



Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation

50TH YEAR
GOLDEN JUBILEE
1959 - 2009

TCSPPF VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is that parents of children in Catholic Schools be full partners in delivering quality Catholic education

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TRIANGLE NEWSLETTER MARCH 2009

Welcome to our 50th year supporting parents and friends supporting Catholic education in Tasmania.

On 22nd November 1959, delegates representing seventeen Catholic schools across Tasmania met at St. Patrick's College, Prospect, for the purpose of establishing a Parents and Friends Association. The Constitution for the "Federation of Parents and Friends of Catholic Schools of Tasmania" was adopted and office bearers elected.

The main goal of the parent network was to persuade Governments, both Commonwealth and State, that there was justice and economic wisdom in financially supporting non-government schools.

Funding like we know it today, to support our choice in the education of our children, did not exist. Catholic schools were built through the financial support of their local Catholic Church community and directed in the early years by the many priests, sisters and brothers who devoted their lives to serving God through the education of our children. Funding as we know it today has only been available in the last twenty years. We as a collective Tasmanian Catholic education community have much to thank those that have worked tirelessly (and generally thanklessly) for the past 50 years.

The Federation is in the process to planning various activities to celebrate our 50 years as a federation of P&F associations. The culmination of these activities (including school students) will be our one day 50th Golden Jubilee Conference to be held at St Patrick's College, Launceston on the **15 August 2009**.

This celebration will coincide with the end of Catholic Education Week this year. More details will be available after the break, but it is hoped all school P&Fs and school captains will be represented on the 15 August. The Federation is currently seeking major sponsors (diamond, gold, silver & bronze) to help offset additional cost of hosting this special celebration.

The **conference guest speaker** for 2009 is **Associate Professor David Loader**. David will speak about how preparing our children for the 21st century is a complex task and although we should not discount our history, we should not use it to plan the future. His 2007 book, *Jousting for the new generation; Challenges to contemporary schooling* published in Australia by ACER Press provides a critique of modern day schooling practices.

Please also note **AGM details** in right hand column.

Extensive conference details will be distributed after Easter.

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2009 AGM

St Patrick's College
Launceston

16 May 2009

1:30 – 4:30

ALL WELCOME

Contact / email the office for registration details

50th Golden Jubilee Conference

St Patrick's College,
Launceston

15 August 2009.

More details will be available after Easter. Please book this date in for your extended family.

"By abiding in the love of Christ we learn, at the school of Christ, the art of true love."

Pope Benedict XVI

DIRECTOR LEAVES OUR SHORES

Dr Dan White relinquished his role of Director of Catholic Education to take up the appointment of Executive Director of Catholic School for the Archdiocese of Sydney in mid February this year. Dan, with the support of a dynamic leadership team, has worked tirelessly to develop Tasmanian Catholic Education for the 21st century. Although we have a long way to go, Dan will be well remember for his desire to meet and address many issues head on. His support and work for the parents & friends of the Federation has been appreciated.

SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAMS – WHO PAYS?

Over the past few years there has been a significant focus on improving the capital facilities of Catholic Schools across Tasmania. In 2008 our Catholic sector has been involved in building programs totalling over \$22 million. The question that is often asked is **who** is actually paying for this major upgrade of learning facilities? The quick answer is the **parents** in Catholic Schools through payment of school fees and by way of taxation.

The building of schools is funded through a combination of school fees and ongoing Government funding including special capital grants. Out of the \$22 million expended on Catholic school building programs the Commonwealth Government has contributed \$3.4 million, whilst the State Government has only provided a very meagre \$0.5 million. Schools, primarily through Catholic Development Fund low-interest loans, fund the remaining \$18.1 million.

However, as with all loans they must be repaid and about 5% of the operating expenses of all Catholic schools is spent on servicing these debts. By contrast State Government schools do not have this cost because their building projects are paid directly from the State capital budget. In effect by carrying these loan costs our schools lose five percent of funding that could be used to provide additional teaching support and resources. This amounts to approximately \$2 million each year that cannot be directed to the classroom.

In such a situation Catholic schools need to encourage greater direct investment by Commonwealth and State Governments as they strive to improve the learning facilities for our students. In particular, the very small amount contributed by the State Government in the area of capital funding for Catholic schools compared to the \$135 million committed in the last budget for State school facilities needs to be addressed as a matter of great urgency.

