Director’s Message
Welcome to a new year in Catholic education.

As we begin this new year, the Catholic Education Office Melbourne renews our commitment to our vision for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne: developing ‘engaged, purposeful and successful learners who shape the world for the common good’. In our mission ‘to provide an outstanding Catholic education that integrates faith, life and culture’, we look to your support and efforts, and in particular in two areas in 2012.

Catholic Identity
I encourage school communities to reflect on their school’s Catholic identity as an important element of the School Improvement Framework (SIF). The use of the available Enhancing Catholic School Identity (ECSI) surveys and questionnaires provide a stimulus for reflection and a means of articulating and making explicit what Catholic schools are trying to do to make them distinctive.

Funding to Catholic Schools
We continue our call on the Australian Government to end the funding uncertainty for Catholic school parents. We seek an Australian Government funding policy that

- incorporates additional funding for Catholic schools to close the gap with government schools;
- funding for Catholic schools that keeps pace with the cost of education in government schools and
- more funding for students with disabilities and special needs regardless of the school they attend.

The final report of the Gonski review was released on 20 February. It contains detailed proposals on how schools could be funded in Australia. The report has recommended a new model for schools. At this time the implications in Victoria for Catholic school funding and parent fees are unclear.

I will keep you fully informed of any changes that are likely to affect our schools.

The review called for the injection of an additional $5 billion in school funding. The Australian Government has responded cautiously to this proposal.

Prime Minister Gillard has stated that ‘indexation will be an element of any new arrangement’. We will wait to see whether this meets the Catholic education position that funding be indexed to keep pace with government school costs.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) will work with schools to ensure they are well represented in any government consultations.

The strength of Catholic schools will be judged by the joint efforts of all involved in Catholic education, including our school boards and parent bodies, in meeting the challenges and developing the opportunities that will emerge from the Gonski Report.

Best wishes for a fulfilling and productive 2012.

Stephen Elder
Executive Director of Catholic Education
Building better boards

FORMATION and CEOM ONLINE RESOURCES

The specific formation requirements of individual boards are the responsibility of the relevant principal, parish priest and canonical administrators as leaders of the parish-school community.

The CEOM provides online resources to assist with formation of board members and boards. The resources are located on the CEVN website <http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au> at the Parish-School Boards page under School Improvement.

Resources provided are:

- foundational documentation for parish primary school and college boards.
- *Guidelines for Boards of Regional and Diocesan Colleges* (2010) which includes a Model Constitution, a brief guide for canonical administrators on the governance of the college, and information on the responsibilities and management of a regional/diocesan college board.
- a step by step guide to assist with establishing a parish primary school board.
- a new resource to be launched in March, *A Guide for Parish Education Boards* (2012) which provides information, videos, practical tips and sample documents relating to the purposes and responsibilities of boards, board membership, developing an effective board, the operations and business of the board.
- A PowerPoint presentation for use in inducting new members to a parish school board or to develop the understanding of the board by existing members.

Principals and school boards are encouraged to use the resources to enhance their work and for the formation of board members.

Any queries or suggestions for additional information may be directed to Patricia Palman on 9297 0264 or <ppalman@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>.

2012 seminars and network meetings

The CEOM offers a range of opportunities for members of Catholic school boards to improve their knowledge and skills and enhance their contributions to their children’s school.

Seminar for primary school board members

The CEOM school board seminar program is most relevant to new primary school board members. Topics include:

- role and function of the school board
- place of the school board in the community
- key attributes of an effective board member
- structure and proceedings of board meetings.

This seminar is to be held on 9 May, and 7 August at Simonds Hall, South Yarra.

An evening seminar to assist board members in their work associated with specific board functions and responsibilities will be conducted on 30 October, at Simonds Hall, South Yarra.

See <www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au> Primary School Boards page for details. Board members interested in attending the seminars should seek their school principal’s assistance to register through IPELS on the CEVN website <http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au>.

Meetings of board chairs

Board chairs may be interested in joining a CEOM network. The primary and secondary board chair networks meet once a term.

The Primary Network meetings are scheduled for 28 March, 20 June, 29 August and 14 November at Simonds Hall, South Yarra.

The Secondary Network meetings are on 7 March (Aquinas College, Ringwood), 16 May (Simonds Hall, South Yarra), 15 August (Sacred Heart Girls’ College, Oakleigh) and 24 October (Simonds Hall, South Yarra).

See <www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au> Our Schools School Boards page for details. To join, contact Patricia Palman 9267 0228 or <ppalman@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>.

Reflect and consider

ENDHANCING CATHOLIC SCHOOL IDENTITY

We accept that the world is changing. The attitudes of what parents, teachers and students want from a Catholic school can be varied. The ECSI tools (see the CEVN website for more details <http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au>) are a means of gathering information from parents, students and staff, to explore and identify the strengths and challenges a school needs to address to articulate the distinctive nature of Catholic schools.

Consider the following:

- using the tools to build your community
VICTORIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PARENT BODY (VCSPB)

The VCSPB Council members in 2012 are:

Archdiocese of Melbourne
Mr Tony Bentley (Chair)
Ms Lisa Hughes (Deputy Chair)

Diocese of Ballarat
Mr Matthew McIntyre (Executive Committee)
Ms Tracey O’Neill

Diocese of Sandhurst
Ms Liz Grogan (Executive Committee)

Diocese of Sale
Mr Shayne Annett
Mr Carl Stevens (Catholic Education Commission Victorian Ltd. representative)

The purpose of the VCSPB is to:

- represent parents of students in Victorian Catholic schools
- promote parents as partners in education
- promote the principles of Catholic education
- promote Catholic schools as schools of first choice for Catholic families.

The role of the Council member includes:

- attendance at Council meetings; a minimum of 4 meetings a year, including the AGM; members must attend the first meeting of the year and the AGM in person and may opt to attend up to 2 of the other meetings by teleconference
- active participation and contribution in all VCSPB work, committees, meetings, stakeholder engagement, publications and submissions
- dissemination and exchange of information with VCSPB contact persons and school boards, in person and by email
- collaboration with the relevant Catholic education authorities to represent the views of Catholic education on relevant diocesan, state and national level committees
- analyse and research policies of education authorities, governments and other agencies for their impact on our schools

Vacancies exist on the Council. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Council, contact the VCSPB secretary <secretary@vcspb.catholic.edu.au> for information.

2012 Parent Seminar Series

A range of topics relevant to the parents, guardians and carers of students in Catholic primary and secondary schools is presented in various school locations. See <www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au> News & Events page or contact Shirley O’Sullivan on 9464 5225 or email <shirley@stclaresthomastown.catholic.edu.au>.