Director's Message

It is with great pleasure that I note that Catholic School Parents Australia (CSPA) was officially launched on 14 October 2013 and held its inaugural Annual General Meeting the following day. CSPA will play a leading role in representing the views of parents with children in Catholic schools to the Australian Government and within the Catholic sector. It will also provide a forum for state Catholic parent bodies to consider issues and share ideas.

CPSA has the support of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, the National Catholic Education Commission and the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd.

An inaugural Council, consisting of two nominees from each state Catholic school parent association and the ACT Catholic School Parent Council, has been established. The nominees from the Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body (VCSPB) are its Chair, Tracey O’Neill (0425 725 771) and Patricia Palman (Executive Officer, 9267 0228).

As a parent and a long committed advocate for all students and Catholic schools, Tony O’Byrne (currently principal at Aquinas College, Ringwood) was elected Independent Chair of CPSA.

Parent leaders and their informed voice at school, state and national levels are a key to ensuring outcomes that benefit the learning and wellbeing of our children and the future of our schools. Thank you for your continuing work and support in 2013.

With best wishes.

Stephen Elder
Executive Director of Catholic Education

Professional learning for school boards in 2014

Members of Catholic school boards looking to improve their knowledge and skills and enhance their contributions to their children’s school may like to participate in the following Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) activities.

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

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

This seminar is repeated three times on 28 May, 25 June and 27 August at the Catholic Leadership Centre, Corner Victoria Parade and Hoddle Street, East Melbourne.

Board members interested in attending the seminars should seek their school principal’s assistance to register through My PL (IPLS) on the CEVN website http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au.

Online resources for ongoing formation of school board members
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 under School Improvement / Parish–School Boards page.

Meetings and networks for board chairs
Board chairs may be interested in joining a CEOM network. The primary and secondary board chair networks meet once a term. To join a network, contact Patricia Palman 9267 0228 or ppalman@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au.
The Primary Network meetings are scheduled for **27 March**, **4 June**, **20 August** and **29 October** at the Catholic Leadership Centre, East Melbourne.

The Secondary Network meetings are on **2 April** (MacKillop Catholic Regional College, Werribee), **18 June** (St Monica’s College, Epping), **3 September** (East Melbourne) and **12 November** (East Melbourne).

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**Building better boards**

**SCHOOL–FAMILY–COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

The Australian research paper, *Parental engagement in learning and schooling: Lessons from research*, found that supportive parents and a highly engaged community are key to a well-rounded education. The research supports the assertion that parents’ attitudes, behaviours, and actions in relation to their children’s education have a substantial impact on student learning and educational attainment. This groundbreaking research on parental engagement highlights the benefits, demonstrates what works, and identifies strategies available to facilitate parental engagement.

The new research has found that encouraging parents and the wider community to be engaged in students’ education leads to better results in overall student performance. The paper concludes that positive parental engagement in learning improves academic achievement, wellbeing and productivity.

Parent engagement is [core work](#) of the CEOM and our schools.

**What does your school and school board do to develop and improve school–family and community engagement?**

**Does your school have a school–family and community engagement policy?**

**Does this policy influence your school’s culture, plans and practices?**

**Does this policy influence your board’s plan, action and practices?**

**Does your school/board have an annual school–family–community engagement plan?**

**What does parent engagement look like?**

See:

- article in [VCSPB Bulletin](#) (March 2013 page 5).

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- The Family–School & Community Partnerships Bureau [www.familyschool.org.au](#)

**A NEW CEOM RESOURCE Parent Engagement in Action: A practical guide and toolkit for schools** has been released soon to help schools to know how well they are going with parent engagement, and how to get even better. Queries may be directed to John Stafford on 9267 0228 or via email jstafford@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au.

**Related material**


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**Reflect and consider**

**SCHOOL-PARISH PARTNERSHIP**

‘Families, Catholic schools and parishes work together as partners in the spiritual formation and education of children and young people.’


‘The family, as the fundamental and essential educating community, is the privileged means for transmitting the religious and cultural values which help the person to acquire his or her own identity. Founded on love and open to the gift of life, the family contains in itself the very future of society.’


‘The Catholic school participates in the evangelising mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out ... The ecclesial [Church-related] nature of the Catholic school, therefore, is written in the very heart of its identity as a teaching institution.’

Congregation for Catholic Education 1998, [The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium](#), no. 11, St Paul’s Publications, Vatican, Strathfield, Australia.

**How is your school and parish partnership enacted?**

[Some ideas](#) for consideration.
The CEOM provides online resources to assist with the formation of board members and boards of primary and secondary schools. The resources are located on the CEVN website http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au under School Improvement / Parish–School Boards.

**Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body**

The Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body (VCSPB) is to be held on **Monday 25 November 2013** at 6pm at the Catholic Leadership Centre, East Melbourne. RSVP by 18 November 2013 is essential. Contact Patricia Palman, Executive Officer, on 9267 0228 or via email ppalman@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au

How can you connect to your VCSPB?
- Visit the [VCSPB website](http://www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au).
- Place a link to the VCSPB website on your school website.
- Subscribe to the VCSPB newsletter online.
- Activate the school’s own reserved VCSPB email account.

To facilitate communication with parents the VCSPB has established a reserved email account for each Catholic school in Victoria. This email account is already available for your school but requires the addition of a password by the SINA administrator in your school. A forwarding address may be added into this email account so that future emails are sent automatically to your VCSPB contact person or school board Chair.

If assistance is required in adding the password or forwarding address, please contact the Catholic Education Office Melbourne ICT Helpdesk on 03 9267 0422 or via email ictsupport@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au.

If you are interested in learning more about the VCSPB and how you can be a Council member, visit [www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au](http://www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au) and contact Patricia Palman, Executive Officer, on 9267 0228.

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**Catholic School Parents Australia (CSPA)**

‘The path to today has not always been easy, there have been challenges along the way but we have succeeded. I believe that the reasons for our success have been our faith and our shared passion for parent leadership and advocacy in Catholic education. Each Council Member brings something valuable to the table and holds a piece of our collective wisdom. Each Council Member is committed to our parent voice informing the decisions of the federal government, NCEC and the Church’s mission for Catholic education.’


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**Inaugural Council members**

**Chair:** Tony O’Byrne

**Federation of Parents & Friends In Catholic Schools Qld**
- Karl McKenzie (Townsville)
- Carmel Nash (Brisbane)

**NSW Council of Catholic School Parents**
- Trevor Kellam (Woollongong)
- Danielle Cronin (Sydney)

**Parents & Friends Federation of WA Inc.**
- Joe Monterosso (Perth)
- Siobhan Allen (Perth)

**Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities (SA)**
- Ann Bliss (Adelaide)
- Kylie Ind (Mt Gambier)

**Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents Council**
- Brendan McManus (Hobart)
- Greg Boon (Launceston)

**Victoria Catholic School Parent Body**
- Tracey O’Neill (Daylesford)
- Patricia Palman (Melbourne)

**Catholic School Parents Canberra & Goulburn**
- Bob Brady (Queanbeyan)
- Tim Smith (Canberra)