**Director's Message**

Recently the Archbishop of Melbourne, the Most Rev. Denis Hart DD, published a landmark pastoral letter on the role of the Catholic Church in education. You can find it on the home page of the Catholic Education Office Melbourne <www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>. The letter, entitled *Learning: a Discovery that Brings Hope*, captures the essential nature and mission of Catholic education as one imbued with the person and teachings of Jesus Christ.

His Grace highlights for all of us the joy and hope engendered by this vision of Catholic schools, while acknowledging the challenges we all face in our mission. I commend this letter to you and all your school community as a source of inspiration and strength, and as an invaluable guide to our work.

In May the Victorian Government brought down its first Budget, and it was pleasing to see that the government has fulfilled its promise of funding Catholic schools at 25% of the average per capita costs in government schools. The additional funding will cover the full school year from January 2011.

When it comes to government funding of students in non-government schools, many myths abound. An article in the June edition of the Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body *Bulletin* newsletter (see <www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au>) provides some brief arguments and figures to counter these myths. I invite your support and assistance in conveying the accurate messages of funding of Catholic education.

Stephen Elder
Director of Catholic Education

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**CEOM resource**

**REVISED GUIDELINES FOR BOARDS OF REGIONAL AND DIOCESAN COLLEGES**

The resource, *Guidelines for Boards of Regional and Diocesan Colleges*, has been updated and is now published online on the Parish-School Boards page of the CEVN website <www.cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au>. The revised resource includes a revised 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.

**Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body (VCSPB)**

The VCSPB represents parents of students in Victorian Catholic schools and supports the work of Victorian Catholic education authorities in advancing the interests of Catholic schools and their students, particularly in those areas where parent input can strengthen the quality of Catholic school provision.

In submissions, the VCSPB speaks from the perspective of parents who value education in the Catholic faith and tradition for their children, and who are also taxpayers and interested citizens.

The VCSPB submissions to the Federal Review of Funding for Schooling (Gonski Review) and the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Education of Gifted and Talented Students are available on the VCSPB website <www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au> at the Issues page.

Further items of interest may be accessed through the VCSPB *Bulletin* newsletter available at on the VCSPB website <www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au>. 
**Parish Education Boards**

The parish priest, upon consideration of local circumstances, including the functions of existing parish groups, is responsible for making any decision about the establishment of a board and its arrangements. His Grace Archbishop Denis Hart, on the recommendation of the Council of Priests, has advised that the preferred title of a board of a parish primary school is **parish education board** and that its functions should reflect a broader parish vision. This title reflects the importance of the relationship between the parish and the parish primary school for the provision of Catholic education in the parish community.

Resources to assist with discussions on current arrangements in light of this advice will be made available on the CEVN website <www.cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au>.

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**2011 professional learning for boards**

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.

**Twilight Forum for board members and parents**

The forum is to be held on Wednesday 19 October at the Treacy Conference Centre, Parkville from 6pm to 9pm. A panel will address practical ways on how a board and parents can support their school and principal in promoting their school. Further details will be provided in Term 3.

**Seminars and network meetings**

Details are available on the CEOM website <www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au> at the School Boards page. Board members interested in attending the seminars should seek their school principal’s assistance to register through IPLS on the CEVN website <www.cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au>.

Primary school and secondary college board chairs interested in joining a CEOM network may contact Patricia Palman 9267 0228 or <ppalman@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au>.

**Seminars for parents**

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

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**Building better boards**

**CREATIVITY TECHNIQUE**

SCAMPER is a checklist that helps to think of changes that can be made to an existing product or service to create a new or better one. The checklist may be used either as direct suggestions or as starting points for developing further possibilities. Developed by Bob Eberle, SCAMPER stands for are:

- S – Substitute – components, materials, people.
- C – Combine – mix, combine with other assemblies or services, integrate.
- A – Adapt – alter, change function, use part of another element.
- M – Modify – increase or reduce in scale, change shape, modify attributes (e.g. colour).
- P – Put to another use.
- E – Eliminate – remove elements, simplify, reduce to core functionality.
- R – Reverse – turn inside out or upside down.

[www.mindtools.com/community/pages/article/newCT_02.php]

**Reflect and consider**

**CHAIRING A MEETING**

The role of the chair includes the chairing of board meetings, ensuring meetings are focused on the agenda and encouraging participation of all members in meetings and board events. The quality of the meeting, its outcome and the commitment of the board to the outcome is a reflection of the how well this is achieved.

Consider the following:

- are the values of the board in place and applied?
- is there effective dialogue? (See Board Business Number 9 – Term 1, 2009)
- is the board meeting a stimulating, learning conversation that informs and builds understanding of all members?
- is there support and encouragement for honest, trust based exploration of ideas and possibilities?
- is each board member able to offer their best and be heard, acknowledged and valued?
- do board outcomes reveal and apply the collective wisdom of the board?