



Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents and Friends Federation

TCSPFF VISION STATEMENT

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

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TRIANGLE NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2006

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

The last 3 months have been very busy for your Federation Executive, with representation at the Australian Parents Council and National Catholic Education Commission Annual conferences. I had the opportunity to meet and discuss Catholic education in Tasmania with the Federal Education minister, Julie Bishop and she assured me that the government wishes to maintain its support of our right of choice in educating our children.

Due to our ongoing dialogue at this level, and to ensure the Federation provides the Federal & State governments with accurate information and advise, from a Catholic parent prospective, **the Federation seeks your views** about Catholic Education in Tasmania.

Although your opinions, concerns or thoughts can always reach the State Executive through your local P&F, we thought an **anonymous survey** would provide us with a current insight **into what you really think**.

The information gathered from this survey will be presented at next year's Annual Conference, to be held at MacKillop College, Hobart on the 28 & 29 April 2007.

Go to the Federation website and follow the link on our homepage to the survey. This survey is **open to all parents, carers, students, grandparents** and the **wider school community**. The survey form will also be sent to all school P & F's.

A request from the 2006 annual Federation conference has resulted in **the Federation developing a Parents & Friends manual** to help school P&F executives in their leadership roles.

This manual will provide advice to school P&F executives on individual and collective roles and the functions a P&F needs to have knowledge of, to ensure they are effective within the Tasmanian Catholic school community.

The manual is to be launched at the **Parents Matter Forum, St Patrick's College – Launceston on the 22 October 2006 starting at 9:30 am**.

Titled '**Parents Matter – The Rite to Exist and How to Exist**', the open forum hopes to provide members of your school P&F executive, and other interested parents, strategies to ensure your voice is heard in the context of a whole school community to ensure 'What is best for the children' occurs.

The guest speaker, Dino Ottavi, will talk about harassment and bullying at management level and how to secure your rite to exist. Further information can be found at the Federation website or contact the office.

Bill Button

IN THIS ISSUE

Survey into
Catholic Education
in Tasmania

Parents Matter
Forum

Principals Matter
Parents Matter

Andrew Fuller
comes to
Launceston

Are we the
Kleva Kuntry?

Parent / Teacher
Partnerships

2007 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MacKillop College
Hobart

28 & 29 April 2007

Theme

Parents Matter
The Changing
Nature of Parent
Engagement &
Involvement in
Catholic Education

Guest Speaker

Andrew Mullins
Principal
Redfield College
Sydney

HOW CAN WE AS PARENTS SUPPORT EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS?

PRINCIPALS MATTER

Many report findings into improving student learning outcomes often target the classroom teacher. Although the evidence suggests that an effective teacher DOES make the difference in student engagement and learning, the following discusses an additional approach in supporting teachers.

Schools today have changed radically in the way they are administered to help meet legislative requirements. A testament to this is that advertised principalships can attract less than three quality applicants compared to over twenty, fifteen years ago. This is not to say that our schools do not have effective leadership within, but rather they do not see a principalship as an attractive career option.

This is because a principal's role and responsibilities has increased two hundred fold over the last twenty years, yet there are still only twenty four hours in a day and three hundred and sixty five days in a year. Some of our larger schools have managed to resolve some of these issues by creating upper management positions.

So what has this got to do with children's learning? Principals started off their careers as teachers. They became teachers because they have a love of children and a love of lifelong learning. You can't help be an effective teacher with this combination. As principals of today get caught up in the 'business' of running a school, less time can be spent supporting teachers in their Mission, that is to help your children **learn and develop physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially and most importantly, spiritually.**

So what can we do as parents to support our principals? Well, perhaps a release of the principal from these 'business' duties may assist. Many of our colleges have employed business managers to manage the business affairs of their large schools / businesses. If the position of business manager is important in a college to help meet its legal obligations, **surely a business manager for a cluster of primary schools would be logical**, particularly since the critical years of a child's education is at primary school.

If we as parents want the best for our children, we need to start to really support our school principals and management teams. Up until the 1960s, Catholic schools were run through the financial support of the local Parish community and parents. **Catholic schools had no government funding.** The true cost of educating our children was offset by the religious orders that taught our children, Those days are over. **Yes, we do pay school fees, but are they a true reflections of what it actually costs to educate a child in the 21st Century?**

Our great grandparents left us a legacy, the fruits of which we still enjoy today. What are we leaving for our great grandchildren?

