



Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation

TCSPPF VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is that parents of children in Catholic Schools be full partners in delivering quality Catholic education

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von Samorzewski

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TRIANGLE NEWSLETTER JUNE 2006

Welcome Parents and Guardians of children in Catholic Education to this edition of our newsletter.

Firstly may I congratulate the organisers and host school, St Finn Barr's, for a most successful and productive conference. The comments I have had passed onto me, both at conference and afterwards, are a testament to the conference's success. I trust that all those that attended also felt as I did, the true Christian spirit that was within our midst during our deliberations and discussions.

The issues from conference that have been placed before the Executive to action, are quite complex and we look forward to working in a collaborative and communicative relationship with all concerned stakeholders for the best interests of our children in Catholic education.

Please take the time to read this issue of the Triangle, it is YOUR insight into what is happening in Catholic education,
Bill Button

THE TOP FIVE ISSUES IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION FOR PARENTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The five most important national issues for Catholic school parents at this point in time as being (in no particular order):

- The review of the SES funding model for non-government schools and the resultant impact upon the funding of Catholic schools in the 2008-2012 funding quadrennium
- The inadequate resourcing of students with disabilities/special learning needs
- The development of the Australian Certificate of Education
- Unpacking the crowded curriculum and helping schools to let go of some of the burden they are currently carrying to address the developmental needs of young people (much of which schools have willingly taken on in the past) and redirecting the appropriate areas of focus back to parents and families
- Continuing to develop mutually respectful and constructive teacher/parent, family/school partnerships

To clarify any of the above issues, contact your local P&F or the Federation office.

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A PARENT'S COMMENT

A first-time attendee at the conference, from the north-west coast, told me that the energy and passion displayed throughout the conference was refreshing.

"This conference has given me the faith that we, as parents of children in Catholic schools, can achieve great things for our children, if we work together."



ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT

ST FINN BARR'S
LAUNCESTON
29 / 30 APRIL 2006



IS EDUCATION FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

- AFFORDABLE
- ACCESSIBLE
- EVANGELICAL



This year's conference has been hailed as a great success. The opening addresses by the Tasmanian education Minister, the Honorable David Bartlett, and Archbishop Adrian Doyle set a positive tone that was carried throughout the two-day conference.

The **Tasmanian Minister for Education, the Honorable David Bartlett**, opened the conference. He indicated that he is the Minister FOR education and that this included State, Catholic and independent school systems in Tasmanian. He also indicated that he wished to develop a better understanding of the issues faced by parents of children in Tasmanian Catholic Schools. He **then announced that the next State budget will allow for an additional one million dollars**, over four years, for supporting special needs children in Tasmanian Catholic schools.

His Grace, **Archbishop Adrian**, told the audience that "**No one should need reminding that parents are the primary educators and carers of their own children, and that it is this basic responsibility that empowers them to be an integral part of the way schools educate and care for their students**".

These are powerful words that inform us that we, as a Federation, are on the right track. But we must always remember to think "*What is best for the children?*" The honest answer to that question will always point us in the right direction." Parents, as key stakeholders, have always had the best interest of their children as their primary goal.

With this in mind, the key conference motions were put to the floor. Motion 13 was pertinent to many P&F bodies in the state and was carried as; ***That the TCEC be requested to clarify the position at some schools, apparent reliance on their school's Parents and Friends Association for Capital and Maintenance Budgets.*** For a full list of the motions please go the Federation website and download

the 2006 AGM minutes.

Mr. Paul Prichard, from Good Beginnings, presented us with information about how critically important the early years of a child's life are, to ensure a well balanced child leaves our care as a young adult. Paul discussed how developing strong local community links are the key to the various programs Good Beginnings offers. Further information on Good Beginnings can be found in the full conference report.

Mr. Ian Dalton, Executive Director for the Australian Parents Council, and life member of the Federation, **introduced the notion to us that parents are owner / builders of their children's lives.** As parents, they sub-contract education to the school that will provide the out-comes they seek. For this to start to really occur in our children's lives, a huge shift needs to occur. Three shifts need to occur.

- The culture within schools,
- The shift in expectations we, as parents, have on our schools (and teachers),
- And the expectations schools have on us as parents.

Father Richard talked particularly about the conference theme.

Is it Affordable? From his understanding it appears to be. Processes are in place to ensure most Catholic families can access this education, (at least to Grade Six).