Catholic parents are urged to alert their local state members of parliament to this critical under-funding issue and to seek their support for improving government contributions to Catholic school building projects.

Dr Dan White
Director - CEO

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Has your school, or your P&F, received its **copy** of the **Guide to the National Family-School Partnerships Framework**? Check with your school principal. Copies were posted to all schools late in 2008. The Framework sets out the principles of effective partnerships and highlights strategies that schools and parents can use to guide and develop partnerships.

An electronic version is available at <http://www.familyschool.org.au/pdf/framework.pdf>

Minister for Education, the Hon. Julia Gillard, noted that families have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and through life. COAG has identified **boosting parental engagement as a key policy direction** to improve school participation and achievement, reduce educational disadvantage and promote social inclusion.

MELBOURNE DECLARATION ON EDUCATIONAL GOALS FOR YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

A meeting of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) has agreed to an updated version of the National Goals for Schooling. The update Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians has identified two key goals:

- Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence
- All young Australians become:
 - successful learners
 - confident and creative individuals
 - active and informed citizens.

The Declaration has also identified eight areas in which 'all Australian governments commit to working with all school sectors and the broader community to achieve the educational goals for young Australians'. These are:

- developing stronger partnerships
- supporting quality teaching and school leadership
- strengthening early childhood education
- enhancing middle years development
- supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions
- promoting world-class curriculum and assessment
- improving educational outcomes for indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds
- strengthening accountability and transparency

http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf

HOW DOES LITERACY OCCUR?

Have you ever wondered why one of your children struggles to learn to read and write, whilst another learns it with no effort at all?

This is because reading is not a natural act (Clay, M. 1993. Westwood, P 2005. ATF) and for most people, it needs to be learnt. The Senate Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (2005) found that many children need explicit instruction in all aspects of literacy development and the opportunity to consolidate their new learning in ways that suit them.

Have you ever wonder what is involved in literacy develop? Well, to help you understand, I have developed a metaphor of literacy development, using the house building process. This metaphor can be found on the Federation website.

It should be noted that although this metaphor has been written sequentially, it is not intended to imply that literacy development will or does occur so simply or sequentially (Westwood, P. 2008). The metaphor is written to allow you to appreciate the complexities our teachers need to work within on a daily basis.

The Federation would be interested in hearing from parents that would like to attend workshops (statewide) to help them deepen their understanding of this important area, including being provided advice on hands-on learning activities that support the learning that is occurring in their child's classroom.

Please email the TCSPFF secretary at tcspff.secretary@gmail.com or mobile 0438 639374 to express your interest.

Reading to Your Children

Little Ears, is a bi-monthly Australian children's storytelling magazine with beautifully illustrated stories, poetry and plays by Australian authors, which hopes to inspire busy, modern parents to revive the lost art storytelling with their children while fostering a love of reading.

Storytelling is an important purpose of the magazine and it's also a great tool for early readers to practice their reading skills. The stories are aimed at children aged 3 years and up. In addition, there are two or three articles for parents that are relevant to parenting and children's wellbeing, activities, children's book reviews and stories and drawings submitted by children. And in each issue the magazine's mascot, Nuno the Bilby, gets up to exciting stuff as he travels around Australia.

The magazine has been tested with parents, children and childcare professionals and is guided by an advisory panel made up of a professor of early childhood, educational psychologists, early childhood teachers and literacy specialists. For a free electronic preview of the magazine go to www.littleears.com.au and download from the home page.

FAMILY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

The national Family-School Partnerships Framework helps school communities build effective partnerships with families to support student learning.

The Family – School Partnerships Framework is based on existing good practice and provides an **agreed national approach to guide schools and families** working on these issues. It recognises that many positive developments and innovations are already occurring in schools and that a "one size fits all" approach to partnerships is not feasible. Partnerships need to be underpinned by broad principles and strategies but remain specific to school context, including family/community characteristics, school size, levels of schooling and student needs.

