

Spirit

of Sandhurst



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Catholic Education Sandhurst



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Front Cover Photos:

- Student from St Monica's Primary Kangaroo Flat
- Prayer focus from Sandhurst School Education Board meeting
- St Augustine's Wodonga's wonderful school production
- Phil Billington with senior students from St Mary's of the Angels Nathalia.

Inside Front Cover Photo:

- Student from St Michael's Tallangatta

Back Cover Photos:

- St Francis' Primary Nathalia statue
- North East Deanery Festival of the Sacred
- Year 12 students from Catholic College Bendigo at their final school assembly.
- St Francis' Primary Nathalia student

Artwork:

- Page 9 - Chloe Wheaton (Grade 2)
- Sacred Heart Primary Yarrowonga

Reflections from the Director



As 2013 draws to a close we have much for which to be grateful amidst a busy year during which we have focused on 'Re-Imagining the Partnerships – Foundation for Faith and Life.' In re-imagining the partnerships we are going to be focusing the Spirit of Sandhurst Magazine more on parents as the prime audience in the hope that it provides a broader sweep of educational matters which are of interest to you and your family.

Foundation for Faith and Life was really brought to the fore with the pilgrimage to World Youth Day in Rio of both school aged and post school young people from Sandhurst. I was privileged to join



the group in Rio and it was a transforming experience! To be with millions of young people joyfully expressing their faith was amazing. I am including a photo of Melissa Mewburn who was one of only 6 worldwide who spoke personally to Pope Francis – a transforming experience in itself! We are so very proud of Melissa, a graduate of Catholic College Bendigo and Youth Ministry worker in our Diocese. Our challenge as the adults is to continue to invite our children into faith, a relationship with God – this they learn through our example and our relationships with them and with God.

2013 heralded the launch of the SSEB Parent Leadership Strategy in March and the subsequent activity across the Diocese is just wonderful. In the past weeks, over a hundred members of School Boards have gathered for the Term 4 Deanery meetings which are now chaired by Parent Leaders. The partnership in working together for our young people is fundamental to a healthy community in which everyone fulfills God's plan for them – to be a person fully alive! (St Irenaeus).

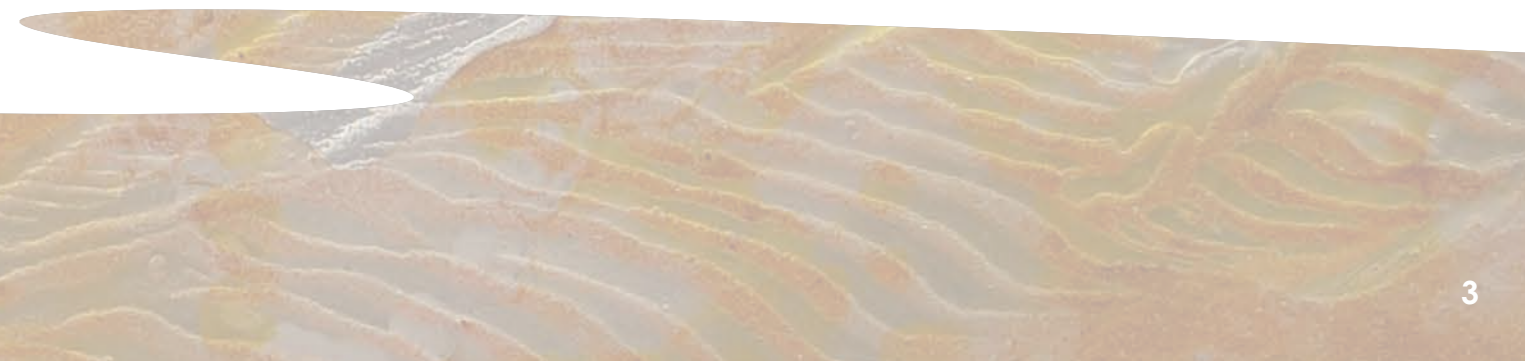
2013 also brought another Federal Election and a battle for Federal Funding for our schools. Thank you for your energetic advocacy which has ensured that our key values of subsidiarity have been honoured. I pay particular tribute to Mr Stephen Elder, Executive Director of the CECV and a member of the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) whose particular advocacy ensured success. I am including a more fulsome report in the body of this edition. 2014 will see us going to the State polls!

As we conclude the year, we are very thankful for the wonderful support and commitment which you give to your local school communities and to our endeavours in Catholic education in Sandhurst. We look forward to 2014 as we venture more deeply into being God's people and to connecting more deeply into The Story of our Faith and into our Parish communities.

May the blessings of Advent as we prepare for the coming of the Christ-child be with you and your families.

Blessings

Ms Phil Billington
 Director
 Catholic Education Sandhurst



Parents as first educators



Research tells us that the most successful schools engage students, parents, carers and the community as partners in supporting student learning. Parental engagement is a powerful lever for raising achievement in schools. Where parents and teachers work together to improve learning, the gains in achievement are significant.

