

# *Spirit* of Sandhurst



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Catholic Education Sandhurst

# *Spirit of Sandhurst Magazine*

This Spirit of Sandhurst Magazine will be published twice annually capturing the Spirit of Catholic Education in the Sandhurst Diocese – its uniqueness, vibrancy, innovation and commitment to enhancing the lives of students, families and teachers.

It is focused on celebrating:

**Our schools:**

***Engaging fully with human potential inspired  
by the Catholic story***

(Catholic Education Sandhurst Identity Statement)

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# *Spirit of Sandhurst Alive!*

**It is very fitting that a tribute to Denis Higgins, retiring Director of Catholic Education is the lead article in the inaugural edition of Spirit of Sandhurst. Throughout his career as Principal, Consultant and Director over 31 years in Sandhurst, Denis has embodied, animated and inspired the Spirit of Sandhurst.**

Denis has a passion for quality education for all children. His innovative approach, insightful and wise, reflective and animated, has inspired generations of children, teachers and families. He is a man of many parts who is not limited by boundaries or the expectations of others! He is, in fact committed to encountering and delivering the unexpected. He has taken the dream to reality in countless instances such as the establishment of the DOXA and Borinya schools which serve families and students whom we have failed in our 'mainstream' schools - he is a champion for those who have no voice. Whilst inaugural lay principal at St Liborius in Eaglehawk (1979-1988) Denis was the inspiration behind many innovative practices and high level structural and organisational 'new ways'. These particularly included programs which would challenge and include every single student. The Arts was a major emphasis and these programs involved all students from St Libs as well as many other schools and culminated in high level performances locally and even internationally during the UN Year of the Child.

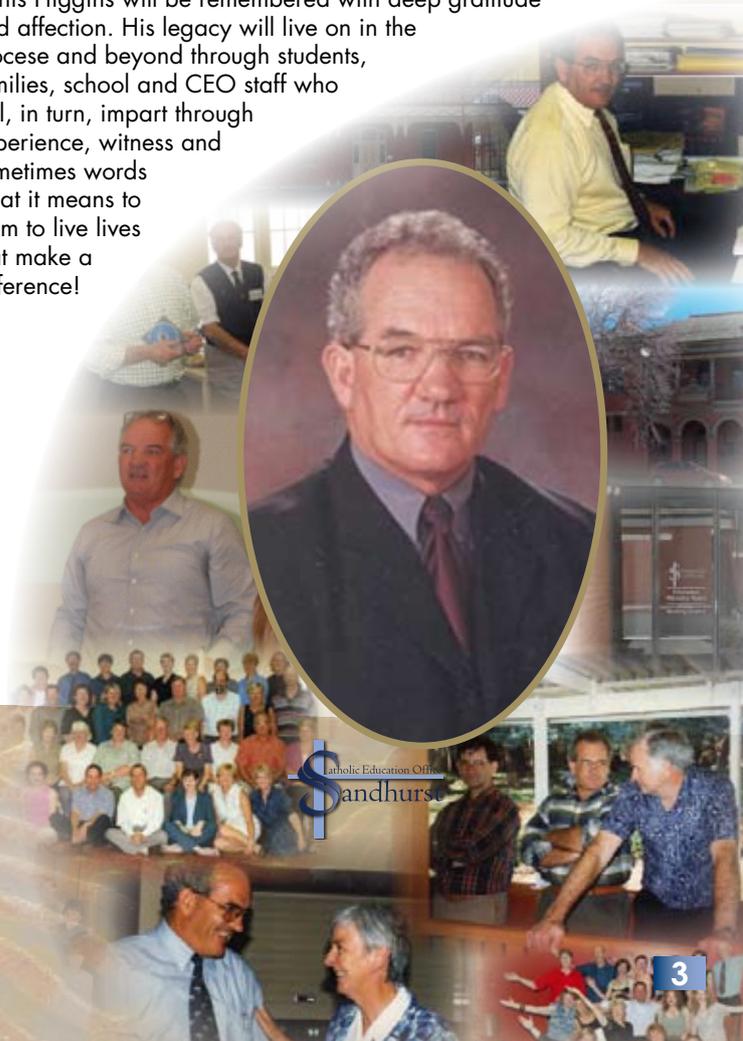
The current innovative regime of study tours in Sandhurst was born of the Higgins imagination. Denis has promoted the critical importance and value of staff in our schools being exposed to a world beyond – whether it be in another state or diocese in Australia or overseas, such as the study tours to Canada which are prompting structural change in Primary and Secondary schools in order to gain improved learning environments for students. Countless Sandhurst staff have experienced an enriching and in some instances life-changing exposure to other cultures and traditions – this has a deep impact on the students who experience enlivened and renewed teachers.