Is it Accessible? For the majority, although much work still needs to be done in the areas of special needs and secondary colleges for remote regions of the state.

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HIGH ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS? HOW DOES IT OCCUR?

Successful students have successful teachers. These teachers set high expectations of their students and put structures in place to ensure that every student has the necessary resources to rise to the challenges.

Keeping all students fully engaged in every lesson, each day of the week is a very demanding, time consuming and sometimes a difficult task. This requires expert subject knowledge and passion. For passion gives you the energy to work the hours you need to, to be a highly effective teacher.

Great teachers are not just content to have peaceful classrooms. Their classrooms have a buzz in them that come from active and engaged minds. Brian Brennan, Senior Education Officer at the Sandhurst Catholic Education Office, suggests that the following strategies are ingrained in effective professional teacher practice.

1. Teachers need to be completely familiar with every aspect of their course.
2. Teachers need to set high expectations that are very clear.
3. Teachers should make sure that students have ready access to the necessary resources.
4. Teachers need a clear understanding of the preferred learning styles of their students and should provide opportunities for students to use these learning styles.
5. A wide variety of learning resources must be made available to ensure different ways of knowing are developed in students.

'Segments of the above article first appeared in *Teacher* (May, 2006). Brian Brennan's 'At the chalkface' column appears regularly in *Teacher*. Visit www.acer.edu.au/teachermagazine

So how do we as parents support school boards in ensuring our schools are staffed by highly effective teachers? These suggestions may help us to achieve this goal;

1. We as parents, have high expectations of our teachers, expecting the very best from them.
2. We as parents, have high expectations of school management and boards, ensuring they make decisions that are "*What is best for the children!*"
3. We as parents, support our schools, to ensure we help create an environment that attracts highly effective staff and a means to reward them.
4. We as parents, support our local church communities, for our faith drives our passion and without passion, we do not have faith.
5. We as parents, support each other, to ensure our diverse skills are exploited for the benefit of our Catholic school communities and therefore helping the Catholic Church's Mission.

These ideas may not be even new or even easily achieved. It all comes down to faith, for as Father Richard alluded to at this year's conference, deep faith comes from the Holy Spirit, and this gives us the passion to succeed.

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR THE TASMANIAN TEACHING PROFESSION

The Tasmanian Teacher Registration board released its code of ethics for its registered teachers in February 2006.

Its says, Members of the Teaching profession in Tasmania are committed to the principles of;

- Dignity
- Respect
- Integrity
- Empathy
- Justice

For a full version of the Code of Ethics contact your teachers or the Federation office.

SCHOOL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Tasmanian Catholic Education Employees Association informed the Conference that Tasmanian Catholic Schools **are now legally required to have a formal Grievance Procedure** that should be know by all members of the school community and be able to be accessed freely. The process must provide clear procedures for members of staff, students, parents / guardians and the general community to follow in case of a grievance against any member of the school community.

The Federation is interested to see how your school is progressing in this matter.

Contact the Federation office for more information

AUSTRALIAN CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION

The Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, has invited public comment on a new report that considers the options for a common Year 12 Australian Certificate of Education.

The report, *Australian Certificate of Education: exploring a way forward*, provides a foundation for considering a standardised Year 12 certificate across Australia.

The Minister has invited members of the public to provide comments on the report."

Contact the Federation for further information.

ANDREW FULLER IS COMING TO LAUNCESTON

The TCSPFF – Northern Region has organised for Andrew Fuller (Clinical Psychologist and Family Therapist) to address parents and friends in Launceston. Topics to be discussed include; Raising Real People – Creating a Resilient Family with an open question and answer session. Contact Henk Van Zetten on 6334 3929, for more information.

When – 3 August 2006, 7:30 – 9:30 pm

<http://www.andrewfuller.com.au/>

Where – St Patrick's College, Launceston

Cost - Gold coin donation

Conference Report Continued

Is it Evangelical? 2006 Tasmanian Catholic school enrolments indicate that 45% of students are non-catholic. Therefore we must be increasing our evangelical mission.

Father Richard then posed the question, "So is Catholic education running fine in Tasmania?"

From some of his conversations with Tasmanian Catholic youth, **Father Richard has become quite concerned with the faith culture within our Tasmanian Catholic schools.**

He mention of a Catholic boy who attended a Catholic school until the end of Year 10. He then completed his Year 11 & 12 at a local State college. "If I said I went to church at the Catholic school, I would have been rubbished, ridiculed and ostracised. At the government school, it wasn't an issue and even intriguing." Another youth mentioned that he enjoyed the youth activities Father Richard organised because it was good to be with a group of his peers that actually had the faith, could talk about it openly and could be listened to, supported and encouraged. That's not my experience in a Catholic school."