Parents have the greatest influence on the achievement of young people through supporting their learning in the home. It is their support of learning within the home environment that maximises achievement and creates the greatest difference.

Dr George Otero from the Centre for Relational Learning states "the single minded focus on improving the school as the key to educating all children regardless of social and community contexts is based on the notion that the school is a closed system. But, in order to continue to raise standards and ensure that all children have the opportunity and support they need to achieve, schools must begin to act much more as open systems. They must embrace the families and community of which they are an integral part."

Catholic Education Sandhurst has been working with George Otero who has been consulting with parent leaders in the development of the Parent Leadership and Family Engagement Strategy. George is a leading educational practitioner in the area of Family and Community Engagement.

A number of schools in the Sandhurst Diocese have had the opportunity to work with Mr Otero on the implementation of the strategy within the context of their individual school communities. The strategy is designed to guide schools in developing sustainable processes that suit their community.

In August this year the Sandhurst School Education Board (SSEB) Parent Leaders were invited to present the Parent Leadership and Family Engagement Strategy at the Australian Catholic University (ACU) conference in Sydney. The response to this presentation was overwhelming, it is the first strategy developed by parents and then presented at the ACU conference by those parents. The parent leaders felt supported, valued and empowered by this experience. The ACU conference presented an opportunity to showcase the great work the SSEB parent leaders have undertaken in the Diocese of Sandhurst. It highlighted the innovative thinking, commitment to best practice and an understanding of the need and value of Parent Leadership and Family Engagement at the policy and development level of Catholic Education in Sandhurst.



George Otero working with parents at St Joseph's Primary School in Rochester



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A word from the Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body (VCSPB) on parent engagement:

New Australian research: parents a key in the education of their children.

The Federal Minister for School Education recently launched a new research report on parent engagement.

The Parental engagement in learning and schooling: Lessons from research found that supportive parents and a highly engaged community are the keys to a well-rounded education. Literature and the research supports the assertion that parents' attitudes, behaviours, and actions in relation to their children's education have a substantial impact on student learning and educational attainment. This ground-breaking research on parental engagement, highlights the benefits, demonstrates what works, and identifies strategies available to facilitate parental engagement. The new research has found schools that encourage parents and the wider community to be engaged in students' education lead to better results in overall student performance. The paper concludes that positive parental engagement in learning improves academic achievement, wellbeing and productivity.

What does parent engagement look like:

- communicating with children about parental expectations for education and about the value and enjoyment of learning
- discussing learning strategies with children
- linking school work to current events and other topics

- fostering educational aspirations and making preparations and plans for the future
- providing a stimulating home learning environment, and making learning enjoyable and rewarding
- focusing on activities which are directed at building students' decision-making and problem solving skills and affirming their growing autonomy, independence, and academic abilities.

The way parents perceive their role is critical

- beliefs about appropriate and desirable child outcomes
- beliefs about who is responsible for these outcomes
- perceptions of what important group members (e.g. family, teachers, other parents) expect from them as parents
- parental behaviours related to those beliefs and expectations.

A supportive parenting style

'A parenting style which is supportive of the child and encourages conversation and exchange between the parent and child is more conducive to emotional wellbeing during the schooling years. A supportive parenting style allows for the setting of limits and rules while making transparent the reasons behind decisions, thereby acknowledging the autonomy and self-responsibility of the child. Conversely, a style which is emotionally distant yet which requires children to obtain high levels of academic achievement can lead to low levels of self-esteem in children, which can have a flow-through negative impact on academic achievement.'

Patricia Palman

Stay connected.
Place a link to the VCSPB website
on our school website:
www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au

Hot off the press

National Voice for Catholic School Parents Launched

An organisation aiming to give Catholic school parents a strong and united voice at national level was launched this month.

Catholic School Parents Australia will play a leading role in representing the views of parents to the Federal government as well as providing a forum for state Catholic school parent bodies to consider issues and share ideas.

Newly elected Independent Chair, Mr Tony O'Byrne, says "Catholic schools educate 1 in 5 Australian children and parent engagement is a very strong element of the ethos of Catholic education."

"Catholic schools have a distinctive ethos and are therefore often faced with a unique range of policy issues."

"We believe it is vital that our parents have a forum through which their specific views can be expressed at a national level," Mr O'Byrne said.

The organisation has the support of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the National Catholic Education Commission.

An inaugural council consisting of two nominees from each State Catholic School Parent Association and the ACT Catholic School Parent Council has been appointed.

Patricia Palman, Executive Officer - Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body (VCSPB)



Earlier this year Ms Sally Livermore was appointed as Parent Engagement Officer for Catholic Education Sandhurst:

My position as the Parent Engagement Officer is a direct result of the need identified by parent and CEO leaders to assist with the implementation of the initiative and to ensure the sustainability of the strategy. The role is to support the introduction and implementation of all aspects of the Parent Leadership and Family Engagement strategy. It involves providing support and resources for the SSEB Parent Leaders, representing the Sandhurst Diocese on State and National Catholic Parent Boards, researching best practice, providing professional development opportunities and supporting Principals and Parent Leaders.