OUR SCHOOLS NEED OUR SUPPORT.

PARENTS MATTER

The Organisation of Economic co-operation and Development [OECD, 2005] recently published a report into predicted **teacher shortages over the next ten years**, due to the aging teacher workforce. Although governments and others tell us that teacher education institutions are preparing for these shortages, the OECD report also revealed a disturbing trend of beginning teachers also leaving the profession. Current research informs us that up to **30% of graduate teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching.**

The OECD also investigated why there was such a high teacher attrition rate and came to the conclusion that many highly effective teachers **leave teaching due to poor working conditions.** These conditions include; bullying, harassment and fazing from school management and staff, unrealistic expectations on workloads, poor collegial support, poor ongoing professional development, parent abuse, inadequate resources and students failing to respect learning.

So what has this got to do with parents? Although more money would solve some of the above issues, others require a change in attitude. We need to start to work smarter, rather than harder. **Parents need to get REALLY involved in their children's education by;**

- **Develop** close working relationships with all your children's teachers. Ensure your expectations are "What are best for **all** the children" in your child's class and **not just** what is best for your child.
- **TELL** your school what expertise you have and ask them to exploit it, for the benefit for **all** the children in the school. (The talent we have as parents & grandparents is an important untapped resource that needs to be used more effectively.)
- **FUND** a parent liaison officer between a cluster of schools to coordinate parent involvement within the school, including professional development of parents in their role as the primary educators of their children.
- **Transfer** the 21st Century work culture within parents' workplaces into the school workplaces. Pull schools into the 21st Century, don't push them. Parents need to lead by example and show best business practices AND provide the resourcing to maintain these initiatives.
- **Encourage** your school P&F to be more active in your school community. Develop a list of talents and expertise within the school community and use it. WE need to get back to the basics and do what our great grandparents did, build our schools through a labor of love.

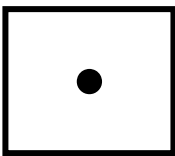
ANDREW FULLER IN LAUNCESTON



The Andrew Fuller evening saw over 400 parents and friends gather at St Patrick's College, Launceston for an evening of enlightenment, entertainment and encouragement.

Andrew discussed a wide range of topics, which at its heart focused on how importance it is for families to be families. That is, to actually find time to enjoy each others company.

Andrew highlighted to those gathered that building and maintaining relationships with our children is a lifelong mission, which as we know, is not easy at times. His short antidotal movies of children's behaviours and parent reactions reminded us that in the big scheme of things, many of those annoying little things are just that, little! We often focus on the small negative things when we should focus all our energy on celebrating the positive things our children do and achieve. Andrew highlighted this point to the audience by asking them what they saw in this image.



Yes the majority focused their attention on the black dot, that little annoying thing!

We need to ensure we spend more time focusing on what our children do well, for it is these strengths that will give our children the ability to navigate life. This will also allow our children to build the resilience they will require to continue successfully in their life's journey, no matter what obstacles that are put before them.

Most importantly, those gathered took away with them a confirmation that they are doing the best for their children and that little speed humps, although annoying, will always be there. After all, that's apart of growing up – AND we are all doing that, no matter how old we are!

This Andrew Fuller evening was funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training's (DEST), through the Australian Parents Council / TSCPFF Parent Project Families Matter initiative and achieved through the incredible hard work of Henk & Marlene Van Zetten, tireless workers of the Tasmanian Catholic Parents & Friends Federation.

The Tasmanian Catholic Parents & Friends Federation – Northern Region would also like to thank St Patrick's College for the venue. It is through these partnerships that we can focus on what Archbishop Adrian called us all to do at this year's annual conference, "What is best for the children"

PARENTING IDEAS PRESENTATION

"SICK – HOW TO TALK SO YOUNG PEOPLE WILL LISTEN AND LISTEN SO THEY WILL TALK!"

