



# Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation

## TRIANGLE NEWSLETTER

October 2005

### State Council Executive

President  
Bill Button

Secretary  
Susan Jahnig

Treasurer  
Brian Watson

Northern President  
Greg Boon

Southern President  
Andrew Fyfe

North West President  
Jane Dutton

### Parents Working Together – What can be Achieved?

A frequently asked question is “What does the TCSPFF do?”

The Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation represents the parents of about 14,000 students who attend the 37 Catholic schools in Tasmania. It liaises with Catholic Church authorities, peak education bodies and the Tasmanian Government and its instrumentalities to maintain and protect the interests of Catholic school students and their families.

Its most significant achievement is Government Funding for Catholic Schools. Currently approx 85% of the cost of schooling each child comes from the Federal and State Governments.

How is this Funding Achieved?

Since its formation in 1959 the TCSPFF has made representations to State and Federal governments for justice in school funding.

Past Milestone Achievements include:

- 1962 – Menzies Government introduced capital grants to government & non-government schools.
- 1968 – Tasmanian Government commenced per pupil grants to non-government primary & secondary schools.
- 1970 – Commonwealth Government introduced recurrent grants to non-government schools at the flat rate of \$35 for primary & \$50 for secondary.
- 1973 – Recurrent grants based on 20% of the assessed Australia wide cost of educating a child in Government primary & secondary schools.

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### Isolated Children's Parents Association



### Annual Conference Report

The 34th annual conference of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) was held Thursday 11th and Friday 12th August at Rydges Lakeside Hotel Canberra, ACT.

*“The 5 A's, Our Children Wait”*

The theme for this year's conference contains strong meanings for delegates who travelled from some of the more isolated areas of the mainland and Tasmania to meet in our Nation's capital for the first time.

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### TCSPFF VISION

**Our Vision is that  
Parents of  
children in  
Catholic Schools  
be full partners in  
delivering quality  
catholic education**

### Australian Parents Council Conference 2005

The Australian Parents Council (APC) held their 2005 Annual Conference in Brisbane on the 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> September. The theme was “The Non-Government School Parent in 2005”.

Senator Brett Mason opened conference on behalf of the Hon Brendan Nelson MHR, Minister for Education, Science and Training.

Senator Mason highlighted that research show that parent encouragement and support for learning activities at home, and parental involvement in Schools, have a positive impact on students' learning. He also stated that the Australian Government see the right of parents to choose the best school for their child – government or non government – as a fundamental democratic right.

Along with acknowledging the valuable advice and expertise that members of APC have provided to assist Government in progressing the Family-School Partnerships Framework, School funding, Reporting to parents in plain English about their child's progress, Values Education and Quality Teaching was a the fore front of the Governments commitment to Australian Schools.

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## Achievements of TCSPFF

Recently the acceptance of the '13 point plan' was an important achievement by the TCSPFF, under the leadership of Immediate Past President, Ian Dalton, working with all our P&F affiliates and the Catholic Education Office.

Currently we are working with the Tasmania Catholic Education Commission to lobby the State Government for improvements in: **Capital funding, ICT funding, Special needs funding and General Recurrent funding.**

On the national level Tasmanian Catholic Parents are represented through the Australian Parents Council, the "National body of parent organisations from most States and Territories of Australia, recognised by the Federal Government as **the peak national body representing parents of children attending non-government schools.**"

Approximately 1/3 of school parents & friends' affiliation fees go to the APC.

The TCSPFF has a number of nominees/representatives on Boards/Consultative groups on the national and state level. These include the recently formed National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) Parent Forum, which will provide input with a parent perspective to NCEC as well as working groups of the APC; a number of TCEC working parties, e.g. Government Funding, Leadership and the investigation of a secondary college in Kingborough.

Other areas where the TCSPFF has a nominee or representation are the Teachers Registration Board, Leaders in Careers Forum, Cross-Sectional Assessment Group (year 10 certification) and Student Transport.

Funding for Catholic Schools is essential for the system to survive. This funding is achieved as a direct result of parents acting through an organised structure demanding their rights.

***This is the Legacy that our parents gave us.***

***This is the Legacy that we must hand on to our Children.***

***We can only do this if we are organised as a Parent body to ensure our voice is heard.***

We seek your continued support for the TCSPFF as it endeavours to ensure fairer funding for the education of your children.

