Director's Message

In my last message to you I brought to your attention the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) 2011–2015: Directions for Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne and Strategy Plan 2011-2015. A response to these key documents has been a major restructure of the CEOM, effective from 10 October 2011. The new structure places greater emphasis on the role of the regional offices of the CEOM in delivering whole of school services.

Also reflecting our renewed emphasis on key stakeholders and priority areas, was the launch of the new CEOM website <www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au> on 17 October 2011.

Thank you for your continued good work in celebrating and proclaiming our unique Catholic identity in education.

With best wishes to you and your families for Christmas and the New Year.

Stephen Elder
Executive Director of Catholic Education

2012 seminars and network meetings

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.

Seminar for 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 to be held on 9 May, and 7 August at Simonds Hall, South Yarra.

An evening seminar to assist board members in their work associated with specific board functions and responsibilities will be conducted on 30 October, at Simonds Hall, South Yarra.

See <www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au> Primary School Boards page for details. Board members interested in attending the seminars should seek their school principal’s assistance to register through IPLS on the CEVN website <http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au>.

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. See <www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au> Our Schools School Boards page for details. To join, contact Patricia Palman 9267 0228 or ppalman@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au.

CEOM Board resources

Resources to assist with documentation for school boards and for induction of new members is now available on the CEVN website <http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au> at the Parish-School Boards page under School Improvement.
2012 Parent Seminar Series

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

National Catholic Education Convention

International and national speakers presented on six strands: leadership, technology, community, learning, religious identity and governance at the National Catholic Education Convention held in Adelaide in September 2011.


One of the speakers, Dr Gemma Simmonds CJ, an internationally renowned researcher and speaker on theology and spirituality, presented a challenging address. She argued that we can use the Catholic sacramental imagination as a way of educating us in the value of the here and now and in the holiness of the ordinary.

Relevance of faith

She argued that the relevance of faith in the contemporary world is greater than the media and politicians would have us believe. The glory of God is seen in one’s own life. Our ordinary lives are consecrated – grace and nature are interrelated: in a sense Christ is being crucified every day, all over the world. We are missionaries, sent to be a body of Christ.

Dr Simmonds declared the greatest threat to Catholic education as the commodification of education for economic and political purposes.

Catholic learning communities

Building a Catholic learning community begins with each of us. We are called to proclaim the living Christ in our everyday lives. All the tedious tough things in life are the sign of the prophetic message of Christ. Our learning communities must create opportunities to recreate our values and to understand the faith vision of the Church. There must be genuine dialogue between Church and the wider secular culture, between school leadership, staff, parents and students.

Social justice guidelines

On Thursday 27 October, Auxiliary Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv. launched the Social Justice Guidelines for Action and Fundraising in Schools and Parishes. The Guidelines will assist schools and parishes in responding to requests to engage in and support social causes. They also provide information about the Archdiocesan agencies and the services they offer.

The Guidelines were sent to every school and parish in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. The Guidelines are also available to download from the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne website <www.cam.org.au/parish-school-news/social-justice-guidelines-for-schools-and-parishes-launched-today.html>.

Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body (VCSPB) 2011 roundup

A key aim of the VCSPB Council is continuing to:

- develop an effective state-wide communication network with school boards or authorised parent support groups
- raise the profile of the VCSPB in the parent and school communities
- raise awareness amongst parent communities of key issues in education
- provide a link for parents to express their concerns, needs and views.

To assist in the evaluation of VCSPB communication an online survey of parents was conducted and schools encouraged to nominate a contact person or activate the VCSPB reserved email account allocated to their school. At present 68.2 per cent of Victorian Catholic schools have done so.

In engaging with education and related organisations, Council members attended diocesan educational board meetings, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority Parent Group meetings, National Catholic Education Commission Parent Committee meetings, Victorian Institute of Teaching seminars, Spirit Dream in Burning Hearts conference in Sydney and the National Catholic Education Convention in Adelaide.

During 2011 the VCSPB made submissions on Review of Funding for Schools to the Gonski Review and the Victorian Parliamentary enquiry into the education of gifted and talented students. Submissions made in 2011 and prior years may be viewed at the VCSPB website <www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au/> Issues page. The VCSPB newsletter, the Bulletin, is available online at <www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au>.

Vacancies exist on the Council. If you are interested, contact the VCSPB secretary <secretary@vcspb.catholic.edu.au> for more information.