

Catholic Education Today



August 09

Catholic network launch
to lead teaching from
Edward Bellamy



Catholic Education Office

Contents

- 2 From the Director
- 3 A leap forward
- 4 Around the Archdiocese
- 6 Building bonanza!
- 8 Schools spectacular
- 9 Learning your ABC
- 10 A dog's life
- 11 Faithfully restored



Catholic Education Office
Archdiocese of Melbourne

Catholic Education Today is produced by the Catholic Education Office, James Goold House, 228 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002.

© Copyright reserved

ISSN 1441-2802

Acknowledgments Thank you to those who contributed to the articles and to the staff and students of the schools featured in this issue.

Writer David Ahern

Design and artwork Three's a Crowd

Photography Les O'Rourke

Printing Print Media Group

Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne. The editor reserves the right to amend or reject any item submitted for publication.

Correspondence is welcomed to:
David Ahern, Media and Promotions
PO Box East Melbourne Victoria 3002
Tel: 03 9267 0228 Fax: 03 9415 9325
Email: dahern@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au
Website: www.ceo.melb.catholic.edu.au

Catholic Education Today is printed on environmentally friendly Monza recycled paper.

Cover image School captains Nadia Conte and Brendan Plowman inside the newly refurbished chapel at Loyola College, Watsonia. Story page 11.

From the Director



Image
Stephen Elder,
Director of Catholic Education.

There have been several articles in various newspapers this year on the topic 'faith-based education'. One of the most recent was by Professor Andrew Jakubowicz who claimed in an article in *The Age* that religious schools, including Catholic schools, undermine social stability and a commitment to diversity and cultural tolerance.

This is not true! Firstly, and not unexpectedly given their faith-based nature, a central tenet of religious schools is their commitment to tolerance and acceptance of others. Catholic schools teach the very ethical and moral values that Professor Jakubowicz identifies as essential for social cohesion.

Catholic schools, steeped as they are in the Church's teachings, promote charity, tolerance and a commitment to the common good. As such, they can instill in students those very values on which civility and acceptance of diversity depend.

Instead of representing a narrow section of society, it is also the case that the socioeconomic and ethnic mix of Catholic schools mirrors that of government schools. One only needs to see the number of Catholic schools serving the needs of Victoria's multicultural communities in less affluent areas to know that this is the case.

Research, both here and in the U.S., also suggests that faith-based schools are successful in promoting social capital – the type of personal bonds and values that bind communities together. In part, this is because Catholic schools, similar to many other faith-based schools, are very much community oriented and the way they are organised and managed reinforces social harmony and trust.

This recent criticism of faith-based schools is not new. Both the president of the Australian Education Union, Angelo Gavrielatos and Sydney-based writer Jane Caro have made similar claims.

The time for such divisive attacks should have ended long ago. As argued by the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Julia Gillard who publicly stated, "Can I say once again to the Australian Education Union and to everybody else, we have left the debates of public versus private behind us. They are yesterday's debates".

On a separate matter and as we head towards the final term I would like to wish all students in our schools every success with their end-of-year examinations. It can be a tense time for students – and their families – but much of the key to success lies with being organised and studying in a supportive environment. Good luck to all, especially those undertaking their VCE and VCAL assessments. ✝

Stephen Elder
Director of Catholic
Education



A Leap forward

66

This is an historic agreement between Telstra and the Catholic sector which will benefit students in Catholic schools across Australia.

99

Image

The Director of Catholic Education, Stephen Elder (left), Telstra Chief Executive Officer, David Thodey (middle), and CNA Chair, Francis Moore, with student Kevin at St Monica's Primary School.

In 1969, Apollo 11 commander Neil Armstrong made "one small step for man and one giant leap for mankind" when he took those first few hesitant steps on the surface of the moon.

Forty years later and a week before the anniversary celebrations of the first moon landing, the Catholic sector took a significant step when plans were unveiled for a national broadband network linking Catholic schools around the country with 21st century technology.

Under the newly established Catholic Network Australia Limited Ltd (CNA), more than 1550 Catholic schools and Catholic Education Offices Australia-wide will be connected to Telstra's network infrastructure.

Telstra Chief Executive Officer, David Thodey, and the Chair of the newly established CNA, Francis Moore, announced the plan at St Monica's Primary School, Footscray. The \$146 million project will dramatically increase the reach and capacity of broadband connectivity to Catholic schools over the next two years and provide a diverse range of services for teachers and students.

Benefits will include: a reduction in total costs for individual Catholic networks and agencies; the opportunity for Catholic schools to be at the forefront of ICT provision and capacity in education; and the opportunity to share exemplary practice, content and resources across all Catholic schools Australia-wide.

The Archbishop of Melbourne Denis Hart congratulated all parties on the historic agreement. "This will provide a tremendous boost to Catholic schools and will also benefit other Catholic agencies and parishes in the future. Sincere thanks to the Bishops and Catholic Education Offices around Australia and to Telstra for its ongoing work in this area."

