Director’s Message

I trust that each of you is starting this year with renewed energy and a refreshed spirit, ready to embrace all that the year offers. I am grateful for your commitment to Catholic education and your service to school and parish.

Recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures show that Catholic schools in Victoria continue to increase their share of enrolment growth. Enrolments in Catholic schools have increased by 2 per cent, while those in government and independent schools rose by 1.5 per cent. The story is particularly positive in our secondary schools, with growth in new enrolments at 1.9 per cent, almost double that of independent schools. This is a testament to the fine work you are all doing in providing a quality Catholic education for the children and young people in your care.

While federal funding arrangements are secure for the next four years, conversations with government will continue apace in 2014 to ensure the interests of Catholic students are protected. The Australian Senate has already begun a review into these funding arrangements and with a state election due in November we can expect Catholic school funding to remain a live debate.

The Australian Curriculum is under review and Catholic education works to ensure the curriculum is academically rigorous, teacher-friendly and in line with evidence-based research about effective teaching. Certainly the curriculum could have a better balance in perspectives, ensuring that the Judaeo-Christian heritage of our nation is well represented.

Thank you for your continuing work and support in 2014. With best wishes,

Stephen Elder
Executive Director of Catholic Education

It would be appreciated if a copy of this newsletter could be provided to board members or parent groups.

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, East Melbourne.

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

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 on 9267 0228 or via email 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 (Catholic Leadership Centre, East Melbourne)
- 12 November (Catholic Leadership Centre, East Melbourne).

Catholic Education Office Melbourne

www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au
A special event for parish priests and principals is to be held on **26 March 2014** (9.30am – 1.00pm) at the Catholic Leadership Centre, East Melbourne. Dr Alessandro Colombo (Milan, Italy) will address the importance of subsidiarity, autonomy, diversity and choice and their relationship to the overall health and performance of schools and systems. Registration is via My PL (IPLS) on the CEVN website [http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au](http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au), Activity Code: 14LDJ520A or phone Ms Karen Mitri on 9267 0228.

**Resources**

Resources for Parish-School Boards and parents are located on the CEVN website [http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au](http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au) under *School Improvement* / *Parish-School Boards*. Additional material and resources are available for 2014.

- **Sharing Wisdom** (Sr Mary Benet McKinney OSB)
  A faith-filled approach and process for those who participate in some form of group decision making.

- **A Guide for Parish Education Boards** provides information, videos, practical tips and sample documents relating to:
  - the purposes and responsibilities of boards
  - board membership
  - developing an effective board
  - the operations of the board
  - the business of the board.

Some of the information in this Guide is also relevant to secondary college boards.

**NEW** **CEOM Parent Engagement in Action: Guide and Tool** (2013): This practical and user friendly resource helps schools to know how well they are going with parent engagement, and how to get even better.

This resource is available on the CEOM website [www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au) under *Learning & Teaching / Parents as Partners / Initiatives / Family School Partnerships*.

Collated resources are also available on the VCSPB website [http://vcspb.vic.catholic.edu.au](http://vcspb.vic.catholic.edu.au) on the following topics:

- Bullying
- Catholic Identity
- Curriculum
- Parent Engagement
- Parenting
- Safe Schools.

**Building better boards**

**COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES**

To share and support the work of the board, the board may consider establishing committees or a working party. Board committees and working parties are an effective means to make better use of board members’ expertise, by allowing those with particular knowledge, interests and skills to concentrate on those areas.

From time to time these committees may have the option of co-opting additional members to assist with their deliberations. Board committees also create opportunities for leadership and succession planning.

Each committee or working party should be chaired by a board member who would be responsible for reporting to the board on the activities of the committee/working party. Board committees/working parties are directly responsible to the board.

Each committee/working party of the board should have clearly articulated expectations or terms of reference stating:

- the name of the committee/working party with a clear description of background and context
- the name of the chair
- the purpose and function/tasks to be undertaken including specific deliverables/outcomes and resourcing
- the names of the members
- meeting and reporting requirements
- the date for reporting back to the board, e.g. actions since last report, what’s happening now, future plans, items for board discussion
- duration of the committee/working party.

The terms of reference of each committee or working party of the board should be recorded in the board Handbook.

A summary of the activities of each committee/working party should be included in the board’s annual report to acknowledge the specific work undertaken by the committee/working party during the year.
Reflect and consider

TRUST AND DARE TO DREAM

By Joe Doolan, Religious Education and Catholic Identity Unit, CEOM. First published in Director’s eNews, Vol. 4, No. 1, January 2014

Catholic Education Week Theme
The 2014 Catholic Education Week celebrations, beginning 15 March, have taken two themes from a tweet by Pope Francis to young people last year (27 April 2013): trust and daring to dream. This challenge he offers our youth could be a focus for us throughout first term.

Pope Francis encourages all young people to embrace the grand plan God has for each person, a vision that includes personal integrity, strong relationships with others, service of the Kingdom and a shared vigilance for our world.

Place our trust in God first
Our Catholic community enjoys a rich legacy when it comes to the idea of trust: it is one of the cornerstones of our faith. In everything we do there are divine assurances to rely on:

- the love of the Father, who created and sustains us
- the love of Christ, who modelled authentic human life for us
- the love of the Holy Spirit, who lives in our hearts.

These three actions of God’s love are what our trust is based on.

