Director’s Message

I thank all school boards for their continuing input and support in what has been a challenging year for schools and their communities.

One of the most exciting developments in Catholic education is the recent signing of an agreement between Telstra and the Catholic sector to implement the Catholic Network Australia (CNA). This national broadband network, installed over the next two years, will link more than 1550 Catholic schools and Catholic Education Offices across Australia with the commitment of 90 per cent of all Catholic education sites in Australia to the network.

CNA will dramatically increase the reach and capacity of broad band connectivity to our schools and provide a diverse range of services to students and teachers. Eventually a single network for all Australian Catholic agencies and parishes will be provided for by CNA at reduced costs and in line with best practice.

I am confident our focus and vision of working as one for the benefit of all will continue to be reflected in your endeavours for our schools.

With best wishes

Stephen Elder
Director of Catholic Education

2009 seminars and network meetings

The Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) continues to offer seminars to support the work of Catholic school boards and parents in 2009.

- **Seminars for parents**
  See [www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au)
  Parents page or contact Shirley O’Sullivan on 9464 5225 or email <shirley@stclaresthomastown.catholic.edu.au>.

- **Meetings of school board chairs**
  Contact your principal or Patricia Palman <schoolboards@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>.

Building better boards

Leadership

As members of a school board you each have chosen a leadership role in the school and the community.

Archbishop Denis Hart in his 2009 *Pentecost Letter to Youth* (<www.cam.org.au/pentecost>) noted the Catholic tradition of the seven virtues which provides a road map for a Catholic leader.

The seven virtues require us to:

- be prudent
- be just
- show fortitude
- be temperate
- be a person of faith
- be a person of hope
- be a person of charity.

As we are called by God to leadership so we receive the gifts from God to meet the calling.

In light of what it takes to be a Catholic leader, at some point in each year, take time to reflect and consider

- how you approach your leadership role on the school board for the good of your school and community
- your school board procedures and processes and how they reflect the seven virtues.

Reflect and consider

Scenario

A new member has joined the board and is due to attend their first meeting next Term. The rest of the members have been on the board for 2 or more years.

Questions for discussion

- what information would be useful to provide prior to the first meeting?
  Consider an induction information pack including:
  - venue, time and meeting dates
  - list of board members and contact details
  - copy of Constitution and Handbook
Minutes of last 2-3 meetings
list of current actions
strategic plan and goals of the board
a brief history of the school and a tour of the school
will a brief meeting over coffee with the principal and the chair be beneficial?
what formation activities need to be considered; for example, a CEOM seminar?
how do we make our group and meeting welcoming and inclusive for the new member?

2009 Regional Forum
The Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body and the Diocese of Sandhurst are holding a forum for school board members and parents on Friday 16 October 7.30pm (dinner) and Saturday 17 October 9.00 am–3.00 pm at Notre Dame College, Shepparton.
The theme to be developed is Just and faithful stewards Governance and parent relations. Our keynote speaker is Robert Fitzgerald discussing school governance and the role of parents in Catholic schools.

For further information contact Audrey Brown, Diocese of Sandhurst (Wangaratta Office), on <abrown@ceosand.catholic.edu.au> or (03) 5723 0000

Parliament of the World’s Religions
It is important to recall that our Catholic identity is reflected in all we do and are seen to do, and in how we work with all parts of our society. More so we need to be open to the world and engage with a confidence that our actions are guided and inspired by an understanding of the human person and our relationships are based on the enriching values of the Gospels.

An important part of engaging with the world is an understanding of peoples of other faiths. During 3-9 December 2009, an opportunity is provided when Melbourne hosts the Parliament of the World’s Religions. This is the world’s largest interreligious gathering of interfaith interaction and understanding. For details see <www.parliamontofreligions.org>.

Resources on CEOM website <www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>
- School Board documentation, establishment process, guidelines and formation information, and FAQs.

CEOM Policies
CEOM consultancy service supporting school boards
The purpose of the school board consultancy service is to support principals and parish priests in their responsibilities related to strengthening the education community. The service provides them with resources and advice in working with existing school boards and in establishing school boards. The specific formation requirements of individual school boards are the responsibility of the relevant principal and parish priest as leaders of the school community.

The consultancy service is directed to primary school principals and to a limited extent, secondary school principals during normal business hours. The service is by telephone, email and face to face meetings. Additional assistance may be provided by referrals to other areas within CEOM, particularly CEOM Regional Offices.

The service responds to specific needs of individual schools where support may be needed to:
- establish and maintain an effective school board
- assist with development and the review of draft documents (Constitution/Handbook).

The consultancy service is complemented by the CEOM services for members of school boards in the:
- provision of professional learning opportunities directed to primary school boards and to a limited extent, secondary school boards
- support of network and school cluster activities
- provision of printed and online resources.

Contact Patricia Palman (03) 9267 0228 or email <ppalman@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>.

Sharing and learning together
What could other boards learn from your board experience? Your contribution to the Board Business newsletter, via email, would be very much appreciated. Please forward to: <schoolboards@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>.