Welcome TO THE 2015 SCHOOL YEAR

It is with great pleasure that I welcome families, old and new, to a truly exciting era in Catholic education.

Building on outstanding academic results in 2014 and record 2015 enrolments, our schools are perfectly positioned to develop learning and teaching practices and student outcomes even further.

As Executive Director, I have the joy of working with a team of talented and committed teachers and school leaders who strive to produce the best possible results for their students – your children – at every turn.

We abide by the philosophy that parents and carers are the first and lifelong educators of their children. By working together I know we can provide the loving, compassionate, supportive and safe environment crucial to nurturing creative and successful young adults.

We said ‘hello and welcome’ to a record 16,700 Prep (or Foundation) students this year, and to those families who became a part of the Catholic education community for the first time we also say ‘thank you’ for the opportunity to care for your child.

You have made a wise choice. Our task is to shape the academic, spiritual, physical, social and moral elements of every student in our care – and we do it very well.

Academically our results (see page 2) are of the highest standard.

Recent students have confirmed they are well prepared for the rigours of university and the challenges of a 21st century world and perform better in the workplace.

Most importantly, a Catholic education instils in young people the desire to make the world a better place.

Archbishop of Melbourne, Denis Hart, whose ministry includes a special concern for Catholic education, explained our beliefs well in a pastoral letter titled Learning is a Discovery that Brings Hope:

Catholic schooling provides a ‘light to the world’.

In this privileged setting teachers have the greatest impact and the mission of the Church is most evident. We must give careful attention to the following:

• to develop in students the intellectual, creative, and aesthetic faculties of the human person
• to promote in them a sense of values; to encourage just attitudes and prudent behaviour
• to prepare them for professional life
• to encourage the friendly interchange among students of diverse cultures and backgrounds that will lead to mutual understanding.

It is indeed a privilege to help shape your children’s future so, once again, on behalf of everyone connected to Catholic education, enjoy 2015. I know our partnership together will produce another wonderful year at your school.

Sincerely,

Stephen Elder
Executive Director Catholic Education
2014 performance

Catholic schools continued to return outstanding academic results across all year levels.

NAPLAN
On average across all year levels (3, 5, 7, 9) Victorian Catholic education excelled, with at least 95% of students posting results at or above national minimum standards (NMS) in all domains.

R: Reading; S: Spelling; W: Writing; GP: Grammar and Punctuation; N: Numeracy.

YEAR 12 RESULTS
Collectively, the 62 Catholic VCE schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne performed at better than the state average once again in 2014.

TIME TO SHINE
The inaugural Catholic Education Performing Arts Gala, Time to Shine, was an outstanding success. Live at the iconic Palais Theatre and screened nationally on Channel Seven, the gala showcased the elite artistic and musical talents of 300 students from more than 50 secondary schools.

The review of internationally acclaimed vocalist and guest performer Silvie Paladino said it all: ‘From beginning to end, Time to Shine was truly remarkable. I loved it.’
New schools
Four new Catholic schools opened this year to meet the demand of new and expanding communities in and around Melbourne. It’s a great compliment to all of our principals, teachers and staff that parents are demanding a Catholic school be a part of their neighbourhood.

Over the last five years a total of 10 new Catholic schools have opened their doors in Victoria.

In total we now provide 491 primary and secondary schools across the state and on current projections that number will be close to 500 before the start of the next decade.

Government support
The value of the Catholic education system was recognised in the lead-up to last year’s state election, when both major political parties agreed to lock in annual state government funding for our schools.

A historical deal links Catholic school funding to 25 per cent of the cost of a government school. This helps ensure we remain a high-quality, contemporary and affordable education option in keeping with our mission to contribute to the community.

On top of this, the Victorian Government is providing $120 million over the next four years for the development of new schools and crucial upgrades to existing facilities.

Record enrolments
More Victorian families are trusting Catholic schools to provide for their children’s future than ever before, with total enrolments over 210,000 for the first time. That equates to almost one in four Victorian primary or secondary students attending a Catholic school.

Catholic Education Week
We celebrate our proud history each year with Catholic Education Week, highlighted by the celebration of St Patrick’s Day. This year’s theme is Seek God with all your heart.

Festivities include a week-long visual arts exhibition, the Mass of St Patrick for Schools and the always popular Concert in the Park at Treasury Gardens on 17 March.

All families are encouraged to take the opportunity to learn more about what makes Catholic schools great.

Executive Director of Catholic Education, Stephen Elder, with Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews, and Education Minister James Merlino, at St John Vianney’s Primary School, Mulgrave.
In 2015

CHALLENGES
While we have gone a long way to bridging the funding gap, when all forms of government monies (state and federal, recurrent and capital) are combined a 16% shortfall exists between Catholic and state school systems.

We will continue to work for financial assistance that is fair and reasonable, in particular the right for disadvantaged students and families from low-socioeconomic backgrounds to access the best education possible, no matter which school they choose.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION TODAY
Once per term a 16-page colour magazine highlighting the day-to-day activities and achievements of our schools and students will arrive in your home.

Catholic Education Today is designed specifically for parents and includes regular features and advice on everyday issues and events affecting the modern school-age family. Please email media@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au to tell us what you’d like to read about in this magazine.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION
Follow us on Twitter for education news, views and discussion designed for parents @Ceomelb