DEST's Family School Partnership Framework can be downloaded @ <http://www.familyschool.org.au/pdf/framework.pdf>

In order to create the conditions that enable effective family-school partnerships to be developed and sustained, the following supporting structures need to be in place at both systemic and school levels:

- I. family-school action teams to plan, organise, implement and evaluate partnerships;
- II. school policies and procedures which explicitly state and clearly integrate the principles and practices of effective partnerships;
- III. support networks, to enable school communities to share ideas, issues and best practice; and
- IV. accountability to the community, to report on successes and drive improvement in partnerships.

Why not use this partnership framework as a point of discussion at your next P&F meeting?

The Learning Federation - **Helping at Home – Maths**. It can be found on www.thelearningfederation.edu.au under the scootle button. It's a pilot to help parents and they are keen to get feedback on it including how useful it is, how else might parents want it presented including the language, is it useful etc...

The Australian Council for Educational Research has released its research report on the **study of maths and science in schools**. The report can be found at http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/Mono63_MathSciTechSept08.pdf

www.bread4health.com.au

A NEW NATIONAL CURRICULUM?

The development and implementation of a national curriculum will be conducted under the auspice of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and its Productivity Agenda Working Group through the National Curriculum Board

The Board's primary role is to **develop Australian national curriculum** that sets core content and the achievement standards that are expected of students from Kindergarten to Year 12 in **English, Mathematics, the Sciences and History.**

See <http://www.ncb.org.au>

Department of Education (TAS), Catholic Education Office & Association of Independent Schools (TAS) Sustainability Learning Centre (SLC)

Construct the first sustainability and climate change education centre for Tasmanian schools and community. The centre will be an interactive building in a bush setting that demonstrates sustainability principles as a 'hands on' educational tool, supporting leading edge pedagogy.
\$2 million

<http://www.deewr.gov.au>

ARE WE A PRIEST, LEVITE OR GOOD SAMARITAN?

We all remember the parable of The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). It was read once again at the Mass of Welcome for the beginning of the new school year at my children's Catholic school. It got me wondering. This is by far probably one of the most remember Gospel passages, as it is easily related to our daily lives, or is it? The story is quite simple. The majority view indicates this parable is told by Jesus in order to illustrate that **human kindness** and fellow feeling **must be available to all**, and that fulfilling the **spirit of the law** is just as important as fulfilling the letter of the Law

Reflecting on this Gospel message allowed me to realise that although we may have knowledge, we more often than not fail to use that knowledge. Take for example obesity. We all know that obesity causes numerous diseases and can have a major impact on our lifestyle (just keeping up with our kids can be an issue). We all know this yet why do we choose to ignore it? Because **actions are harder** than just knowing what to do. Acting with human kindness is far harder every minute of every day than thinking that we do.

One example of this is what David Loader refers to as **school obesity**. This is where schools, in the recent past good times, have focused more on the physical attributes of a school than its moral purpose. Catholic schools already have their moral purpose, that's what makes them a Catholic school (as opposed to a private school).

This is having the 'knowledge'. How we action this moral purpose is the defining feature of a Catholic school and is easily seen. Just look around when there are no adults about. You will soon see if the school is awash with what Jesus taught us.

And adults have no excuse either. We are often so caught up with 'climbing' up the ladder' of life that we often forget to look at the view we currently have. This stopping may also cause us to see who we have trampled on to get our view.

I put this challenge out to all school leaders (including school boards) – let's forgo our view a little and help those who have been trampled and see what many of us see. We may not be known in the community as 'THE school' but we be would know as a SAMARITAN school. Remember ACTION for those that can not act for themselves!

A recent McKinsey report found that despite 'massive' spending on education by the world's governments, totalling \$2 trillion in 2006, performance has barely improved in decades
(McKinsey and Company, 2007).

http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/PAPE_Output_1208.pdf

LUNCHBOX IDEAS

www.bread4health.com.au

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

<http://www.chw.edu.au/parents/factsheets/fosnackj.htm>

<http://www.eatwelltas.org.au/lunchboxideas.php>

BOYS' EDUCATION

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

The March 2009 Triangle Newsletter content has been sourced and compiled by

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"Zeal for your house will consume me." John 2:17

The views expressed in this newsletter are the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of the Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation.

**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!**

Check us out on the web www.tcsppf.org.au

