Director's Message

As a positive step to sustainable funding of our schools, the $1.4 billion package over four years for Catholic schools was announced on 11 November. The package includes an additional $268 million, with indexation of new funding expected to deliver a total of $274 million. The new agreement represents a significant step towards our goal of Victorian Government funding equivalent to 25% of the cost of education in a government school. This agreement supports the choice of Catholic families regardless of their economic circumstances.


Thank you for your continued good work in celebrating and proclaiming our mission and unique identity in Catholic education.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Stephen Elder
Director of Catholic Education

Building better boards

Valued contributions

Each member of your school board has an opportunity to make a unique contribution to the board and its contributions to the school. As a group, the board can provide valued contributions to the school, the learning outcomes of school and to the mission of Catholic education.

How can the board make valued contributions?

- Align board goals and activities to the School Improvement Plan.
- Undertake an annual board evaluation and review process.
- Promote your school in the community every chance you get – be an ambassador for your school.
- Assist with the development of your school website and marketing plan.
- Record and celebrate the history and achievements of your school e.g. a commemorative book.
- Build relationships with other school boards e.g. networks and clusters and attend professional development programs.

Reflect and consider

Scenario

Following the annual review of the school board, the board considered recommendations to introduce a few changes to enhance the functioning of the board. There is agreement on the recommended changes.

Questions for discussion

- Is there an understanding that change takes time, involvement and commitment?
- Is the focus of the board on the desired outcomes of the recommended changes?
- Are expectations clear?
- Are communication lines established and open?
- Is information to be provided consistently and frequently?
- Are there structures and processes to enable opinions and ideas to be voiced in a safe and trusting environment?
- Are successes acknowledged openly?
2010 seminars and network meetings

The CEOM will again offer a range of opportunities in 2010 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 relevant to new primary school board members as well as boards who have been together for a while. Boards may schedule attendance at one of the seminars in lieu of their usual board meeting. 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 held five times a year on 22 March, 21 April, 23 June and 21 July at Simonds Hall, South Yarra; and on 5 May at Ringwood.

Board members interested in attending the seminars should seek their school principal’s assistance to register online on the CEVN website <http://admin.ceo.melb.catholic.edu.au>.

Meetings of school board chairs

Board chairs may be interested in joining a network. The primary and secondary board chair networks were established in 2008 and have an ongoing membership of between 12 and 20 members.

Contact your principal or Patricia Palman <schoolboards@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>.

Seminars for parents

The Parent Seminar Series, which has been operating in the Archdiocese of Melbourne for more that 18 years, is an expression of the partnership that exists between parents, schools and the CEOM to support the education of students in Catholic schools.

The Parent Seminar Series presents a range of topics relevant to the parents of students in Catholic primary and secondary schools in various locations.

See <www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>
Parents page or contact Shirley O’Sullivan on 9464 5225 or email <shirley@stclaresthomastown.catholic.edu.au>.

Resources on CEOM website

<www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>

- School Board documentation, establishment process, guidelines and formation information, and FAQs.
- CEOM Policies
- Parent Handbook: booklets, one for primary school parents and one for secondary school parents providing parents with useful summary of what Catholic schools can offer children.
- Victorian Catholic Schools at a Glance 2009: presents a useful snapshot of statistics related to Catholic schools in Victoria providing a concise and accessible overview of school enrolments, numbers of staff, numbers of schools and details of new and closed schools.

Victorian Catholic School Parent Body

Established by the Bishops of Victoria, the Victorian Catholic School Parent Body (VCSPB) represents parents of children in Catholic schools.

Parent representatives from each diocese and region in Victoria form a Council. The Council engages on key issues effecting education in our schools.

The Council seeks your involvement and encourages you to
- visit the VCSPB website <www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au>;
- read the Bulletin newsletter;
- register a contact person for your school;
- contact your Council member or email your views to <secretary@vcspb.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>.

Merry Christmas