Since starting this position in April I have been fortunate in having supportive leadership within the CEO, and the opportunity to work alongside the four SSEB parent leaders, Annette Jacob, Liz Grogan, Vaughan O'Sullivan and Michael Devlin. These parents have passed on to me their passion and commitment to the future of the Parent Leadership and Family Engagement Strategy.

Study Tour

In 2014 the CEO Sandhurst are sponsoring a study tour immersion to Santa Fe New Mexico with George Otero at the "Centre For Relational Learning." The study tour participants consist of eight parent leaders and seven principals. The group will participate in a program involving school and community visits, a number of workshops to gain knowledge and experience of how Community Engagement is achieved in different socioeconomic and culturally diverse communities in the region. This study tour shows the commitment of Catholic Education Sandhurst to the ongoing support of Parent Leadership and Family Engagement. I look forward to taking part in this study tour and supporting the principals and parent leaders in what is an exciting initiative.



Nathalia schools partnership

maximising opportunity through partnership



Principals in the Nathalia Learning Community
L-R: Vicki McManus, Leonie Irwin, John Sciacca & Claire Kelly



A unique partnership in the small rural town of Nathalia is creating exciting learning opportunities for students, regardless of where they choose to go to school.

Government school Principals, Vicki McManus from Nathalia Primary School and John Sciacca from Nathalia Secondary College, together with Claire Kelly, Principal of St Francis Catholic Primary school and Leonie Irwin from St Mary of the Angels College, Nathalia have formed the Nathalia Learning Community (NLC) with a common vision of providing the best educational opportunities for students.

Leonie Irwin: The Nathalia Learning Community developed out of a desire to enhance educational outcomes for the students in the Nathalia area. Nathalia is a small rural town in the Goulburn Valley that hosts two primary schools and two secondary schools (Government and Catholic) and is situated in a strong farming community.

The two secondary schools have had a shared provision relationship that has extended over thirty years, with St Mary of the Angels and Nathalia Secondary College offering access to VCE and VCAL subjects to senior years students. The further development of this relationship over the past two years has meant that between the two schools they are now able to offer over fifty VCE unit 1 / 2 or unit 3 / 4 sequences as well as offerings in VCAL literacy, numeracy and personal development; this is a substantial offering for any school let alone two rural schools in such a small township.

The relationship between the four schools developed even further after representatives from the schools in the town attended the Country Education Project (CEP)/Catholic Education Sandhurst (CES) UK study tour that focussed on clustering, partnerships and schools that had moved from being underperforming to high performing. After the conclusion of the tour, the representatives from the four schools committed to continuing the educational conversation with a view to maximising opportunities for students and to have a strong 'student at the centre' focus. The "Nathalia Learning Community" (NLC) came into being shortly after.

The NLC has its own motto, context, rationale and objectives statement to help guide future developments.

To date the NLC has developed its core document, hosted International expert on educational outcomes, Sir John Jones from the UK for a full day of professional learning for all staff across the four schools and even more recently, the four schools hosted eight pre-service teachers from ACU whose brief was to complete their placement and to focus their action research on addressing the issue of student aspiration. The two primary schools have also worked together to develop a strong partnership between early years services, kindergartens and schools.

It is because of this strong partnership between the four schools that each community now feels much more comfortable in contacting other members to offer access to professional learning that they may have organised or access to visiting performing artists etc.

The motto of the NLC is "Maximising opportunity through partnership," which on the ground has also meant that we have applied for and received some joint funding to support teacher training in student coaching. The two secondary schools also joined in with St Augustine's in Kyabram to form a successful Trade Training Centre Consortium, offering six VET subjects across the three schools.

In a recent conversation with state government representatives, John Sciacca (Principal of Nathalia Secondary College) and Leonie Irwin (Principal of St Mary of the Angels College) reflected on what made the partnership so successful and it was agreed that a positive mindset towards partnerships was a definite prerequisite along with small acts of kindness towards one another and most of all, trust.

Before the end of November this year, the four principals, John Sciacca, Claire Kelly (St Francis Primary School), Vicki McManus (Nathalia Primary School) and Leonie Irwin will spend a day together discussing what other opportunities are available to the NLC that will help maximise educational outcomes for the students in our care.

"We have a town with a population of 1500 people and between us we are educating 1100 students' every day, making us the biggest employers in the town."

Claire Kelly (Principal, St Francis Catholic Primary)

Sir John Jones



There is a small and select band of educational professionals who have not only had their achievements recognised in the New Year's Honours List, but who are also able to inspire others with their outstanding knowledge, passion and enthusiasm – Sir John Jones is one.

Knighted in 2003 for his services to education, Sir John worked most of his professional life in challenging schools across the North West of England, his last post being the head-

teacher of a large secondary school in Merseyside.

His achievements and reputation for leadership and creativity has led him to be invited onto various organizations, panels and think tanks including the National College for School Leadership, the DfES' Leadership Development Unit, the Teacher Development Agency's National Remodelling Unit and visiting posts with both Manchester and Liverpool Universities.

