIAN CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION

The new Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) will become a significant qualification marking the end of a person's first stage of lifelong learning after compulsory school. The Tasmanian Qualifications Authority – (TQA) expect the first students to gain this qualification will be those who start Year 11 in 2008.

Students will get this qualification when their achievements in senior secondary education and training show that they meet or do better than TQA standards for participation and achievement, literacy, numeracy, ICT and pathway planning. See <http://www.tqa.tas.gov.au/1906>