### *Isolated Children's Parents Association Annual Conference Report (from page 1)*

The content of the conference consisted of Federal and State Reports, Portfolio Reports, Guest Speakers, Annual General meeting and motions.

**The Minister for Education Science & Training, Dr Brendan Nelson addressed conference as a Guest Speaker.** He highlighted his understanding of rural & remote issues and commended ICPA for being an influential, formidable and effective voice for rural & remote Australians. ►

He spoke of the Federal Government's push for National Benchmarking, Plain language reporting, accreditation of Educational Facilities and National Standards for Teachers and Principals. Dr Nelson's Commitment to Non-Government Schools and Commonwealth Learning and Accommodation Scholarships were also ongoing and important. Dr Nelson stated that the **Federal Governments 6 Key indicators of a good school are:**

***Principal Leadership***

***Well-trained quality teachers***

***Purpose & Identity of children***

***High Parent participation***

***Publishing outcomes of school performances.***

A significant address was by **Professor Margaret Alston – Professor of Social Work and Human Services & Director of the Centre for Rural Social Research.**

Professor Alston states that '**Education access for rural & remote young people is a human rights issue**' and has been involved in an intensive study of rural and remote families in NSW, Vic, & Queensland. Her findings from case studies, interviews and focus groups show that:

-2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the Australian Population live in Capital cities

-83% within 50km of the Coast and

-17% across the Rural Inland regions of which are

seriously disadvantaged.

**A '96 Senate Inquiry** showed a decline from 25% to 17% and nothing has changed since.

Of that 17% the population consists of:

-Aging,

-Out migration of youth,

-Greater loss of young women,

-Indigenisation of some remote towns and

-A general erosion of services and infrastructure.

Entry-level public service, Professional and Dedicated Career pathways are lost, but the biggest decline is happening in:

-Smaller towns in the rate of growth the further one is from a large city and

-The wheat/sheep, dry land farming and pastoral areas.

The structural changes show:

- A population drift to the coast and cities

- Farms are amalgamating and getting bigger

- An increase in corporate agriculture,

- Loss of workers

- Loss of families from properties and

- Loss of young people.

In February 1999 the **Human Rights and Equal**

**Opportunity Commission (HEROC)** initiated a national enquiry into rural and remote education because the Commission's 1998 Bush Talks consultations on the human rights concerns of regional, rural and remote Australians had revealed that access to education of an appropriate standard and quality was a significant concern in rural and remote areas.

**On the 25th May 2000; over 5 years ago; Human Rights Commissioner Chris Sidoti handed 110 pages of "Recommendations" from the National Inquiry into Rural and Remote Education to the Federal Attorney General Daryl Williams.**

***The evaluation framework of this intense enquiry was that education must be for all children:***

**Available, Accessible, Affordable, Acceptable and Adaptable**

**Our Children Wait**



## Catholic Education Sector Reaffirms Support for ELs

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> September 2005

The Director of Catholic Education, Dr Dan White today reaffirmed the support of the Catholic Education Sector for the Tasmanian Essential Learnings Framework

*"The introduction of Essential Learnings into Catholic Schools has made a significant difference to the quality of learning and teaching at a classroom level,"* said Dr White.

*"Recent research in Catholic Schools indicated that students were more engaged with their learning when teachers utilised teaching strategies based on the principles of Essential Learnings,"* commented Dr White.

*"I agree with the Dean of Education, Professor Arnold, when she observed that the Essential Learnings Curriculum has placed Tasmania at the forefront of educational reform in Australia,"* said Dr White.

Dr White observed, *"Recently members of the peak body for Catholic Education in Australia spent time in four Tasmanian Catholic Schools to specifically observe first hand the impact of Essential Learnings."*

*"The visitors appreciated the manner in which the Tasmanian Curriculum is challenging students to think deeply about the aspects of their learning that are relevant to the world today."*

*"Chief Executive Officer of the National Commission, Ms Joan Warhurst especially remarked upon the depth and quality of our students' work samples and commented that National Commissioners were impressed by the integration of ideas across subject areas,"* said Dr White.