Sir John has proven himself as one of the most entertaining, inspiring and sought-after speakers on the global educational stage, whilst retaining a very down to earth approach to education, believing it to be about social change, never just about ticking boxes or meeting targets. Sir John Jones offers practical ideas that make a difference and a genuine and moving sense of awe at the power teachers have to change young lives.

Country Education Project



The Country Education Partnership (CEP) has been working in the area of Victorian rural education for over three decades. Initially established in 1977 as part of the Commonwealth

Schools Commission Country Area Program, CEP has maintained a strong commitment to building the capacity of all rural schools and their communities through collaboration and local partnerships in locally determined geographic areas.

A central element of the Country Education Partnership approach is the inter-systemic approach and clustering model. The three main education sectors including the government schools, Catholic schools and independent schools have always been equally involved in all levels of the project. Such an approach remains central to CEP today.

"What became a very powerful message for us is that we know what we are doing is cutting edge, we know that there have been some challenges that we have had to overcome, especially in the Primary, we didn't have the history that the secondary schools had, so Claire and I have really put a lot of effort into building that trust, and that partnership."

Vicki McManus (Principal, Nathalia Primary)

Showcasing the Arts

From an early age children respond to music, to movement and to all forms of entertainment. Children are naturally curious and have a wonderful imagination which enables them to grow and learn through self-expression, so it's not surprising that Australian research is revealing the value of The Arts in school curriculum.

Participating in The Arts helps children to develop and enhance physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development, enhancing the learning of students in all aspects of curriculum, including literacy and numeracy. The Arts teaches children life skills such as developing an informed perception; articulating a vision; learning to solve problems and make decisions; building self-confidence, self-discipline and the awareness of different cultures and traditions.

In 2009 Catholic Education Sandhurst established a partnership with the Australian School of Performing Arts (ASPA) to deliver a first class musical experience for students and to enhance the capacity of music provision in schools. Five years on and A3-Australian Arts Alive, a branch of ASPA has become a part of the culture of schools in the Sandhurst Diocese.

Catholic Education Sandhurst Council for the Arts (CESCA) was inaugurated in 2012 with the purpose of raising the importance and value of The Arts in Sandhurst schools. CESCA reinforces the commitment of Catholic Education Sandhurst to provide rich cultural experiences for students that enable them to be creative, to imagine, to express and to be fully alive.

The Council is made up of a group of experienced people who meet four times a year to combine their wisdom and seek ways of helping school communities in their artistic endeavours. The Council gains the assistance of various members of the Catholic Education Sandhurst Community and the wider rural and state community. It explores grant possibilities, interschool and community connections.



a3 australian arts alive

a3 is the second of two branches of the Australian School of Performing Arts, the first being the Australian Girls Choir, which has built a reputation as the most dynamic girls' choir in the country, and this year celebrates 29 years of providing high quality education and wonderful performance opportunities to many thousands of girls.

As educators, a3 australian arts alive tutors have seen time and time again the benefit of exposing students to the performing arts, in terms of developing their skills, but also growing confidence, practising teamwork, working towards a goal, as well as a means of expression. Building the capacity of classroom teachers and specialist teachers to engage their students in the performing arts is a priority for a3.

Over the past four years a3 has engaged thousands of students and teachers throughout Australia, providing performing arts workshops and programs, creating choreography for school concerts, directing school musicals and facilitating professional development sessions for teachers.

Arts Alive

Some of the wonderful school productions held across the Sandhurst Diocese this year.



HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

Since 1987, a highlight for Catholic College Bendigo's Year 9 students has been the annual production. Disney's 'High School Musical' in 2013 was no exception. As the movie is so well known, the challenge was for the students to bring their own interpretation to the roles. They rose to the challenge and produced fantastic results.

"It was great to see everyone involved putting in so much effort to make our show all it could be!"
(Gemmah Kurzke-Michell)

Set in a world of Jocks, Cheerleaders, Brainiacs, Thespians and Skaters, the characters followed their journey to find each other and attempt to break free from the roles they are expected to play.

"It was one of the most exciting, yet challenging, moments of my life. High School Musical was a blast!"

(Danielle Stuckenschmidt)



HAIRSPRAY a stunning success!

FCJ College's stunning production of the hit musical Hairspray was seen by over a thousand people with two sell-out performances! Patrons were treated to a brilliant performance from the thirty-five students who acted, sang and danced their way through over two hours of quality entertainment.

Principal of FCJ College, Mr. David Leslie lavished praise on the students for taking ownership of the production and working as a team to produce such memorable performances. Mr. Leslie also acknowledged the many staff who assisted with the staging of Hairspray, in particular music teachers Nada Lupo and Ben Heddermann, Mandy Stephens for her eye for detail with the costumes, Cathy Begley who designed the backdrops, Tim Gerrish for set design, Rodney Reardon for sound effects and Guy Durance and Vince Branigan for their overall direction and production of the show.



HATING ALISON ASHLEY!