Perhaps the lasting legacy of Denis will be in the field of leadership. As Educational Consultant for eight years he promoted and prompted professional performance at all levels, but especially at Principal level, through a regime of 'rigorous service' to schools – a practice which still guides CEO staff. His challenging addresses and writing on leadership have unsettled and ultimately formed many leaders over the years, both in Sandhurst and beyond.

His insightful, intuitive and provocative thinking has prompted growth in so many – this thinking is profound and yet simple. It is grounded in a deep understanding of humanity coupled with a passion for education honed over countless years as a practitioner and a lover of children. His incisive intellect is disciplined in engaging in the wrestle with dilemmas that are presented, often choosing the 'path less travelled' rather than 'the expected' and the 'usual'. Denis strives for the more deeply human engagement in all endeavours. In working with Denis, one has to hang in for the intellectual wrestle with ideas and notions and be prepared for the rigorous debate.

Denis has been a courageous champion for Sandhurst in matters of governance and political advocacy. The challenges encountered during his time as Director have been significant. He has shown outstanding insight, courage, thorough knowledge of both the educational and the political issues and a strong commitment to Catholic education and its mission within the Church and its contribution to the broader Australian society.

Denis Higgins will be remembered with deep gratitude and affection. His legacy will live on in the diocese and beyond through students, families, school and CEO staff who will, in turn, impart through experience, witness and sometimes words what it means to them to live lives that make a difference!



Catholic Education Office  
Sandhurst



# carriers

**The symbol of fire is a powerful emblem in any religion or culture. The element of fire is used mainly to symbolise cleansing and renewal. The FIRE Carrier Project which is an initiative of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and the 'Opening the Doors Foundation' promotes reconciliation in Victorian Schools, using the power of fire as a symbol of new beginnings, of trust and understanding.**

Fire is at the heart of Aboriginal culture. It represents the spiritual connection between individuals to Mother Earth and Ancestors. It is around fire that Dreamtime stories are told and laws taught. It is used for smoking the people and the land when gathered for important ceremonies. And so it is fire that represents the learning, teaching and a school community's journey towards reconciliation.

FIRE stands for Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education. FIRE Carriers are elected within the student body to represent students on the school's journey to reconciliation, and to educate the school community about the local Aboriginal story. FIRE Carriers also are required to hand over their position when they leave a School, Parish or Diocese so that the position is sustained and the project continued.

Many schools in the Sandhurst Diocese are registering to be FIRE Schools, committing to an ongoing relationship with Aboriginal people based on respect and understanding. Commitment to the program requires Schools, Parishes and Dioceses to write a Covenant with the Aboriginal

Catholic Ministry, outlining their Reconciliation actions. The Covenant is a living document that is added to each year. The program emerged from the vision of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry which is dedicated to the human dignity of each person, to reconciliation and partnerships.

The program is partnered by The Opening the Doors foundation which addresses the severe educational disadvantage still being experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. The foundation provides assistance so that Aboriginal families are able to choose and successfully maintain a positive educational environment for their children.

The Sandhurst Diocese is committed to providing pathways to connect with Indigenous Australians, to learning about and understanding Aboriginal spirituality and how it aligns with Catholic Identity. This comes to life through acknowledging and recognising cultural perspectives and demonstrating awareness through things such as flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, learning and understanding rituals and meanings and of engaging in cultural immersion.

In Bendigo recently Bishop Joseph Grech was commissioned as a carrier of the fire alongside other leaders from within Catholic Education Sandhurst, recognizing the value of the program and demonstrating a desire for Sandhurst to journey with Aboriginal people toward reconciliation.

**“Walk the journey, carry the fire”**  
Let the knowledge of Aboriginal culture and history ignite the reconciliation fire inside you.  
Carry the burning coals of reconciliation and educate your community.  
Use God's hands, feet and heart to travel the journey and carry the fire.