In response to the recent criticism of education jargon associated with the ELs Curriculum, Dr White commented,

*"It is critical that the EL's Curriculum is communicated to parents and employers in a clear, user-friendly manner. Equally however, it is important that the significant educational benefits of the Essential Learning's Framework are not lost because the professional language of educators is not easily translated into 'plain English'."*

*Just as with Doctors and Lawyers, every profession uses specific terminology relevant to their field. The challenge facing educators is to communicate new ideas in a clear and concise manner without compromising the educational advances currently being achieved through Essential Learnings,"* argued Dr White.

### Key Tasks of the Australian Parents Council

**Unify** non-government School parents.

**Monitor** policy formulation and implementation by governments, political parties and bureaucracies.

**Inform** membership at all times about what is happening and in turn be informed by the membership.

**Energise** the membership to achieve an intensity of membership engagement in the organization's activities.

**Discern** how events either align or conflict with the organization's policies, principals and goals.

**Decide** whether a response is needed and, if so, the nature of an appropriate response.

**Respond** to issues in a timely manner.

**Network** with key stakeholders and other parties of strategic interest to ensure that the knowledge base of the organization is maximised.

**Influence** governments, political parties, bureaucracies, stakeholders and the general public.

**Strategically align** with existing and potential partners (a fluid process).

**Innovate** in all sorts of ways to ensure that the organization's principals, policies and goals are progressed.

**Act** at all times with a clear sense of purpose (goal setting).

**Manage** its limited resource base in such a way that will maximise outcomes. **Evaluate**

#### APC Conference Report (from page 1)

APC President Laurie Eastwood presented his first report at the Conference dinner stating his appreciation for the enormous contribution of past President, Leo Dunne, as well as retiring Executive Director Jo Lonergan and Office Secretary Margaret Wright culminating in 85 years collectively of dedicated and committed service. At the same time he expresses his confidence in Ian Dalton's appointment to Executive Director and Ian's personal assistant Leonie Mitchell in Launceston, Tasmania. Keynote Speakers addressing Conference on Saturday were:

**Rural – Jack Beach**, President, Isolated Children's Parents Association

**Islamic – Manar Eltchelebi**, Parent, King Khalid Islamic School, Melbourne

**Special Needs – Susan Perry**, Parent, St Stephen's Catholic Primary School, Algester and member of the Working Party Review for Special Education Policy  
Guest Speakers were:

**Margaret Sykes – DEST**, Careers Education, Vocational Education & Training and Australian Technical Colleges

**Terry Donahue – Nudgee College**, "Senior Phase of Learning with a VET Emphasis

The APC Project Reports presented included:

*Indigenous Parent Literacy Project*

*Family/School Partnerships Project*

*Families Matter Project*

*Values Education Project*

*Tutorial Voucher Initiative Project*

Sunday's Session was intensive with Motions, Work plan topics, Principals & Policies Review, Governance Structure, General Business carried over from Friday and Elections. Elections resulted in the following:

**President - Caz Bosch**, **Senior Vice President - Russ Nelson**, **Secretary - Brenda Baber**, **Treasurer - Malcolm Pound**, **Vice Presidents - Robyn Christmas, Brian Watson, Greg Palmer.**

## Marriage & Relationship Education

Today there is a greater appreciation of the importance of couples having appropriate marriage education prior to them marrying. The personal, family and social costs that result from the breakdown of marriages in Australia are enormous. In an endeavour to try and reduce the incidence of marriage breakdown, the Australian Government now requires all marriage celebrants to encourage couples to engage in a marriage education program.

The Catholic Church in Tasmania has recognised the value of marriage education for many years and, through Maritas, has been providing couple and group marriage education programs since 1992. The Maritas couple programs are based upon the FOCCUS® Marriage Preparation Inventory.

FOCCUS® is used widely throughout Catholic Dioceses in Australia as a tool to help couples explore their relationship prior to marriage. Couples attend a session with a trained facilitator and respond to an inventory of statements about expectations, communication, problem solving, money, parenting, religion, sexuality, in-laws and other issues. The facilitator then uses the responses to develop an agenda to help the couple to explore their relationship in a series of subsequent sessions (usually about six sessions in total).