The network, which is predominantly fibre-based, will connect five data centres across Australia and use Telstra Internet Direct, which provides carrier-grade connectivity.

The Director of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne and CNA Board member, Stephen Elder, said it was envisaged that CNA would eventually provide a single network with increased flexibility for all Australian Catholic agencies and parishes.

"This is an historic agreement between Telstra and the Catholic sector which will benefit students in Catholic schools across Australia. I would like to thank David Thodey and his staff at Telstra for partnering Catholic Education and the Catholic Church in this tremendous new development."

Mr Thodey agreed the network would benefit students. "Broadband has become a critical tool that helps break down geographical and social barriers and connects students to each other and the rest of the world."

"Together with CNA, Telstra will provide Catholic schools across Australia with the broadband services necessary to access education resources critical to a first rate contemporary learning environment," Mr Thodey added. †

Around the



66

Grandparents Day was organised to celebrate the positive contribution grandparents make in the lives of their grandchildren.

99

Image Tara and Yvonne . Photo courtesy Santa Maria College. Tania

All in the family

Family Week held even more significance this year for families affected by the devastating bushfires in February. Sacred Heart Primary School, Yea, as reported in the May issue of **Catholic Education Today**, was one community deeply affected by the fires with three families losing their homes. No surprise then that the local community kicked up its heels in May for Family Week. Some mums received a makeover, including a new hairstyle; a special lunch was prepared and gift boxes were distributed to every family. Principal Vicky Wissell said, "We have always participated in Centacare's Family Week and we thought it was even more important to celebrate it now after all that's happened. We never had the opportunity to celebrate the beginning of the school year with our traditional family barbecue or school Mass." Centacare CEO Father Joe Caddy said, "Families are pulling together and communities are joining forces to rebuild and support families in difficulty. This capacity to reach out to other families is what Family Week is all about."

Generational

Grandparent's Day at Santa Maria College, Northcote, earlier this year held special significance for three generations of one family. Year 7 student Tara Fontana, her mother, Tania Fontana (1970s) and Tara's grandmother, Yvonne Mogorovich (1950s), all attended Santa Maria. Each has fond and positive memories of the college, with the youngest member of the family acknowledging that her generation is fortunate with more curricular and co-curricular activities from which to choose. The inaugural Grandparents Day was organised to celebrate the positive contribution grandparents make in the lives of their grandchildren.

Safe holidays

The Don Bosco holiday camps at Safety Beach on the Mornington Peninsula have been available to young people, especially the disadvantaged, for more than 65 years. The Salesians of Don Bosco holiday retreats range from two to five days and are open to primary and secondary girls and boys. The camps are organised by the youth retreat team and cover a broad range of topics, including relationships; self esteem; leadership; spirituality and music. Further details are available from 5987 2692 or email: emily@donboscocamp.org

Archdiocese



Adolescent Issues

The popular Parent Seminar Series continues on Tuesday 15 September with a session on Peer Relationships/Social Skills and Adolescent Issues. The presenters will be Pat Jewell and Constance Jenkin. The day-long session will be held at St Timothy's School, 21 Stevens Road, Vermont starting at 9.30am. The cost is \$5, which includes lunch. Further details are available from Shirley O'Sullivan on 9464 5225 or email: shirley@stclaresthomastown.catholic.edu.au †

VCE Awards

Four former Catholic school students were among 17 top All-Round VCE High Achievers to be recognised at the Premier's Awards in July. They gained study scores of 46 or higher in at least five VCE subjects in 2007 and 2008. James Cini of Emmanuel College, Altona North; Christopher Shallue from St Kevin's College and Xavier College students, Stephen Hughes and Miltiadis Paikopoulos were among the top award recipients. Forty-three Catholic students in total received VCE Awards. †

On fire

A new initiative – the FIRE Carrier Project – was launched at Genazzano FCJ College, Kew, during Reconciliation Week. An initiative of the Opening the Doors Foundation (OTDF), FIRE stands for 'Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education'. The project aims to promote reconciliation in schools and support their reconciliation journey. OTDF assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to access Catholic education for their children by helping with additional education costs, including books and uniforms. The Foundation, which is currently supporting more than 400 students, was established by the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne, an agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. †

Images

Following the destructive bushfires in February, Family Week at Sacred Heart Primary School, Yea, was celebrated with even more fervour as depicted by the kiss and cuddles received by Sharna from her children, Johnny and Grace. Photo courtesy Centacare.

Young people enjoying a holiday camp at safety Beach.

Building bonanza!

“

The funding has come at the right time and fits in well with our master plan for the school.

”

Image
The Director of Catholic Education, Stephen Elder, St Joseph's principal Gilbert Keisler with Daisy and James in the new bicycle shed.