Marian College Myrtleford performed 'Hating Alison Ashley' in their Performing Arts Centre. It was an absolute delight and the students from Years 7-10 enjoyed performing and the audience was totally engaged.



PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Drama students across the different year levels at Catholic College Wodonga presented their School Production of Pride and Prejudice for 2013. The show was visually sumptuous, with a hardworking team of teachers, parents and student helpers sewing beautiful costumes and constructing a very professional set. Sound and lighting was ably delivered by VET Music students with the help of Albury Sound and Lighting and the new VET Music teacher, Paul Gibbs. Students handled the demands of the language of the play with dedication, realising a sophisticated, entertaining and warmly received show. Congratulations to Sara Hagarty, CCW's new drama teacher and to the committed team of students, parents and teachers who worked so hard to bring the production to life!



CACKAWHACKADOO BAY

St Mary's Cohuna presented the Australian Play Cackawhackadoo Bay with every child in the school performing! The performance was dedicated to the much loved Prep student Thomas Jones who sadly passed away in August this year.

The MacKillop Art Exhibition

The MacKillop Art Exhibition brings together the artistic talents of primary and secondary students from right across the Sandhurst Diocese and is held at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Bendigo annually.

Vivid water colours, acrylic paintings, photographs, and ceramics are brought together each year for the exhibition; the result is an inspiring and diverse exhibition which showcases an exciting array of young talent.

The MacKillop Art Exhibition was inaugurated in 2010 to honour St Mary MacKillop in the year of her Canonisation as Australia's first saint. In the lead up to the exhibition schools are able to take part in a visiting artist program with renowned Australian artist Terry Jarvis to produce artworks for the exhibition.

Whilst the exhibition celebrates the talents of Sandhurst students it is also an exhibition for visitors and the wider diocesan community. The exhibition is held in August each year to coincide with the feast day of St Mary MacKillop and is on public display for two weeks, the prestigious MacKillop Art prize is awarded at the launch for the best exhibited work from a senior student valued at \$1000.



The Festival of the Sacred

Imagine the voices of 700 senior primary school students singing together in a choral spectacular, individual students presenting, dancing and singing under the tutelage of the professional teachers from the Australian School of Performing Arts, and you have the Festival of the Sacred!

Inaugurated in 2009 by Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst, Ms Phil Billington, the Festivals of the Sacred take place in the Western, North East and Goulburn Valley Deaneries each year. Secondary students from each region also perform at the Festival including dance troupes, chamber choirs and college rock bands.

The important partnership with a3-australian arts alive, a branch of the Australian School of Performing Arts (ASPA) is now in its fifth year and the festivals keep getting better each year.

The Festivals deliver an uplifting and inspirational display of beautiful young voices, some realizing for the first time the beauty and power of The Arts, others discovering a love of performance which will last a lifetime.



The Hundred Languages of Childhood

The child
is made of one hundred.
The child has
A hundred languages
A hundred hands
A hundred thoughts
A hundred ways of thinking
Of playing, of speaking.
A hundred always a hundred
Ways of listening of marveling of loving
A hundred joys
For singing and understanding
A hundred worlds
To discover
A hundred worlds
To invent
A hundred worlds
To dream
The child has
A hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred more)
But they steal ninety-nine.
The school and the culture
Separate the head from the body.
They tell the child;
To think without hands
To do without head
To listen and not to speak
To understand without joy
To love and to marvel
Only at Easter and Christmas
They tell the child:
To discover the world already there
And of the hundred
They steal ninety-nine.
They tell the child:
That work and play
Reality and fantasy
Science and imagination
Sky and earth
Reason and dream
Are things
That do not belong together
And thus they tell the child
That the hundred is not there
The child says: NO WAY the hundred is
there...

Loris Malaguzzi

Founder of the Reggio Approach

Engaging young learners

Engaging Young Learners - The Reggio Emilia Approach



The vision for Catholic Education in Sandhurst is to provide, in partnership with our families, a stimulating, enriching and nurturing learning environment in each of our school communities. These schools actively enable each of our students to flourish into the person God calls them to be. This flourishing is a rich and experience which engages and affects the whole person. (Charter of Sandhurst school improvement Chapter 1)

These aspirational endeavors that underpin our vision for Catholic Education in Sandhurst do indeed resonate with aspirations of the Reggio Emilia philosophy where all educational endeavours are family centred.

Sixty years ago Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the Reggio Emilia Educational project stated, Reggio Emilia is more than a philosophy of education it is a philosophy for life.....

The Reggio Emilia philosophy has at its heart a highly optimistic vision of the child as capable, competent and active learners. Children possess an innate capacity for expression and communication in an infinite number of ways. With a strong emphasis on learning experiences that value the contributions of all participants, actively engage in listening, the child becomes the constructor of knowledge. The child's learning is shaped through investigation and interpretation. Individual and group learning are valued and authentic and purposeful processes record and document meaningful moments of the learning. The Reggio Emilia learning environment is carefully constructed to promote familiarity, belonging, connectedness, challenge and choice.