Trust is a rich Biblical idea. The term appears in the Old Testament 200 times, especially in the Psalms, and is prominent in the New Testament. The story of the People of Israel is a narrative commencing with trust in God, followed by some forgetfulness of Him, then leading to rituals and prayers marking the renewal of trust. The constant in this story of vacillation is God’s faithfulness, a Covenant that never wavers. The Bible, and especially the words of Christ in the New Testament, exhorts us to trust in God, our refuge and strength.

What does trust look like?
From the foundation of our trust in God we find it easier to place our trust in others. Sometimes it is through our relationship with someone we have come to trust that we can open ourselves to trust in God.

When we trust someone we have a sense of confidence in that person. We give over some of our security to the other person, and this disclosure of vulnerability paradoxically strengthens us and can forge strong relationships. Trusting another person occurs when we, aware of our fragility, lean on another for strength. When we exercise this virtue of trust in another the action engenders a reciprocal response and bonds the individuals and groups.

The virtue of Trust is important in life, especially when things go wrong, when God seems absent. Trust may be a secure harbour at times but it is also the ability to find a way to connect to God when we are caught in the storm. We are aware that difficulties will emerge in everyone’s life. Jesus warns us that ‘floods will rise and winds will blow’ our houses around, and we need solid foundations – our trust in God (Mt 7: 24–27).

How do we build trust in a Catholic school?
Trust is a key element in the life of any vibrant community. For a Catholic school it is essential. Trust is a foundation on which to build the relationships essential to effective teaching and the wellbeing, growth and development of students. These include relationships between teachers, parents and principal. The story of a school is one of mutual collaboration, cooperation and shared life. As a community of faith, the Catholic school has trust in God as its starting point, from which it strives to build trust at all levels.

A school builds trust in God by beginning every day and each gathering with prayer. We state our trust in God and connect to the rich current of prayers that form our Catholic narrative.

The initial gathering, school Masses and assemblies with themes of welcome and hospitality also establish a sense of security in the school community, people and an environment we can trust. Planning for the year is thorough and professional so as to engender trust. Hopes and dreams for the year can be buttressed by that trust. Principals and staff set about building or developing relationships of trust with students, colleagues, parents and the community.

Dare to dream
In Pope Francis’ call to trust in God he combined this with a call to ‘dare to dream’. The second depends on, and grows from, the first.

What can we dream of in 2014?
God asks us to co-create a better world wherein the poor are included, freedom of all is championed, and peace is actively fostered.
People who seriously dare to dream consider carefully their plan. Daring to dream encompasses an evaluation of our God-given talents and an ability to see and take the necessary first steps to bring the dream to birth. These people seek advice from trusted friends and are undeterred by criticism of their plan. Daring to dream means asking God’s Holy Spirit to clarify the bold new vision and give courage to carry it out.

Our rich heritage of daring disciples
When Jesus called the disciples their response is immediate, unqualified and brave. His request – ‘Follow me’ – implies a challenge: ‘I dare you!’ Through the centuries our Roman Catholic narrative has delivered a rich heritage of people who were up to the dare. In Australia we celebrate St Mary of the Cross and Caroline Chisholm. We look forward this year to the canonisation of Blessed John XXIII, Blessed John Paul II and Blessed Peter Faber, leaders who envisaged great enterprises. Each of these followers of Christ had a God-given dream and the courage and imagination to follow it, trusting in God’s guiding presence. In doing so they attracted others to the cause, and the legacy of their dream lives on.

Pope Francis’ call to young people is a call to hope in the midst of a world that can often cause us to lose hope. It is a call to all of us who live and work with young people.

‘Entrust yourselves to God and dare to dream.’

STAY CONNECTED – Access key resources
✓ Visit the VCSPB website.
✓ Place a link to the VCSPB website on your school website.
✓ Subscribe to the VCSPB newsletter online.
✓ Participate in online surveys.
✓ Activate your very own reserved VCSPB email account
✓ Check that the on-forwarding email address is still current

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 to add the password or forwarding address, please contact the IT Helpdesk on 9267 0422 or 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 and contact Ms Patricia Palman, Executive Officer, on 9267 0228 or via email ppalman@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au.

Articles of interest in the 2013 VCSPB Bulletin
- Parent Engagement (Term 1 and Term 4)
- Wellbeing is at the core of learning and school improvement (SEL – social and emotional learning) (Term 2)
- Why is Catholic education important in Australia and for the Church? (Term 3)
- Social Inclusion (Term 4)

Catholic Leadership Centre
The Catholic Leadership Centre (CLC) is a world class conference and learning facility for professional learning programs and executive courses to support Catholic education and key agencies. Conveniently located in the heart of East Melbourne, the centre features purpose-built learning spaces for contemporary adult learning, supported by the latest conferencing technology.

Location
The Centre is located at 576 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne.

Facilities
The Catholic Leadership Centre has a range of facilities and spaces to host professional learning programs, workshops and seminars, including:
- two large halls with capacity for 120 and 300 people
- a variety of catering package options
- 45 accommodation units onsite all with ensuite facilities
- nine teaching and workshop studios (from 15–60 participants)
- breakout and resource spaces.

Information Technology
The CLC features learning spaces fully equipped with the latest high quality, contemporary and high end information technology.

Transport
The CLC is well served by public transport. There are also several public car park facilities located within walking distance.

Catholic Education Office Melbourne www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au