The building sector has been a hive of activity over the past few months. The Federal Government's stimulus package and efforts to keep the Australian economy moving has resulted in some large windfalls for Catholic schools.

The funding, accessed through the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program, has been tremendous news for the Catholic sector, with libraries, multi purpose halls, gymnasiums – and even bike sheds – in the planning stages or under construction.

The Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) has welcomed the Federal Government's implementation of the National School Pride program.

The Director of Catholic Education, Stephen Elder, said the funding would be of great assistance, as Catholic schools had difficulty meeting the demand for capital programs, as the sector operates on less resources per child than government and independent schools.

“This package provides all schools with a tremendous opportunity to start building the education facilities that all students deserve and the Federal Government should be congratulated on this important initiative,” Mr Elder said.

Principal Dan Mogg says work is underway on four new classrooms (replacing the present classrooms) and a multi-purpose hall at St Mary's Primary School, Ascot Vale. Work is scheduled for completion in April, 2010.





“The funding has come at the right time and fits in well with our master plan for the school,” says Mr Mogg. “Ideally, we hope to rebuild the school over the next seven to 10 years and this is a great start.

“The hall will have a variety of uses, including for physical education, drama productions ... and be available to the wider community.”

At St Anthony’s Primary School, Glenhuntly, the funding is also being used to build a new multi purpose hall and library at a cost of about \$2 million. Principal Mark Brown says construction is underway and it’s hoped the hall will be ready by February, 2010.

“The hall will be used for assemblies, parent information sessions and before and after school care. It will also be open for parish functions and to the general community,” says Mr Brown.

The Commonwealth funding has also been welcomed at St Joseph’s Primary School, Hawthorn, where a bicycle shed and a running track on the oval have been built. Principal Gilbert Keisler, who was new to the school this term, says the local community is excited by the latest developments.

“The track will maximise opportunities for the children’s physical and social development on what is a wonderful site,” says Mr Keisler.

In terms of the bike shed, Mr Keisler says bicycle promotion is on the agenda. “The children only ride to school on Fridays but parking is an issue on Glenferrie Road, so we will look at encouraging more children to ride to school.” ✦



Images

St Anthony’s principal Mark Brown and parish priest Father Gerard Diamond look over the plans for the new hall.

Principal Dan Mogg on site of the new hall at St Mary’s Primary School, Ascot Vale.

St Joseph’s students and principal Gilbert Keisler show the Director of Catholic Education, Stephen Elder, around the new running track.



Schools Spectacular

All the colour and pageantry of the Student Wellbeing Drama Festival were on show in June when more than 1000 Catholic school students took to the stage in front of sold out theatres.

Thirty-five Catholic primary and secondary schools participated in the second annual festival organised by the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM).

In the Primary section, St Dominic's School, Camberwell East was awarded first prize, with St Mark's School, Dingley, second, and St Joseph's Primary School, Boronia, third. Killbreda College, Mentone, was the Secondary winner, with Loyola College, Watsonia, second and Star of the Sea College, Gardenvale, third.

Each play ran for about 10 minutes, and examined issues affecting students, including resilience, positive decision making, friendship groups, community partnerships and positive relationships.

The Director of Catholic Education, Stephen Elder, said the festival gave students the opportunity to showcase their work in the performing arts area.

"Our students are learning valuable lessons about the role health and wellbeing plays in all their endeavours within and beyond the classroom.

"Sincere thanks to all those schools for their energy and creativity in preparing a series of unforgettable performances. The excellent work of the principals, teachers and parents deserves to be acknowledged."

The plays were performed over six nights at the Clocktower Centre, Moonee Ponds and the Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading. The festival will be held again in 2010. +



Images

The Rainbow Fish, performed by the Year 4 students at St Carlo Borromeo, Greenvale, was about a beautiful rainbow fish whose vanity affects the other sea creatures around her.

Mother of God School, Ardeer, performed 'Right V Wrong', a play about the power of togetherness and how if people join forces and work together, everyone can achieve more.

Students at Lumen Christi Primary School, Point Cook, performed 'Show A Little Kindness'. Based on the book 'Greetings from Sandy Beach', it was the story of a family whose plans to spend a lovely day at the beach are disrupted when a family of rowdy motorbike riders turn up.



Learning your ABC

The Literacy Assessment Project (LAP) was first piloted in Catholic schools some five years ago. The idea behind the LAP was to improve literacy outcomes among younger children through the promotion of literacy leadership and teacher professional learning in schools, with an emphasis on professional learning teams.

A Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) project developed in collaboration with The University of Melbourne, the LAP was initially developed in Years 3 to 6 in 19 Catholic primary schools and resulted in substantial improvement in student reading outcomes.