# of the Flame

"Reconciliation is an active pursuit – it's about getting on with what's needed and what we know to get the results we all want, and that's a mixture of measures that target the body, the mind and the spirit." Mick Dodson, *Australian of the Year, National Press Club address, 17 February 2009*

True Reconciliation requires national and local solutions achieved through positive and purposeful partnerships, not just for today but for tomorrow. The FIRE Carriers program promotes reconciliation and symbolizes a new beginning of hope and healing. As we walk the journey and carry the fire we move closer to the reality of reconciliation, and to becoming a nation that truly celebrates the rich history of our land and the people who have walked this earth for over 60 thousand years.



# Inclusive

*I stayed at my friend Sarah's house the other night. We met at my old school, we like the same stuff but she doesn't always understand why I act the way I do. I don't think her Mum likes me, she thinks I'm a bad influence on Sarah, I guess she's right. I'm a bad kid, that's what people say. Sometimes I get mad for no reason. I've been at this new school for a term now; it's the best school I've ever been to.*  
-Emma 14 (student)

*I have three children, two of them are no trouble at all, they like school and are doing really well. My youngest Ben has never enjoyed school; He's not a bad kid; school has just never been a good fit for him. We heard about this alternative school setting and wondered if it could provide Ben with the support he needed. We enrolled him about three months ago and I can't tell you what a difference it has made to our family. Ben is happy, he enjoys school in this setting and we are all excited about the future, especially Ben.*  
-Laura (parent)

*I didn't realise how hard it was going to be. These kids need so much support and yet I see potential in all of them. When I stop and compare the child who walked through our doors on their first day, to the one that stands before me at the end of their time with us, I thank God for the small part that I have played in their future.*  
-Liam (teacher)

*The Principal's not a bad bloke, we know each other pretty well, we should do, I spend enough time in his office. He has to punish me, I don't blame him. Steve's mum came to pick him up while I was in his office, I could hear her voice getting louder. I wonder how long I will be suspended for this time. I don't really care, I don't like school much, it doesn't like me either.*  
-Dylan 11 (student)

## **Where does a family turn when a child is not responding to mainstream schooling? What options are there for a school when a student is not able to settle into school life and their academic future is uncertain?**

Up until recently there were few alternatives for students and their families. Programs designed to reconnect students with education or provide pathways for future learning did not exist or were located in metropolitan areas where access for rural families was limited.

Finally, there are educational settings responding directly to the needs of these students and their families. Programs designed to re-engage students and to support families is being offered in the Sandhurst Diocese, and what a difference these settings are making to the lives of these children and their families.

Doxa, Borinya and the McCauley-Champagnat programmes operate in Bendigo, Wangaratta and Shepparton respectively. Although each setting is unique they are all linked by the common thread of providing the brightest possible future for students. Staff are committed to ensuring that students have access to a positive schooling experience and are engaged in learning and connected with a community.

### **Doxa:**

Doxa School is situated in the heart of Bendigo in a renovated space, once home to Marist Brothers Bendigo. The modern school facilities are designed to ensure that there is little resemblance to a traditional classroom setting. Students notice straight away that this learning experience has the potential to be different for them. Open common rooms are blended with learning areas that are cleverly designed to make students feel at ease, whilst remaining functional.

The specialist program is facilitated by committed staff who assist young people to develop better attitudes to learning and more positive social behaviours. Educational components include literacy and numeracy, as well individual programs based on student profiles. Students are also given the opportunity to build self esteem and resilience through a social development program.

Doxa school is governed by Doxa Foundation, the Marist Brothers and Catholic Education Sandhurst. Doxa School Bendigo is a Catholic school but accepts students from Catholic schools, government schools and non-denominational schools. The program caters for students in the 11-15 age group who are experiencing difficulties in mainstream schooling.

The Doxa program which is based on Doxa School West Melbourne has two components. The first part is a six month program at Doxa School (two terms), with the second component involving the provision of support for the student by Doxa School youth workers for a further 12 months, once the students return to their own school.

The re-entry into mainstream schooling is carefully managed. Since Doxa School opened its doors three years ago it has had an 80% success rate reconnecting students with a learning environment.

Despite the challenges involved in delivering a program of this nature Doxa has firmly established itself an educational establishment which is up to the task. Dedicated staff work hard at developing meaningful relationships with students which are based on respect, innovation and care.

