Director’s Message
As we approach the end of Term 4, I want to thank you all for your continuing efforts on behalf of Catholic education and the students in our care. I hope the coming holidays will be an opportunity for you to rest and relax and spend time with family and friends.

May every blessing and the joy of Christmas be yours.

Stephen Elder
Executive Director of Catholic Education

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

Building better boards

Impactful strategic plans
Your school’s strategic plan impacts the strategic direction of your school and the actions of the board.

Research shows that formal strategic planning processes play an important role in proving overall satisfaction with strategy development. Most processes are data-driven and in addition to identifying strategy initiatives, results in:

- financial forecasting
- a budget
- resource allocations
- target setting
- the alignment of operations with strategic priorities.

Some ideas to improve the strategic planning process include:

- identifying, exploring and discussion of the implications of strategic issues (for example, major trends, what is different from last time, what is distinctive/your competitive strengths and how you may build on them) that will have the greatest impact on the future of the school
- including the most knowledgeable and influential participants to stimulate and challenge thinking with open, challenging yet collaborative discussion of the issues
- development of a plan and how it is to be implemented
- a system to measure and monitor the progress of the plan and emerging problems, which includes short- and long-term performance measures aligned to the initiatives, as well as budget targets and financial goals
- during the development of the plan, evaluate its strengths and weaknesses and its implementation

Reference:
www.mckinsey.com/insights/strategy/how_to_improve_strategic_planning

Resources

Guiding Standards for Governing by Australian School Boards (AISG)

Australian Institute of Company Directors offer an online learning portfolio which includes a comprehensive range of interactive webinars and self-paced eLearning courses designed to help strengthen or refresh a director’s knowledge.
Most of us want a real conversation — real, meaningful conversation that is courageous, and that pushes the frontiers both for ourselves and for those who work for and with us — but good conversation can be a very rare commodity ... Good conversations by definition break through the everyday surface chatter and invite people to the larger context. ... But first we have to apprentice ourselves to a language that is large enough for the world we want to enter ...

What language do we need for the world that we want to enter? Of course, it is not a lexicon of words; it is by its nature a dialogue, a new conversation, one we haven’t had before and one that will ask us to forsake our old identity for a new one. Conversation – specifically, courageous conversation – has the power to make unspoken aspirations a reality ...

Conversations are at their most powerful whey they are at our own frontier, and when they invite other people to their own frontiers, at the same time. The best conversations are on an edge – we feel as if we don’t fully know the pattern with which we are engaged, and other people feel the excitement too. When we work on the edge of the unknown, other people find it intriguing, and they also most likely find it authentic, because we’re not pretending to know everything about the direction we’re headed.*

Conversations are very powerful tools of action and change ... Conversation as an approach ... simply asks us to stay involved, to keep the conversation going. I as an individual do not have to come up with the answer; the answer will be overheard in the conversation ... Trying to get people engaged in a particular task, for example, is often impossible through coercion or legislation. Human beings do not often change gladly to do others’ bidding – whether it’s to change their behaviour or to increase their productivity or to pursue the many goals of the organization. What we can do, however, is to create a conversation that is invitational to our own and other people’s powers, that releases imagination, creativity and energy.

* Reference: www.redkitecoaching.com/articles/David_Whyte.html

David Whyte is a poet from Yorkshire, England. He takes his perspectives on creativity into the field of organisational development, where he works with many American and international companies. He is an associate fellow of Templeton College at the University of Oxford.

The Australian Catholic Bishops’ Social Justice Statement 2014–2105

By Gerard Tonti-Filippini, Religious Education and Catholic Identity, CEOM. First published in the CEOM Director’s eNews on Vol. 4, No. 18, 7 November 2014

Our goal
The Australian Catholic Bishops’ Social Justice Statement for 2014–2015, A Crown for Australia: Striving for the best...
The Statement provides us with an opportunity to reflect on what this means for our school context. Here we often use ‘sport’ to describe the overall concept of students taking part in multiple physical activities and/or major games – such as netball, football, basketball, soccer, cricket, tennis – and movement skills for their development. All schools are encouraged to engage with the Statement and to develop an awareness of the contribution sport can make to emotional, moral and academic growth.