Father Richard said "this should be a red flag to us all", and that perhaps we need to evangelise a little closer to home, so that "we can all be drawn a little deeper to our faith."

Father Richard left us feeling that we have much to do as parents of our Catholic children and their faith development.

The open forum created some lively debate including; What does the Federation do for us at the grass-roots level? What support can the Federation give OUR P&F? and What does the Federation actually do?

The AGM followed, with all positions declared vacant. Bill Button was reelected President with Brian Watson as Treasurer and Damian von Samorzewski as State Secretary.

For a full report on the 2006 Conference, please go the Federation website and download the 2006 Conference Report.

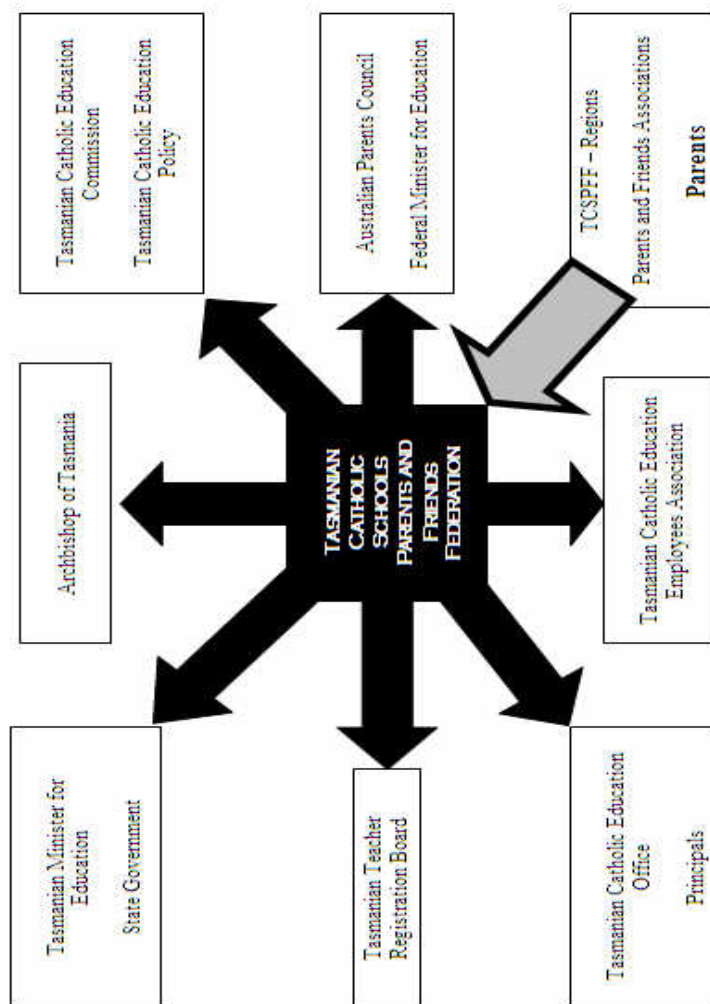
WHAT DOES THE TASMANIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PARENTS AND FRIENDS FEDERATION DO?

A question often asked of the Federation is, "**What does the Federation actually do?**" In short, to help parents have a voice in their children's education. The State Executive of the Federation acknowledges that much of the work that it carries out is done to give parents a voice at the 'top end of town'.

To help illustrate this, the State Executive has drawn a graphic organiser (see below) to help you understand what organisations the Federation has DIRECT contact with.

To maintain these relationships, members of the Federation volunteer more than 2000 hours per annum.

It must be remembered, at the heart of the federation, is its core vision to help parents be "full partners in delivering quality Catholic education". To ensure we maintain this core vision, **the Federation will conduct a review of Catholic education in Tasmania during 2006**, seeking parent's views, concerns and aspirations, as Primary Educators of their children's education. Please see the Federation for further information.



The June 2006 Triangle Newsletter content has been sourced and compiled by
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"Zeal for your house will consume me." John 2:17

The views expressed in this newsletter are the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of the
Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation.

**The more you read,
The more you know,
The more you know,
The smarter you grow,
The smarter you grow,
The stronger your voice,
The stronger your voice,
When speaking your mind or
Making your choice!**