### **Borinya:**

Beside a river at the edge of Wangaratta you will find Borinya-Wangaratta Community Partnership. The name Borinya is an Indigenous word from the Pangerang Tribe meaning "ana" or branch of a river which has parted from its main course for a short time. The branch leaves the main flow of the river and later rejoins it. Like an anabranch Borinya allows young people to take some time away from mainstream schools before returning to consider learning options for their future.

Borinya had its first intake of students in semester two 2009 and although the program is new to the region it is being recognised for the unique program that it is delivering to young people of Wangaratta and district.

Borinya-Wangaratta Community Partnership offers youth aged from nine to sixteen an opportunity to be members of a supportive, learning community during a time in their lives when they may be struggling with social or emotional challenges, or when mainstream education does not meet their needs.

# Education providing for all

Providing an alternative educational setting for young people at risk of being disengaged or who are already disconnected with learning can be a critical turning point for students. Borinya is committed to developing students' self esteem, social and academic skills, as well as encouraging students to be open to their own personal development.

Curriculum includes literacy and numeracy as well as personalised projects aimed at promoting community links. Learning opportunities in the areas of outdoor education, art, technology, woodwork and construction or horticulture are also offered. Students have the opportunity to work towards a number of accredited certificates, with the aim of providing career path options.

Borinya-Wangaratta Community Partnership is jointly governed by the Catholic Education Office-Sandhurst, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development-Hume Region and North East Support and Action for Youth. Galen Catholic College, Wangaratta High School, The Centre and the Rural City of Wangaratta complete the partnership.

Through identifying young people's strengths, challenges and barriers to learning, Borinya is able to provide individuals with an enjoyable and rewarding learning experience. The aim of the program is to encourage students journey back to education and to reveal pathways to reengage and refocus these young people towards a more certain future.

## The McAuley-Champagnat Programme:

The McAuley-Champagnat Programme has been supporting young people in the Shepparton region for 4 years. The programme is a joint initiative between Notre Dame College, the Catholic Education Office Sandhurst, and the Salvation Army's Brayton Youth and Family Services.

The McAuley-Champagnat Programme commenced in 2006 in response to the increasing number of school aged young people no longer in mainstream education. Up to 180 young people, both indigenous & non-indigenous, across the Goulburn Murray Region ranging in ages from 8 to 16 were identified through various schools and agencies as either not attending school or not attending school on a regular basis.

The initial aim of the program was to provide an alternative education setting for students in the Goulburn Murray Region who were already disengaged from schools or who are at significant risk of being so. The program aims at providing pathways for its students to either return to mainstream schooling or to explore other options in order to secure their future prospects. The McAuley-Champagnat Programme was developed to provide an educational alternative for those who are most in need.

Young people enter the program via their mainstream school or by referral from agencies. An interview provides an outline the program and its expectations, and assesses the suitability of the young person for the program. It is vital

that students demonstrate a positive commitment towards the program, and are willing participants in setting achievable goals.

Small class sizes with a maximum of 8 students provide opportunities for more personalized attention. Teachers are assisted by Teacher Aides, Youth Workers and Indigenous mentors within the classroom to support the special needs of each student.

The major aims of the program are to concentrate on literacy and numeracy skills, life skills and personal development, as well as to increase self esteem and self control so that students are better able to return to mainstream education, TAFE or employment. Work experience and careers counseling are an important component of the program.

The McAuley-Champagnat Programme is underpinned by community partnerships which are a crucial factor in ensuring organizations and agencies within the community work together to support disconnected young people.

The objective of the Programme is to assist disconnected young people aged 13 to 19 to re-engage with education in a supportive environment and provide them with the ability to participate in further education, training or employment. The McAuley-Champagnat Programme is an inspiration, as are the dedicated staff who have led the way in providing an alternative educational setting in the Sandhurst Diocese.

## Inclusive education, what does it mean?

Well to our young people it means hope, opportunity and for some, it means a second chance. Providing alternative educational settings is not a luxury - it is a critical inclusion into our learning provision. The benefit of being able to re-engage these young people, directing their energies towards education, self belief and community connection is of benefit to all. The merit of inclusive education is unquestionable and the skill, courage and dedication of those who deliver these programs are inspirational.