GUEST PRESENTER - MICHAEL GROSE

Please keep the evening of **Tuesday the 24th October free** to attend an inspiring presentation by **Michael Grose** of *Parenting Ideas Strategies and Solutions* [<http://www.parentingideas.com.au>]. Michael will present an unforgettable experience that will entertain, inspire and stimulate parents to assess their approach to parenting and find out what works and what doesn't to raise kids to be *confident, competent and community-minded*. The presentation will be held at **Mt Carmel College, Sandy Bay**. This presentation is the TCSPPF Southern Region Parent Project and is being organised with Mt Carmel college.

When **Tuesday, 24th October 2006**
Where **Mt Carmel College, Sandy Bay**
Time **7.30pm**
Cost **Gold coin donation**

For further information
TCSPPF - Southern Region Secretary
Michael Verrier
Mobile. 0400 892 129

ARE WE THE KLEVA KUNTRY?

In a recent speech to the Sydney Institute, the Federal Education Minister, Julie Bishop informed the gathering that Australia needed to increase the graduation of Mathematics, Science & Technology graduates to remain competitive in the global economy. She cited that within six years Australia will have a shortage of 55,000 scientific professionals. She also acknowledged that the lack of interest in these specialist fields began in primary school, with a recent Victorian research inquiry conducted by the Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) principal research fellow Sue Thomson that identified the relative lack of time being spent in Australian schools teaching science, particularly in the early years when children are naturally interested in the subject.

Jonathan Osborne, chairman of science education at King's College in London, in an address to an ACER conference in August this year, examined ways of improving science teaching and arresting the decline in science students. He suggested that the way the subject is taught in schools creates students who are poorly educated about science and ambivalent towards it.

An inquiry into the teaching of mathematics in Australian schools (2005) also found serious concern about the quality of mathematics instruction in many Australian primary classrooms. This finding could possibly be supported by the fact that less than five percent of Tasmanian year twelve graduates study high level mathematics.

This year the national teacher associations for science and mathematics had a combined annual conference so great are their concerns, particularly in the area of highly qualified teachers to teach these subject areas. As the teaching population is aging (average age in Australia is currently 48), concerns have been raised on who is going to educate our future generations.

As one Catholic parent, who happens to be an engineer told me the other day, the love of mathematics and science comes from an early age and is developed by effective and well trained teachers that not only have expert subject knowledge, but also know how to enthuse others with their passion and love of scientific learning.

In 2005, the OECD reported that most first world countries were experiencing teacher shortages in subject specialisations and that there were no short term solutions to these issues.

The OECD report also indicated that countries that knew that effective teaching in the disciplines of mathematics, science and technology would help them become the new world powers of the 21st Century.

Has someone got a spare bucket of sand?

PARENT / TEACHER PARTNERSHIP

A recent landmark meeting with the Tasmanian Catholic Education Employees Association and the Federation has resulted in a proposal to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the two associations. This memorandum is designed to open up dialogue between two of the most powerful influences in our children's lives, to ensure "What is best for the Children" is always at the forefront of our thoughts AND actions. It is critical that school staff and parents work more closely together, for our Mission is not an easy one and respectful collaboration is the key to any successful relationship.

The catalyst to this Memorandum of Understanding were the words the **Archbishop Adrian** used in his speech at this year's conference, "**What is best for the Children?** The honest answer to this question will always point us in the right direction."

It is often forgotten in our busy world that we all want what is best for our children, but sometimes this clarity is lost. It is hoped that this open dialogue will allow two key parties to better understand each others roles and how we can provide better support to one another.

Contact the Federation office for more information

STUDENT FREE DAYS

Make a date out of it if you can!

Are you one of these parents that groans when you realise the following Monday is a student free day? Why not do what the TCSPFF – Northern Region President does. His boys have a lunch date with their mother. Nicely dressed, they do a negotiated activity together and then go to lunch. Lunch is the boys' choice, but it has to be a place where tables are waited on and menus viewed.

So why do this? As Martin explained, it teaches the boys how to treat a lady and how they should be treated. They learn to negotiate and communicate with women.

So go on, make a date of it with your children!

DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING JUVENILE ARTHRITIS?

One in a thousand Australian children have this condition. To find out more please visit <http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au/>

The October 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 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!**

Check us out on the web

<http://tascathpf.d2.net.au/>