Marriage Education programs, such as FOCCUS® provide couples with the skills and strategies to develop the strengths in their relationship to handle any challenges that inevitably arise for two people who are sharing their lives together. Marriage Education is not counselling, but rather aims to raise important issues and areas for couples to talk about together. It gives them the opportunity to learn and develop some simple skills for communicating, and for resolving and pre-empting differences more effectively.

FOCCUS® facilitators are often married couples who have decided to utilise their own experience of marriage for the benefit of young couples who are embarking on their marital journey. Many have also been through the FOCCUS® program themselves and found it significantly enriched their relationship, stimulating them to want to offer the same enrichment to others.

If you and your spouse would like to enquire about becoming a FOCCUS® facilitator couple, please contact Anne Matuszek by phoning (03) 6278 1660 or by emailing [mre.centacare@aohtas.org.au](mailto:mre.centacare@aohtas.org.au). The training is not onerous and the rewards derived from giving young couples a positive start on their marital journey are great!

### Active After-school Communities

#### Helping Kids and communities get active

The Active After-school Communities (AASC) program is up and running and reports from parents and children indicate it has been an outstanding success.

AASC commenced in Tasmania with 4 schools/Out of School Hours Care Services (OSHCS) conducting pilot programs before Easter. The program has increased and now includes 36 schools/OSHCS from all regions of Tasmania. Application forms are available at the Australian Sport Commission website

<http://www.ausport.gov.au/aasc/schools/index.asp>

The AASC program is an initiative of the Australian Government with the Australian Sports Commission responsible for the coordination of the national program. The program is designed to get primary aged children active in the after-school timeslot. Children participate in structured physical activities that are fun, safe and available to all children from Prep to Grade 6. Activities at schools/OSHCS vary from traditional sports such as hockey to activities such as dance, gymnastics and croquet.

AASC offers a comprehensive training package to all providers in the program.

Blair Brownless is the State Coordinator of the AASC program in Tasmania and is based in Hobart. He is well supported by 4 Regional Coordinators – Aaron Roberts (62248264) and Neil Connell (62248274) in the South, Ralph Morris (63243277) in the North and Craig Redman (64234955) on the NW Coast. Parents and other members of the community are encouraged to contact the AASC Regional Coordinator in their local area and found out how they can get involved in this exciting new program.

### Websites for Parents

Implementation of new quadrennium funding

[www.dest.gov.au/schools/guidelines/quadrennial/2005-08/index.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/guidelines/quadrennial/2005-08/index.htm)

\$1 billion in infrastructure funding

<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/investinginschools/>

Delivering \$700 tutorial vouchers

[www.dest.gov.au/schools/tutorialvoucher/](http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/tutorialvoucher/)

Values Education

[www.curriculum.edu.au/values/](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/values/)

The National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy

[www.dest.gov.au/schools/literacyinquiry/](http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/literacyinquiry/)

Greater National Consistency in Schooling across Australia

[www.dest.gov.au/ministers/media/nelson/2005/02/tran080205.asp](http://www.dest.gov.au/ministers/media/nelson/2005/02/tran080205.asp) and

[www.dest.gov.au/ministers/media/nelson/2004/06/n723030604.asp](http://www.dest.gov.au/ministers/media/nelson/2004/06/n723030604.asp)

[www.dest.gov.au/ministers/media/nelson/2004/06/n723030604.asp](http://www.dest.gov.au/ministers/media/nelson/2004/06/n723030604.asp)

Improving the teaching of boys

[www.dest.gov.au/schools/boyseducation/](http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/boyseducation/)

Plain English Report Cards

[www.dest.gov.au/minister/nelson/main.asp](http://www.dest.gov.au/minister/nelson/main.asp)

Review of Teacher Education

[www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/evt/teachereduc/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/evt/teachereduc/index.htm)

National Institute for Quality Teaching and

School Leadership (NIQTSL)

[www.niqtsl.edu.au](http://www.niqtsl.edu.au)

Creating Safer Schools

[www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)

Tackling Obesity

[www.healthyactive.gov.au](http://www.healthyactive.gov.au)

Review of Music Education

[www.schoolmusicreview.edu.au](http://www.schoolmusicreview.edu.au)

Boosting Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics in Schools

[www.asistm.edu.au](http://www.asistm.edu.au)

Australian Technical Colleges

[www.dest.gov.au/schools/investinginschools](http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/investinginschools)