Director’s Message

I want to thank you for your ongoing commitment to Catholic education and in particular the support and promotion of your school.

The vision and expansion of Catholic education, and the confidence and trust of parents in our schools is reflected in the first of 13 new schools opening in 2013. The children in our schools represent nearly one-quarter of the students attending schools in Victoria.

Catholic education is a partnership with parents. Your active role in your school and in your parish and school community enhances the education of each child in our care.

Your work as school boards can help each child to become an engaged, purposeful and successful learner, and to develop the commitment, passion and compassion that will shape a better world for the common good.

Together in work and prayer we can face the challenges and opportunities of the year ahead.

My best wishes for 2013.

Stephen Elder
Executive Director of Catholic Education

2013 seminars and network meetings

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) 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:
• 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 repeated three times, on 1 May, 18 June and 1 August at the Catholic Leadership Centre, East Melbourne.

See www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au under Our Schools / School Boards / Professional Learning for details. 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 the 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.

Meetings of board chairs
Board chairs may be interested in joining a CEOM network. The primary and secondary board chair networks meet once a term.

The Primary Network meetings are scheduled for 20 March, 5 June, 7 August and 17 October at the Catholic Leadership Centre, East Melbourne.
Building better boards

MEANING MATTERS

Elements that assist boards in doing their work include role clarity, a clear understanding of objectives and access and resources as needed to get the work done. Also required is an emotionally safe environment where there is trust and respect, constructive conflict, dialogue and a general feeling of ‘we are in this together’.

A strong sense of meaning in the work boards do can inspire board members and increase energy levels, self-confidence and productivity. When what boards do really matter and makes a difference to others, there can be employment of all capabilities to meet a shared goal, and a ‘flow’ created between the individual and board work undertaken.

How can this flow be enhanced? Contextualised to school boards, some suggestions are listed below for your consideration.

• **Tell the story in five ways at once**
  Five universal sources or approaches to framing a story give individuals a sense of meaning, including their ability to have an impact on:
  - society – e.g. building community, stewardship, parish
  - the school – e.g. creating the best school possible
  - the student – e.g. parent engagement in learning
  - the board – e.g. a sense of belonging, a caring environment, working together efficiently and effectively
  - themselves – e.g. sense of achievement, personal development

• **Spend more time asking than telling**
  Human nature is such that when the board chooses for itself and aligns its actions with the direction of the school, there will be far more commitment to the outcome.

Vacancies exist on the Council. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Council, visit the VCSPB website (www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au) for information and contact the VCSPB at secretary@vcspb.catholic.edu.au.

The role of the Council member includes:
- attendance at Council meetings; a minimum of four meetings a year, including the Annual General Meeting (AGM); members must attend the first meeting of the year and the AGM in person and may choose to attend the other meetings by tele/videoconference
- active participation and contribution in all VCSPB work, committees, meetings, stakeholder engagement, publications and submissions
- dissemination and exchange of information with the VCSPB contact persons and school boards, in person and via email
- collaboration with the relevant Catholic education authorities to represent the views of Catholic education on relevant diocesan, state and national level committees
- analyse and research policies of education authorities, governments and other agencies for their impact on our schools.

Resources

Victorian Government

Archdiocese of Melbourne
Catholic Education: Where the child is at the heart of education www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au/about-catholic-education/catholic-education/


Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project
Catholic schools across Victoria were created through the vision, dedication, hard work and commitment of the whole Catholic community. Today, schools are challenged to articulate their identity and vision and to express their distinctiveness as Catholic schools in a society where the Christian faith is increasingly marginalised.

To assist schools in facing these present realities the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) and the Catholic Education Offices of Melbourne, Ballarat, Sandhurst and Sale, have entered into a research partnership with the Catholic University in Leuven, Belgium (KU Leuven) to profile and develop the Catholic Identity of Catholic Schools.

The Project is to assist schools to understand better how their Catholic identity is expressed in work and practice and to support them in their future development. Read more at http://web.cecv.catholic.edu.au/projects/identity/ecsip.htm

Vicdeaf
A new resource has been launched to increase school communities’ understanding of students with Deaf parents. The resource was developed by Vicdeaf (www.vicdeaf.com.au) in response to feedback from parents who felt that communication between the school and home could be improved. ‘Let’s Talk’ is an educator’s guide to working with Deaf parents and their children. Information is provided for teachers, administrators, and additional school staff such as counsellors, integration aides and Outside School Hours Care staff.

‘Here too we see as a distinguishing mark of Christians the fact that they have a future: it is not that they know the details of what awaits them, but they know in general terms that their life will not end in emptiness. Only when the future is certain as a positive reality does it become possible to live the present as well. So now we can say: Christianity was not only “good news”—the communication of a hitherto unknown content. In our language we would say: the Christian message was not only “informative” but “performative”. That means: the Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known—it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing. The dark door of time, of the future, has been thrown open. The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life.’