Reggio Emilia and the image of a child

At the heart of this system is the powerful image of the child. Reggio educators do not see children as empty vessels that require filling with facts. Rather they see children as full of potential, competent and capable of building their own theories.

Inborn abilities and potential - enters their classroom full of knowledge

- Citizenship and human interaction.
- Creativity and curiosity
- Constructors of own knowledge
- Life long passion for learning and exploration
- The child as is the protagonist, collaborator, and communicator

Engagement of parents and families

As the first educators, parents begin a strong partnership with schools when they enrol their children in our schools. These partnerships become authentic when time, care and commitment are taken to ensure that respectful relationships are nurtured. In authentic partnerships with parents, students, and staff quality learning and teaching become a collaborative activity.

The environment as the third teacher

The educators of Reggio Emilia view the school as a living organism, a place of shared relationships among the children, the teachers, and the parents. The school produces for the adults, but above all, for the children, a feeling of belonging in a world that is alive, welcoming and authentic. The environment becomes the "third teacher" creating connections between ideas and the environment. The placement of furniture and learning resources are intentional in creating opportunities for communication and relationships. The spaces are flexible, spacious and awash with natural light. Children's learning is made visible through displays and documentation. Much of the instruction at Reggio Emilia schools takes place in the form of projects where children have opportunities to explore, observe, hypothesize,

question, and discuss to clarify their understanding. The approach relies on a respectful relationship between the teacher, student and parents; the result of this approach is the creation of a collaborative community that is developmentally beneficial for all.

We cannot live without meaning that would preclude any sense of identity, any hope; any future... the search for meaning is born with a child and is desired by the child. This is why we talk about a child who has the right to hope and the right to be valued, not a pre defined child seen as fragile, needy or incapable. Ours is a different way of thinking and approaching the child... Carla Rinaldi- pedagoga Reggio Emilia

The Sandhurst story so far....

Catholic Education Sandhurst began the Reggio Emilia journey in 2009. The Sandhurst Early Childhood Education Network was established in 2010 and an Early Childhood Education Officer was appointed the same year.

Over the past four years delegates from Sandhurst have attended the biennial Australian Reggio Emilia Conferences in Adelaide and Canberra in 2009 and 2011 respectively and this year, 16 educators from the Sandhurst Diocese travelled abroad to attend the Reggio Emilia International Conference in Italy.

The inaugural Reggio Emilia Study Tour departed in April 2013, led by Educational Consultants Pauline Fisher and Julie Cobbleddick. The context for the Study Tour was deeply grounded in the Charter of Sandhurst School Improvement (CoSSI) in its vision of fostering school cultures, of enriched learning and teaching practice, of personalized and purposeful learning, authentic assessment practices, collaborative and student centred environments and the fostering and nurturing of partnerships with parents so that quality learning becomes a collaborative activity.

The tour included an intensive conference over five days, where participants engaged in cultural experiences with visitation to Florence and Venice as part of the pre-conference program. The Sandhurst Diocesan team was part of the Australian contingent, which included over 80 participants.

"Our Sandhurst group is continuing to embrace with extraordinary levels of participation in the Reggio Emilia conference. We are in ongoing dialogue at every opportunity around the possibilities at individual classrooms, school and system level. We are inspired by the Reggio philosophy and principles which are so closely aligned to both our Catholic vision and values." - Pauline Fisher Educational Consultant: Primary

A post study tour meeting was designed to gather information, feedback and insights from the tour. The depth of the responses demonstrated the impact the study tour had on participant's beliefs, understandings and intended practice. Recommendations from Sandhurst educators have helped to guide the 2014 - 2016 Sandhurst Diocesan Strategy for Early Childhood Education.

"We have been moved in both our minds and hearts. This is at the heart of education and it is indeed wonderful that our Sandhurst Study Tours continue to enrich lives and professional practice."

- Julie Cobbleddick Educational Consultant: Primary

A changing world of learning...

Classrooms have come a long way in recent years; the static seating arrangements with teachers giving instruction from a blackboard are long gone. Modern classrooms are dynamic and energetic learning environments, where children move from multiple activity stations, each activity is designed to stimulate, engage and activate learning in a way that children know best, through investigation and discovery, students are then able to demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways.

The teachers' role is to encourage, nurture and guide the process, in the words of the founder Loris Malaguzzi, teachers must have a positive image of children and their vast capabilities. Children, teachers, and parents are three equally important components in the philosophy's educational process. Parents are encouraged to be active contributors to children's activities in the classroom and in the school.

The hundred languages of Childhood, penned by Loris Malaguzzi articulates the infinite ways in which a child can connect with their thoughts, their feelings, their expressions and the wonderful world of their imaginings through the Reggio Emilia Approach.



Catholic Education Sandhurst History Project

an overview

The year 2012 saw a significant milestone for the global Catholic Church, marking fifty years since the convening of the Second Vatican Council in Rome. The echo of this monumental event continues to reverberate today, and it is with this point that the project to document the last fifty years of Catholic education in the Diocese of Sandhurst begins.