# The face of t

**What is the SSEB and who are the members of this group providing leadership for Catholic education in the Sandhurst Diocese? Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst, Mr Denis Higgins, talks about the history and origins of the Sandhurst School Education Board...**

## **Sandhurst School Education Board**

The SSEB exists as a body participating and collaborating in the shared responsibilities of Catholic school education and school governance in the diocese and is:

- the principal consultative body to the Bishop of Sandhurst regarding Catholic school education in the Diocese;
- the principal consultative and advisory body to the Director of Catholic Education and the Catholic Education Office (Diocese of Sandhurst) on matters affecting schools of the Diocese;
- the principal consultative and advisory body for Diocesan and Parish owned schools in the Diocese;
- the major Sandhurst Diocese consultative body for Congregational owned schools and schools with shared ownership and/or governance in the Diocese;

This wasn't always the case, in fact, the SSEB is very young. It was established in October 1997. Prior to its establishment there was a Diocesan Education Committee (the DEC) which itself had only been established in the early 1980's. This group had been a successful forum for discussion, information and for generating ideas, but it had no formal functions in relation to setting policies and directions for the education system of the Diocese.

The DEC was de-commissioned in early 1997 and a consultative process took place during the autumn and winter of 1997 to ascertain the structure, purpose and representation of a new body to represent the Bishop of Sandhurst on matters related to school education in the diocese.

The consultation process included extensive responses from parish priests and principals. Not all responses were positive but the vast majority encouraged the Director of Education to plan for the establishment of a Board of Education which would model excellent governance practice. The Bishop of the day, Bishop Noel Daly, received the report of the consultation and instructed that such a body be established "at the earliest convenience". To this end the Director of Education (Mr Denis Higgins) and Director of Religious Education (Fr Andrew Fewings) set about the demanding task of structuring a Board and developing all of the associated documentation processes. Obviously, all of these arrangements

## **SSEB Founding Members**

Bishop Noel Daly (President)  
Mgr Peter Jeffrey (Goulburn Deanery) (Chair)  
Fr Peter Taylor (Bendigo Deanery)  
Max Fletcher (Secondary Cluster)  
Brendan Cooney (Secondary Cluster)  
Michael Glass (Northern Plains)  
Michael Cavanagh (External Representative)  
(Deputy Chair)  
Pat McConvill (Goulburn)  
Julianne Turner (Upper Murray)  
Kaye Sinclair (Ovens)

Brendan Atley (Campaspe)  
Fr Michael Morley (North East Deanery)  
Bill Gaskell (VIEU)  
Barry Ennis (Goldfields)  
Denis Higgins (CEO Leadership Team) (Chief Executive Officer)  
Peter Bugden (CEO Leadership Team)  
Fr Andrew Fewings (CEO Leadership Team)  
Mary Amohanga (CEO Leadership Team)  
Michael Avery (CEO Leadership Team)  
Catherine Barianos (Administrative Support)



# he SSEB



and writings needed to comply with the requirements of the Bishop, Canon Law and Civil Law as well as keep in mind the key principles of Board – subsidiarity, participation and co-responsibility.

The formation meeting of the SANDHURST SCHOOL EDUCATION BOARD took place at Shepparton on Thursday 23rd October 1997 and the first formal meeting took place on 11th December 1997.

The appointed (and continuing) Chair appointed by the Bishop was Monsignor Peter Jeffrey.

The unique processes, documentation, educative strategies, advocacy, initiatives and leadership of those first days has only grown stronger. A major review held during its tenth year verified the feeling that this formal Board of the Bishop of Sandhurst had gone from strength to strength. The consultation process, ten years down the track, revealed a body which is highly regarded by all those directly involved with it and, more importantly perhaps, by those who it serves. Its work and processes are well known and highly regarded.

The name, SSEB, itself identifies its purpose and bailiwick. It is not about all formal educational enterprises of the Diocese. It is about school education in the Diocese. It is a formal Board, fully constituted by the Bishop of Sandhurst. It is meant to be a model of really good practice in governance at a Diocesan level. It commenced wanting to be all of those things. The little miracle is that it is!