Bishop Christopher Saunders, Chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, states: ‘Sport brings us together, builds communities and lets us celebrate the joy of movement and skill. Good sport makes everyone a winner’. Perhaps our challenge, then, is to discern what is ‘good sport’, or how sport can be integral to our goal of personal and community growth.

**Good sport**
Whether people are playing sport or cheering from the sidelines, sport can be a means of renewal. It can bring people together and enable key relationships to develop. It can help provide a safe place where rich and poor and people of all creeds and colours can meet. It can address the exclusion of the vulnerable, offering a means for those at the margins of society to move from the edges to the centre, and act as a force for social justice and reconciliation.

Sport can be a vehicle for people to develop integrity and a team focus. This approach will address the incidence of violence and abuse of drugs and alcohol, both on the field and off it, on the part of players and of spectators, and the instances of discrimination, illegal betting and corruption across different codes. The Statement names various other attributes sport can help develop, such as resilience, self-discipline and determination. These attributes strengthen that sense of integrity which draws the best out of each of us.

Sport can also address our health crisis and the huge cost associated with anxiety, depression, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle. It can bring joy to individuals and groups, and a sense of belonging through involvement in local clubs and playing sport with family members or school colleagues.

The Statement recognises the vital contribution Catholic schools make in society, in relation to the ways sport can contribute to emotional, moral and academic growth. It asks us to consider the place of sport in our own lives, challenging us to look at how we engage, individually and as a team member, in our search for personal and communal growth.

[Sport] makes us think about life, because our whole life moves towards a goal; and this search – the search for a goal – is strenuous, it demands a struggle, a commitment. And it is important not to run alone. In order to arrive you must run together: the ball is passed from hand to hand and you move forward together until you reach the goal. Then you celebrate (Address of Pope Francis to the Italian and Argentine Rugby Teams, 2013).

**Resources accompanying the Social Justice Statement**
A number of resources have been developed by the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJC) to assist people to respond to the Social Justice Statement in reflection and prayer:

- **Prayer Cards**: available to order or download from the ACSJC website
- **Ten Steps Towards Being a Good Sport**: ten activities to assist students to engage with the ideas of the Statement.
- **Community Education Resource**: suitable for senior secondary students and staff, it uses the See, Judge, Act process to engage with issues of sport, based on the Statement
- **Video** (9.10 minutes): summarises the main ideas of the Statement (available via the ACSJC website).

**Research and debate**
Avenues for research and debate about the issues and ideas explored in the Social Justice Statement include:

- research on the lives of sportswomen and sportsmen from a diversity of economic and ethnic backgrounds and cultures, representing major teams here in Australia.
- debate on the effects of ticket pricing, the incidence and implications of performance-enhancing drugs, a win-at-all-costs approach, gambling and discrimination.
- A look at the mottos of sporting clubs. The 2014 Australian Football League premiership team, Hawthorn, has a Latin motto; ‘Spectemur Agendo’ – ‘By our deeds we shall be known’. What are some other team mottos that make a connection between sport and life?
Film and music
Reflect on films that have a sports context such as *Bend it Like Beckham* and *Chariots of Fire*. The former provides an example of how, through sport, resilience can help overcome exclusiveness. The latter depicts how sport can be a vehicle to highlight and address prejudice, telling the story of a devout Scottish Christian and an English Jew who run for the United Kingdom in the 1924 Olympic Games.

Literature
In *Reach for the Sky* (1954), author Paul Brickhill presents the life of the legendary Douglas Bader. After losing both legs in an air crash, Bader was dismissed as a cripple by the Royal Air Force, but fought his way back to become a top combat pilot and squadron leader. He learned to dance, swim and play golf and tennis.

Reflect on how another person has inspired you to overcome adversity through sport.

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