Catholic education in Sandhurst has been part of the Diocese from its very beginnings, a presence on the goldfields of Bendigo begun by Henry Backhaus. Sandhurst is fiercely proud of its early history, and it has been well documented by a number of people.

On the other hand, the more recent history of Catholic education in Sandhurst remains relatively unknown. The history of the recent past has long been seen as the poorer, and less interesting sister of the history of our forebears. It seems that the early figures of our history had far more interesting lives, struggling as they did to establish the system which is flourishing today.

The aim of this project is twofold: it is to document the recent past, using the recollections of those who were part of making this history; it is also to highlight the importance and relevance of recording our recent past to ensure that these important stories are told and known for many years to come.

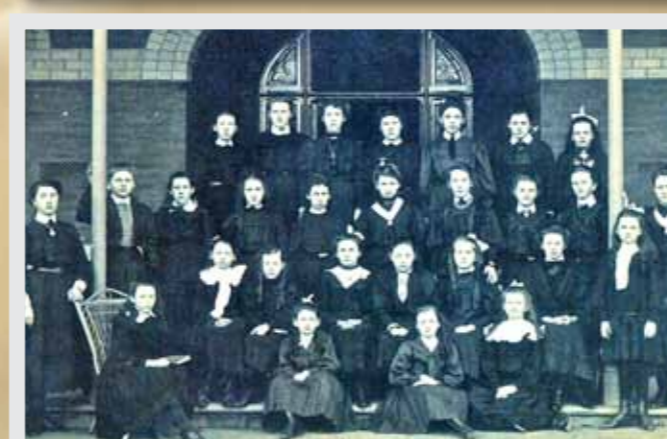
This project uses oral history techniques, recording the stories of those who have experienced the reforms of Vatican II first hand: from the withdrawal of religious orders from our schools; on a personal level, losing the veil and embracing the freedom of dressing in 'civilian' clothes; the struggle to staff schools with lay people and the encouragement of all to take part in the newly reformed Church.

It uses these same techniques to share the stories of those who were integral to the establishment of the Catholic Education Office, at times struggling against differing levels of bureaucracy to achieve the level of respect that is afforded to the Catholic Education system in Sandhurst today. It posits the history of Catholic Education in this diocese within the story of Catholic Education in Australia, in particular the struggles for adequate funding which saw the Sandhurst diocese called to be a witness in the High Court case brought about by the group Defence of Government Schools (DOGS).

The book that is the ultimate result of this project will be both a written and photographic chronicle of Catholic Education in Sandhurst from 1962 – 2012. It is set out chronologically, using the tenure of each Bishop of Sandhurst to define each historical period, and influenced by the directorships of Adrian Sexton, Denis Higgins and Phil Billington to further ground it chronologically. The pre - 1962 story of Catholic Education is not ignored; rather, it is discussed briefly in the first part of the book, to highlight the way the past informs the present.

Along with the text, there will also be an honour roll, listing the Bishops of Sandhurst and the Religious Orders to have established convents and monasteries within Sandhurst. The names of all principals will be listed, including the names of religious principals prior to 1962 and all principals from 1962 until today. Each school within Sandhurst has been invited to write a brief, 500 word history of their school, which will be included in the book, along with photos of the school in its early days, as well as more recent photographs. Importantly, this book will also include an audio/visual element, in the form of an included DVD with short interviews of participants. This provides an extra level of archival material, as well as bringing the history to life in a way that words cannot. The DVD will be around 30 minutes in length, with each vignette providing an opportunity for the interviewee to expand on an element of the recorded interview. There will also be a timeline in the centre of the book, which will fold out, providing a more general overview of the recent history of Catholic education in the diocese.

As a 'coffee-table' style book, this chronicle of Catholic Education in Sandhurst will be impressive and stylish. It will also be useful in classrooms, with the text and the audio/visual components being useful resources to disseminate a history that is mostly unknown to people around the diocese. The story of Catholic education in Sandhurst is one of which we should be incredibly proud: this book provides an opportunity for people to know their recent history, as much as honouring those who helped Catholic education in the diocese become what it is today.



Frances Ardern was born in north eastern Victoria and together with her two siblings, Clare and Nathaniel, grew up on a small property near Chiltern with parents Phillip and Carmel. Frances commenced her education at St Joseph's Catholic Primary school in Chiltern and later attended Catholic College Wodonga, graduating in 2006.

With a strong connection to the Sandhurst diocese in Frances' family, Catholic Education is well and truly in her blood. Frances' maternal grandfather, John Jones, was the first lay male teacher in Sandhurst, teaching at St. Mary's Primary School, Myrtleford from 1967 until 1982. Her maternal grandmother was also a teacher, and taught in Corryong prior to her marriage. Frances is the niece of Pauline Corcoran, who teaches at St Patrick's, Tongala, and her uncle, Leo Jones is the principal of St. Joseph's, Nagambie. The newest member of the Jones clan, Sonia Jones (Leo's wife), is principal at St. John's, Euroa!