**SSEB**  
SANDHURST SCHOOL EDUCATION BOARD

## SSEB Current Members

- Bishop Joseph Grech (President)
- Mgr Peter Jeffrey (Chair)
- Michael Cavanagh (Deputy Chair)
- Denis Higgins (Chief Executive Officer)
- Phil Billington (Executive Member/CEO Leadership Team)
- Max Fletcher (Executive Member/CEO Leadership Team)
- Fr Andrew Fewings (Council of Priests)
- Sr Cecilia Merrigan csb (Religious Order Rep.)
- Paul Wilkinson (Western Deanery Primary Principals)
- Steve Hicks (Goulburn Valley Deanery Primary Principals)
- Paul Maher (North Eastern Deanery Primary Principals)
- David Leslie (Secondary Principals' Network)
- Darren McGregor (Secondary Principals' Network)

- Sue Prichard (Victorian Independent Education Union (VIEU))
- Andrea Caldwell (School Board Chairperson - Western Deanery)
- Anthony Brophy (School Board Chairperson GV Deanery)
- Anne Cummins (External Consultant)
- Jenni Kennedy (Public Relations)
- Audrey Brown (CEO Leadership Team)
- Bernadette Florence (CEO Leadership Team)
- Pauline Fisher (CEO Leadership Team)
- Jim Rolfe (CEO Leadership Team)
- Kevin Lawlor (Executive Support)
- Rosemary Rasmussen (Executive Assistant)
- Marina Scott Administrative Support



# Learning & Teaching in Sandhurst Today

**Schools across the Sandhurst diocese are recognizing that preparing our students to succeed in today's digital environment requires us to do things differently and is presenting us with some exciting new possibilities in learning and teaching. As Peter Senge says "learners learn in the context of their lives" and in order for our schools to remain relevant for our students we need to be able to bridge the gap between how they live and how they learn. Schools are being asked to re-imagine what type of learning environments and ways of teaching will most effectively equip students for life in the 21st century.**

The emerging pedagogical frameworks are focused towards the personalizing of learning, in order to best meet the needs of individual students in terms of their backgrounds, abilities, interests and learning styles. Inquiry learning, developmental play, self-directed and self-paced learning are all examples of learning and teaching approaches that are becoming more visibly imbedded and sustained in Sandhurst classrooms.

The emerging technologies have provided powerful new opportunities for our

schools to utilize a range of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) tools that enable students to engage in their learning in creative, collaborative, meaningful and relevant ways. In addition to students and staff having access to the relevant technologies, our schools are increasingly re-conceptualizing the use of both physical space and time in order to best support the learning experiences. Greater flexibility in learning spaces and in timetabling is becoming evident and is supporting a more authentic learning environment.

The four-strand Sandhurst Diocesan Technology Plan (1. Professional Learning for Leaders, 2. Professional Learning for classrooms, 3. Technical advice, and 4. Financial advice) has provided a sound framework for facilitating the introduction and utilization of technology to enhance learning and teaching for both students and staff. Educational briefings for school leaders, an increase in targeted ICT professional learning for teachers, ICT study tours and the accessibility of Technology Learning kits for trialling in classrooms have all contributed to raising awareness, changing thinking about some of

the possibilities and preparing school leaders and staff to thoroughly plan and introduce these new approaches.

A particular ICT thrust in Sandhurst has been the introduction of 1:1 laptop programs into our schools. Sacred Heart P-8 School in Corryong



*"The programs allow me as a teacher to work more easily with individual students and small groups."*

*Kayla Hore - Grade 5/6 teacher  
St Mary's Cohuna*

"There is a sense of excitement in Sandhurst about the possibilities for enhanced learning and teaching that the new ICT tools bring to our schools."

Max Fletcher  
Deputy Director Catholic Education Sandhurst  
Educational Leadership



implemented a 1:1 program for their Year 7 students in 2009 and extended it to the Year 8 cohort this year.

Principal, Mr Brendan Atley says thorough planning prior to implementing the program has paid off. "Our levels of student engagement have increased significantly, particularly amongst the boys and the teaching and learning has developed markedly. Not only has this approach provided many more learning options for our students but the teachers have also embraced it. We are now planning to extend into Grades 5 and 6."

St Brendan's, Shepparton, successfully launched their 1:1 program for Grade 5 & 6 students during 2009. Grade six student Samantha Tricarico says the classrooms are quieter and there is more independent work. "We also can work well together with a partner or in groups to do group presentations."