In a further boost to the LAP, the Australian Research Council recently announced an \$860,000 linkage grant to continue research into its success. The research grant, awarded to The University of Melbourne, will try to determine if the improvement in literacy outcomes achieved in Catholic primary schools can be successfully replicated in other education systems, in other year levels, and in other subject areas.

In welcoming the announcement, the Director of Catholic Education, Stephen Elder, said the LAP had been an outstanding success in Catholic schools.

“The CEOM is proud of the significant gains made in student literacy learning,” Mr Elder said. “Every child deserves to have a strong foundation in reading and writing and the LAP has greatly assisted the literacy needs of many Catholic school students over the past four years.”

Mr Elder said another benefit arising from the LAP was the strong partnership developed with The University of Melbourne, including the opportunity for literacy leaders in Catholic schools to undertake accredited studies. “Literacy leaders are being provided with pathways, designed specifically for Catholic teachers, to gain postgraduate literacy leadership qualifications.”

Mr Elder also acknowledged the significant leadership of Professor Patrick Griffin, Director of the Assessment Research Centre, Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

The CEOM is committed to developing strong partnerships to research and promote best practice in education, said Mr Elder, and enable educators to share and apply new knowledge for the benefit of all students and school communities. ✦

“Literacy leaders are being provided with pathways, designed specifically for Catholic teachers, to gain postgraduate literacy leadership qualifications.”

Image
Teacher Clare Jenkinson
with students Chloe
Marc and Patrick
St John's Primary School,
Heidelberg was one of the
LAP pilot schools.



A dog's life

Image
 Bridie with students (back)
 Ciara and James
 and (front left) Katherine
 Jessie and Hannah
*Photo courtesy
 Brenda Trickey.*

The children at St Anne's Primary School, Seaford, recently celebrated an important birthday. But there were no candles for the students or the teachers. Birthday celebrations were reserved solely for Bridie, the Australian Shepherd.

She arrived at the school as a 12-week-old puppy two years ago, and has been an integral part of daily school life ever since. Bridie is the fourth dog to spend time at St Anne's, as part of a Dogs in School program which was first trialled at the school in 2004.

The idea was the brainchild of Kate Dourley, the Year 6 teacher at the time, who was also vice president of the Australian Shepherd Club. She presented the concept to the previous principal, believing that a dog at the school would benefit children, especially those who were disengaged or had social and emotional problems.

Any uncertainty of how the school community would react when the program was first trialled soon gave way to widespread enthusiasm, with parents, teachers and the students all giving the program – and Libby, the first dog – the thumbs up.

Owner and school secretary, Brenda Trickey, says Bridie greets the children at the front of the main office each morning and spends morning and afternoon breaks on the school oval.

The lovable canine loves nothing more than retrieving a ball, running with the children, and being walked in the yard. Teachers, parents and students all appreciate the calming affect Bridie has had on the students. Time spent with Bridie also allows the children to learn appropriate behaviour around dogs and responsible ownership.

"We hope the continued support of the school community will include the program as an important part of the curriculum for many years to come," says Ms Trickey.

The children were invited to bring their favourite soft toy dog to Bridie's birthday celebration, a highlight of which was a rousing chorus of 'happy birthday' and a few woofs at the school assembly. ✦

Faithfully restored

66

It was important to maintain its original heritage and everyone is very proud of the renovation.

99

Image
Principal Joseph Favrin with college captains Brendan and Nadia inside Loyola College's refurbished chapel and (below) the chapel circa 1940's.



Restoration of Loyola College's 75-year-old chapel began in earnest in December, 2008. There was only one catch – work had to be completed by early March this year.

Principal Joseph Favrin says a past pupil had booked the chapel for her wedding. "Former college vice-captain Claire Landy was getting married in the chapel so work had to be finished on time. The contractors did a wonderful job and thankfully everything was fine for Claire's big day," says Mr Favrin.

"The chapel refurbishment has been one of the college's main priorities since 2002. It was important to maintain its original heritage and everyone is very proud of the renovation."

Parishes and religious groups returned some of the original items so the chapel could be restored, as much as possible, to its original condition.

The chapel's features include the painting, 'Queen of Society', which hangs on the back wall behind the altar. The Society of Jesus gave the college the painting on permanent loan following a request from the college. Former student Bernadette Thorley created the mosaic symbols on the lectern and altar panel and the original tabernacle which had been at St Damian's Parish Church in Bundoora for 34 years was also returned.

Loyola College, a 7 to 12 co-educational college in Watsonia, was established in 1980 and is located on the site of the old Jesuit seminary for priests. Loyola is a member of the Ignatian network of Jesuit schools in Australasia that share the spiritual and educational philosophy of St Ignatius of Loyola.

Mr Favrin says the first Mass was celebrated by Father Justin King for the Year 7 students on 23 March and the chapel was officially dedicated by the Archbishop of Melbourne, Denis Hart, on 16 August. †

With Sarah Rogan