Frances' love of history, politics and singing was fostered by a collection of wonderful teachers at Catholic College Wodonga (CCW). Following year 12, Frances spent a year in the workforce before moving to Melbourne in 2008 to commence an Arts degree at Monash University. Frances graduated from Monash in 2011 with a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in History and is currently employed by one of the libraries at Monash University, loaning and borrowing books from other university libraries within Australia and around the world.

There are many influences in Frances' life; her family is a great source of strength and inspiration and she says one of the greatest aspects of being part of a big family is the diversity of experiences and interests. Frances cites the literary world as another influence and says her degree has expanded her knowledge and understanding of the world.

Early literary inspiration began with the imaginings of Roald Dahl. "I devoured his books as a child, and still return to them again and again. I love his subversive storytelling, all his stories have such a delicious sting in the tail," said Frances. "I also enjoy reading Tim Winton's books, particularly *Dirt Music*. And of course, classic literature, especially Australian literature, like Ruth Park's *A Harp in the South*. I also enjoy reading non-fiction, particularly anything about Australian social history. I could keep going, because there are so many books that I've read, and loved," she said.

Given the opportunity to tell the tale of Catholic Education Sandhurst with a focus on the past 50 years, has enabled Frances to delve into the history of a place and organization that was instrumental in her own education. This project has also given her confidence to know that writing is something she is capable of and she thanks Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst, Ms Phil Billington for having faith in her and for entrusting her with this project.

The future aspirations of Frances Ardern are many and varied, she would love to continue writing histories full-time, but she also has a passion for teaching. Frances is currently awaiting confirmation that she has been successful in her application to study a Masters of Teaching next year.

As is often the case, stories seem to go full circle, and here is no different, Frances' cousin Jane is also studying teaching so it seems as if the next generation of teachers in the Jones family is being fostered and the next chapter begins.



Working together

NCEC & CECV

The recent Federal election heralded a further change in Education funding and protocols.

At a recent meeting of National CEO Directors the following information was provided. The schema at the bottom of the page summarises the approaches to Education Policy and Funding since 2000. The Government has committed funding for a four year period from 2014 and has committed to reducing 'red tape and regulatory burden'. There is an increased focus on Principal Leadership development, Quality Teaching and School Autonomy – all of which are currently key priorities of Catholic Education Sandhurst.

Currently the Catholic Education of Victoria (CECV) is focused on determining the detailed implications of both the Federal and State Government Funding policies and confirming funding allocations for 2014 and 2015. The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) in its negotiations with the Federal Government has achieved systemic flexibility and the Australian Government will no longer be approving the way in which systems redistribute and manage their funding, but there will continue to be accountability.

The Federal Government will review funding during this four year period. Capital funding will continue as at present. In the presentation by Government the following commitments were made:

- Working with each education system, government and non-government
- Ensuring respect for schools, the teaching profession, parents, communities and students
- Extending support for students with disabilities
- Continuing research and monitoring to improve and support national priorities
- Reducing bureaucratic red-tape and administrative burden

The CECV working with the NCEC will continue to advocate for students with disability and to ensure that we can grow to meet the ever-increasing demand for Catholic education.

The advocacy of families to politicians has ensured that Catholic education continues to be acknowledged as a quality provider of education in Australia.

Historically, responsibility for schooling and reform has been shared across the Commonwealth and states. Over time, the role of the Australian Government has shifted with a greater emphasis on national approaches and outcomes based agreements, and a smaller number of targeted interventions supporting national reform directions.

2000-2007	2008-2013	Post 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment to states and territories and non-government sector • Funding through programs, often paid direct to schools or communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values Education • Investing in our Schools • An Even Start National Tuition Programme • National School Chaplaincy Programme • Australian Technical Colleges • Teaching Australia • Literacy and Numeracy Testing • National Statements of Learning • Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008 • Establishment of the Disability Standards for Education 2005 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment to states and territories and non-government sector • Targeted program funding rolled into base funding for states and territories with less input controls • National Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low SES, Quality Teaching, Literacy and Numeracy • BER, DER, TTCs • Empowering Local Schools • Rewards for Great Teachers • More Support for Students with Disabilities • Establishing national education architecture ACARA, AITSL, ESA • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014 • National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program (2012-2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stable, simple and sustainable approach to funding that gives schools, teachers and parents certainty for the future • A renewed focus on what students learn through a robust national curriculum • Improved quality of teaching and related support services • A greater say for teachers, principals, parents and the community about how their school is run

Decreasing administrative burden on schools/systems



Back Row (L-R):
 Very Rev. Peter Slater VG PP,
 Ms Maria Kirkwood,
 Mr Steve Elder,
 Ms Audrey Brown,
 Mr Francis Moore
 Front Row (L-R):
 Dr Helga Neidhart RSC,
 Bishop Vincent Long OFM
 Con DD VG,
 Ms Philomena Billington

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This Spirit of Sandhurst magazine captures the spirit of Catholic Education in the Sandhurst Diocese - its uniqueness, vibrancy, innovation and commitment to enhancing the lives of its students, families and teachers.