St Mary's Cohuna initiated a self-directed learning program for their Grade 5 and 6 students in conjunction with the introduction of their 1:1 program, during Term 3, 2009. Grade 5 and 6 teacher Kayla Hore notes

that "the students are fully engaged and it is an effective learning environment."

Currently Sandhurst has a number of both primary and secondary schools across the Diocese which are implementing a 1:1 laptop program. By mid year we expect that 15 additional schools will have implemented their 1:1 laptop program, and another 10 schools intend to do so during the second half of the year.

It is important to note that students are not engaged with the technology all of the time and it would be inappropriate if that was the case. However, there is much momentum and a sense of excitement in Sandhurst about the possibilities for enhanced learning and teaching that the new ICT tools bring to our schools. Digital story-telling, digital portfolios, blogs, wikkis, podcasts and vodcasts are becoming a familiar part of the classroom language for both students and staff.



"You can do more work for yourself and I also do a lot of work at home on the laptop. I like it a lot."

Bailey Michel - Grade 6 student  
St Brendan's Shepparton

# Leaders

**Leaders from across the diocese assembled in Bendigo in February for the annual Sandhurst Leaders in Catholic Education Gathering. Bishop Joseph Grech, Principals, Parish Priests, School Board Chairpersons, senior Catholic Education Office staff and Sandhurst School Education Board members took part in the Gathering.**

The Catholic Education Office facilitates the Annual Gathering which brings this group of leaders together who are focused on Catholic education and committed to working together to bring the best outcomes for our schools and students. The Gathering provides an opportunity to engage in dialogue and to contribute to a collaborative vision for the future of Catholic Education in Sandhurst.

A key feature of the annual Gathering is the Commissioning Mass which was celebrated by Bishop Joseph Grech and clergy from across the diocese at the Sacred Heart Cathedral. During Eucharist newly appointed Principals are commissioned and the important contribution that School Board Chairpersons make to their school communities is acknowledged formally.

The Catholic Education Week theme for 2010, "Called to Bring Hope", provided a focal point for the Gathering. Keynote speakers explored the notion of how Catholic Education is called to bring hope in our church, our schools and in the world. Dinner Speaker, Denis Higgins – Director of Catholic Education, presented a challenging and insightful address on the forgotten stories in Catholic education – 'Does

Anyone Know That I'm Here?' This inspiring address reminded all of the challenge of being authentically inclusive of the human dignity of all.

Bishop Greg O'Kelly SJ, Bishop of Port Pirie, presented the opening address, engaging his audience with an insightful look at the challenges facing church in the 21st century. Bishop O'Kelly was informed by his personal experiences in education and in his current role as Chair of the Australian Catholic Bishops Commission for Catholic Education. Bishop O'Kelly challenged all present to enable their personal sense of hope to grow. "Our approach in religious education should be that of formation, not simply instruction. It could be based on the triple emphasis of vision, imagination and reflection. There must also be an emphasis on the church" he said. He reminded all that "Faith and love are the bookends of hope."

The Hon. Ursula Stephens, Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector also provided a keen insight into providing hope for the future. Senator Stephens spoke about the challenges facing our community and being aware of those who are struggling with poverty. Senator Stephens implored that we cannot allow the disparity between the "haves" and the "have nots" to continue to grow. In emphasising the key role of Catholic education, Senator Stephens said, "If you want to know where poverty is, the first place of call is the Parish Priest, the second place of call is the school Principal!"

An especially poignant part of the Gathering was the commissioning of Bishop Joseph Grech, Monsignor Peter Jeffrey, and Director of Catholic Education Mr Denis Higgins as FIRE Carriers. The FIRE Carrier Project which is an initiative of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and the Opening the Doors Foundation promotes reconciliation in Victorian Schools. FIRE stands for Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education. The ceremony was conducted by Ms Vicki Clark, Co-ordinator of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry. Bishop Grech is the first Bishop in Australia to be commissioned into the program. Deputy Director Ms Phil Billington, Principal Dr Kevin Messer together with CEO personnel Bernadette McPherson, Maria Weatherill and Louise Levy are commissioned FIRE carriers and welcomed the new members to this privileged role.



