Welcome to the first edition of the Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents Council E-NEWS (Triangle) for 2014

On behalf of the Parents Council, I welcome you to the first edition of this E-NEWS which we will be publishing at least once per term. This E-NEWS is forwarded to all School/College Communities for distribution to all parents. If you would like to subscribe to receive a copy of this E-NEWS visit the Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents Council website www.tcspc.org.au and subscribe.

This edition contains questions for candidates in the upcoming State election with respect to Catholic Education. There is a news brief on the Review of the National Curriculum and information about us the Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents Council, the Australian Parents Council (APC) and Catholic Schools Parents Australia (CSPA).

If you have suggestions for us to address in future issues please forward your suggestions to the Executive Officer by emailing catholicparents@bigpond.com

Every Blessing upon you and your Families

Rev Dcn Michael Hangan, Executive Officer
News in brief

Review of National Curriculum

In January, Federal Education Minister Christopher Pyne announced the government’s decision to review the National Curriculum. For further information visit http://www.studentsfirst.gov.au/

Tasmanian State Election
Saturday 15th March 2014
What are Catholic school communities seeking from political parties?

As we are all aware the Tasmanian State Election will be held on Saturday 15th March 2014. The Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission, is seeking responses from each of the political parties contesting the election on behalf of the Parents and Students in Catholic Schools. For this purpose seven questions will be asked of each political parties.

The Commission is seeking to clarify each of the parties’ policy position in relation to the State’s education system, with respect to the way in which a future Government may interact and support Catholic Schools in their mission.

All within Catholic Education hold the view that every Education Minister appointed is the ‘Minister’ for all Tasmanian students and hence has a unique role to play in the outcome for our students.

Furthermore, every policy and decision made in respect to education in Tasmania has a direct impact on all of our Schools and Colleges. It is the belief of all within Catholic Education that students who attend Catholic Schools have a right to be included in funding and policy determinations equitably.

Each main political party has been approached for a written response to the seven questions detailed on page 3 of this newsletter. These responses will be published prior to the 15th March to allow everyone to make an informed decision prior to voting. We hope this will work towards good outcomes for all students with out Tasmanian schools and colleges.

The Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission has reviewed the policy information issued by each of the political parties and is seeking answers to some additional questions. These additional questions especially relate to the respective political party, and these responses will be published with the original seven questions responses.

Similarly the Parents Council has written to each of the political parties seeking a meeting with their respective Education spokesperson to address the following questions:

1. Their commitment to ongoing funding arrangements with the Federal Government and the proportional state funding
2. Continuance of the funding to the Parents Council

We will keep you informed.
Questions to Candidates and Political Leaders

1. How will the appointed Minister for Education be considered to be the Minister for ALL schools in Tasmania, proactively and equitably supporting ALL schools, both financially and in terms of policy development?

Sometimes government decisions are made that fund government schools to provide resources that could be made available to all students, e.g. online learning, and specialist support for Students with Disabilities. (It is important to note that our Catholic school system saves governments and taxpayers in the vicinity of $1,000 per student per year through by operating with lower public resources).

2. Will you guarantee to provide for the Catholic Schools system a just proportion of the $83 million quarantined in the 2013 State Budget to support the implementation of schools funding, 2014-2017?

There is some anxiety that this money may be already be dispersed, in part or in full, to fund initiatives that have been publicly announced to improve the quality of educational provision in Government schools, e.g. Capital improvements in a number of government schools, learning Programs that are recent initiatives put into place in Government schools only.

3. Will you undertake to increase state capital funding for the Catholic School system?

At present the amount of state government funding for capital purposes for Catholic schools is around $600,000 per annum in total. This amount is inadequate to support the capital needs of our 37 schools and colleges.

4. How will you take into account the potential impact any change to the Year 11 and 12 College structure within government schools would have on the Catholic Schools of Tasmania?

It is clear that any move to restore Year 11 and 12 to small country high schools will have an impact on the viability of all schools in Tasmania.

5. What guarantee will you provide that the annual state government payment to support VET provision in schools will be continued and indexed into the future?

We appreciate that this payment has been continued for 2014, and need to have assurance that it will not cease thereafter. This payment helps to provide essential upgrading of qualifications for VET teachers and the maintenance of the Trade Training Centres recently constructed, which are serving the needs of students across the state.

6. Will the Government be willing to enter into a signed Agreement to ensure that state government funding commitment (post 2014) for Catholic schools honours federal/state obligations under The Education Act of 2013 to fund the Tasmanian Catholic school system?

7. Will the new Minister for Education lobby the Federal Government to roll out fibre-based NBN provision to ALL Tasmanian schools?

Some schools already have the NBN facility and if the remaining schools receive only a copper-based access this will create inequity of opportunity to access high speed internet access.

Engaged Learning in a Socially Connected World

In December, the Australian Parents Council* (APC) along with the Australian Association of State Schools Organisations (ACSSO) hosted a session in Canberra with David Price (OBE). David is the author of ‘Open: How We’ll Work, Live and Learn in the Future’ and is currently working with the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) on a national project on Student Engagement.

*The Australian Parents Council (APC) is the national federation of organisation representing parents of students attending Catholic and Independent schools to achieve choice, quality, equity and voice. The Parents Council is a proud affiliate of the APC.

David’s view is that we must engage with social media and social learning to engage young people in learning for life.

He describes the six imperatives of Social Learning:

- Do it Yourself
- Do it Now
- Do it with friends
- Do unto others
- Do it for Fun
- Do it for the world to see

Intrigued? Go to www.engagedlearning.co.uk/?page id=40

A powerful message in this YouTube creation by social commentator Suli Breaks about the need to reform the way we think about learning and assessment to create an education worth having and best engage young people. Go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-eVF_G_p-y
An organisation aiming to give Catholic school parents a strong and united voice at the national level was launched in October 2013. Catholic School Parents Australia (CSPA) will play a leading role in representing the views of parents to the Federal Government as well as provide a forum for state Catholic School parent bodies to consider issues and share ideas.

The inaugural Annual General Meeting of CSPA was held including election of office bearers with independent Chair Mr Tony O’Byrne. Mr O’Byrne said “Catholic schools educate 1 in 5 Australian children and parent engagement is a very strong element of the ethos of Catholic Education.”

The TCSPC is a founding member of CSPA

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<td>TCSPC Executive Meeting</td>
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<td><strong>School Term Break (End of Term 1)</strong></td>
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<td>26 October</td>
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<td>8 November</td>
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<td><strong>School Term Break (End of Term 4)</strong></td>
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National day of action against Bullying and Violence

The National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence is occurring on Friday 21st March 2014. This national day which occurs annually provides a focus for schools and the wider school communities, including parents and carers to strengthen existing everyday messages that bullying and violence at school are not OK at any time. Please visit www.bullyingnoway.com.au for parent resources, videos, links and downloadable materials for information about bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence in schools. The Safe Schools Hub www.safeschoolshub.edu.au has a parents section for information about the National Safe Schools Framework which provides guiding principles for safe and supportive school communities.

Why we need a TCSPC

• To have a representative body of parents to advocate the needs of children and families in Catholic Education
• The Council is represented at a variety of Tasmanian and Australian Education reference groups, representing needs of parents/carers and the community supporting students in Catholic Education.
• To ensure the message reaches parents that they are a pivotal partner in the education of their children
• To share the responsibility for learning, living gospel values and developing faith commitment.

Tasmanian Catholic School Parents Council

A voice for Catholic School Parents