# Leaders Unite

*“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”*

John Quincy Adams

The afternoon session involved Victorian political advocacy and resourcing presented by Assistant Director of Catholic Education Melbourne Mr David Wilkes and Senior Advisor for Government and Funding Relations Mr Ross Fox, from the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria. Deputy Director of Catholic Education, Ms Billington emphasised the importance of school leaders having an understanding of the funding issues facing Catholic Education in Victoria.

The conference continued with a planning session based on individual school profiles presented by Mr Crichton Smith from the Catholic Education Commission of NSW. This valuable information will enable schools to examine data which is particular to their school setting; each school has the opportunity to customise their information based on current enrolments and a range of indicators.

The Gathering of Leaders in Catholic Education concluded with an overview of 21st learning developments in the Sandhurst Diocese. Innovation, education and imagination are words that best describe this exciting age of learning. The vision for 21st century learning

stems from the challenge of creating a dynamic learning environment for schools which meets the needs of students and teachers.

The Leadership Gathering provided participants with a forum which was informative and interactive, valuing the individual contribution of everyone present and the role that each leader plays in the life of their community. The 2010 conference highlights the importance of strong and prophetic leadership and provides the opportunity to celebrate those who lead in the Sandhurst diocese.



# Called To Bring Hope

**The words "Called to bring hope" conjure up images of inspiration, strength of character and faith. The theme for Catholic Education Week 2010 is inspired by the words and actions of Blessed Mary MacKillop who will become Australia's first Saint on October 17 this year in Rome.**

The rich history of the Sandhurst Diocese is shaped by those who pioneered education across our region. The religious who established our schools, taught our children and brought Jesus Christ into homes throughout Australia provided an essential service to families in each community.

There are many stories of strength and spirit as this nation became home to people of various nationalities and backgrounds. Mary MacKillop founded the Josephite sisters in Penola, South Australia in 1866 to provide service to the poor and to bring education to the children of Australia.

One such community was the township of Numurkah, situated in the heart of the Sandhurst Diocese. St Joseph's Parish Primary School began in 1890 when Blessed Mary MacKillop, with four Sisters of St Joseph, commenced Catholic Education in a one room building at Numurkah. St Joseph's Numurkah was the first school established by Blessed Mary MacKillop in Victoria. The foundation stone for the Convent and present School was laid on 15th August 1919, and classes began on 4th February 1920. There have been many changes since then. However, St Joseph's School continues to reflect the pioneering spirit

of Blessed Mary MacKillop and the Josephite Sisters in everything they do. Current Principal Mr Paul Arnel said the impending Canonization of Mary MacKillop is a most exciting time for all of Numurkah but especially St Joseph's school and parish.

"As founder of our School, to have Mary MacKillop recognised not only locally but globally makes this especially meaningful for us. It certainly brings home the importance of our role at St Joseph's in continuing Mary MacKillop's work and to uphold the values that are her legacy to us all" said Mr Arnel.

As we prepare for the canonization of our first Australian Saint we take time to honour this remarkable Australian woman and to reflect on the part that she played in the history of Catholic Education in Sandhurst and in particular the community of Numurkah.

In today's world, Mary MacKillop stands as an example of great courage and enduring faith as she lived her life loving God and caring for those in need. Blessed Mary MacKillop calls us all to bring hope to our own lives and the lives of others; her legacy remains an inspiration to all.

I feel very honoured to be Parish Priest of Numurkah Parish during the year in which Blessed Mary MacKillop is to be canonised.

The highlight for me last year was the Concelebrated Mass on August 10th to commemorate the Centenary of Blessed Mary MacKillop's death. The Mass was held in the Mary MacKillop Centre, Numurkah where teachers and students from the seven schools established by the Josephite Sisters within the Diocese gathered to celebrate the occasion. Thirty Josephite Sisters attended the Mass and subsequent celebrations.

The influence of Mary MacKillop's Charisma can be seen both within St Joseph's School and the Parish in general. My overall experience with working with the Josephite Sisters has been very fruitful and they have re-enforced my vocation of service.

Fr Frank Jones  
Parish Priest  
St John the Baptist Parish-Numurkah



# The Spirit of Sandhurst



St Monica's Primary Wodonga



Festival of the Sacred  
Western Deanery



Sacred Heart Primary Tatura



CEO Staff Days



Official Opening of Boringa



Commissioning of New Principals

