



NEWS IN BRIEF

www.pandf.org.au

The Federation of
Parents and Friends
Associations of
Catholic Schools Qld

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2009—A CELEBRATION OF CHURCH, STATE AND CATHOLIC EDUCATION

We have had the opportunity this year to reflect on our history and to appreciate and honour those who have built the foundations of our country, our Church and our Catholic education system. It has also given us the opportunity to envision the future with the unprecedented changes taking place in the nation and in education.

The federal government has instituted a 'revolution' which will significantly affect the way education is delivered for many years to come. The Building the Education Revolution program has injected significant capital resources into education for which our communities are very appreciative and the movement towards an Australian curriculum is proceeding rapidly. The Catholic education sector, and particularly parents, need to be aware of these significant changes and to actively participate in the process of reform.

Throughout the year the Federation has continued to be active in pursuing the interests of our parents and carers with government and other authorities. We have maintained close relationships with the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) through its Parent Committee.

In the state, the Federation has established a very good relationship with the new Minister for Education and Training Mr Geoff Wilson and also through the Queensland Joint Parent Committee (QJPC) which continues to promote the interests and needs of all parents in the state.

The State Committee wishes to thank the parents and carers from every school in the state who continue to support the work of the Federation. In particular we thank those thousands of parents and carers who work tirelessly, often with little recognition, on behalf of the children and families in our schools in the interest of their children and in the promotion of Catholic education.

Thanks also to the school communities including priests, religious, principals, staff and students who continue to be very supportive of the Federation's objectives.

The State Committee of the Federation and the staff at the Secretariat wish the members of our school communities God's peace and joy during the coming Christmas season.



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STATE CONFERENCE TOOWOOMBA 2010

The biennial conference of the Parents and Friends Federation will be conducted in Toowoomba on the weekend of April 30 – May 2 with the theme "Putting the Pieces Together – All as One." Activities will commence with the presentation of the Jack Woodward Memorial Lecture on the Friday evening by distinguished author and educator Professor Jack Keating who has recently released a paper which proposes a new direction for education in Australia.

The conference opening will be on Saturday morning and the program will include keynote speakers and workshops during the day. The conference Mass will be celebrated by the Bishop of the Toowoomba Diocese, Bishop William Morris and the Conference dinner will follow.

The conference concludes with lunch on Sunday after the Federation's AGM.

All parents and carers from throughout the state are invited to attend the conference which gives the opportunity to discuss the important issues regarding the parent's role in the future of Catholic education.

Further information on the conference will be available on the Federation's website at:

www.pandf.org.au



Queensland Parents & Friends
Federation State Conference
TOOWOOMBA 30 April – 02 May 2010

COMING EVENTS

- Nov 28 State Committee Meeting (Brisbane)
- 30 Apr - 2 May 2010 'Putting the pieces together all as one (P&F Biennial Conference Toowoomba)

Your Invitation to the State Conference is enclosed with this News letter

HELP PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN'S IDENTITY ONLINE

The Australian Federal Police and the Australian Bankers' Association have produced a fact sheet for parents to encourage their children to stay safe online and protect their identity from criminals. Even though your children may be technically proficient on the computer and using the Internet you can still talk to them about safe online practices.

The fact sheet outlines some of the threats online and provides some practical tips on how to talk to your children about the issues.

Some safety tips you might share include:

- ◇ Don't post too much information online
- ◇ Don't answer questions with too much information
- ◇ Be careful in choosing screen names
- ◇ People aren't always who they say they are
- ◇ Be very careful about publishing photos or sending them by phone
- ◇ Don't publish your email address online
- ◇ Treat all unsolicited email with caution
- ◇ Do not click on a link on your email
- ◇ Discuss where your child can and can't go on the Internet
- ◇ Ensure your child knows they can talk to you about everything they experience online

If your child published online his or her date of birth, address, phone numbers and email details this could be enough information for criminals to use to create false identities and commit serious crimes.

The information could be used to befriend your child in a chat room for sexual purposes. That is why it is important to have a discussion about what is appropriate to publish online or send via mobile phone.



The fact sheet is available on the following websites: Australian Federal Police: www.afp.gov.au and The Australian Bankers' Association: www.bankers.asn.au

CELEBRATE TEACHERS

This time of the year gives parents and carers the opportunity to thank our teachers for their dedication and commitment in the education of the 128,000 children in the 288 Catholic schools in the state.

It is with a true spirit of partnership between the home and the school that our children will all achieve to their potential.

In association with World Teachers Day, we congratulate Libby

Gaedtke from Xavier Catholic College in Hervey Bay who was presented with an Excellence by a Teacher - Highly Commended Award by Hon Julia Gillard in Canberra and the 20 teachers from our schools who are finalists in NEITA 2009 ASG Inspirational Teaching Awards.



We are standing now with millions around the world to show our commitment to the fight against extreme poverty and inequality.

We are standing because we refuse to accept more excuses in a world where 50,000 people die every day as a result of extreme poverty and the gap between rich and poor is getting wider.

We are standing because we want our leaders to honour their promises to meet the Millennium Development Goals – and we ask them to exceed these goals

We join in solidarity with people from hundreds of countries to say: To the leaders of the wealthy countries- We urge you to keep your promises on poverty – debt cancellation, more and better aid, trade justice and gender equality.

To the leaders of poorer countries – Make it your first responsibility to save the lives of your poorest citizens.

We ask you to tackle inequality, to be accountable to your people, to govern fairly and justly, to fight corruption and fulfil human rights.

*Today and every day, we will **STAND UP and SPEAK OUT** against poverty.*

We will continue the fight against poverty and inequality and to hold our leaders to their promises

We are asking not for charity but for justice. We are millions of voices standing in solidarity to say , no more excuses – end poverty now!

Caritas Australia

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

SHARING THE BEST OF OURSELVES

Australian writer David Malouf writes of 'the sacrament of daily existence', the ordinary, prosaic, uneventful graced power of people living good lives in community. These are communities built on healthy relationships of trust and tolerance, of generosity and good sense, of seeing *the other* in someone else's world view, life style, taste in music or dress sense and inviting that other to see you in the same way. It is about sharing the best of ourselves with others and vice versa.

Healthy relationships allow people to be who they truly are, their essential selves, stripped of affectation and ambition, the false adornments and layers we build in trying to become what other people want. It is about being authentic—where the outer person truly reflects the inner person. It is about seeing the good before the bad, prioritising the positive and seasoning all relationships with empathy, compassion, a bit of forgiving and forgetting and a good dose of laughter.

If we can find and affirm the best of each person we meet, whether spouse or sibling, colleague or child, surely we are on the way to living out in our ragged, messy, holy, hopeful, human way that sacrament of daily existence, the blessedness of the minutes, hours, days and years of our lives.



Ann Rennie in *Australian Catholics*

NEED TO TARGET PRE TEENS TO PREVENT YOUTH VIOLENCE

Programs to prevent youth violence need to start earlier and be sustained longer to be effective, according to a new report commissioned by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY).

The study, which was undertaken for ARACY by Murdoch Children's Research Institute, found primary school age children were engaging in a range of risk-taking behaviours that put them in danger of developing long-term social and health problems.

As many as one in five Year 6 boys admitted to having drunk alcohol in the previous month, and one in twenty in the same group had drunk more than five alcoholic drinks in a row in the previous fortnight (classified as binge drinking). The rates were lower for girls, but increased for both genders in Year 8.

The study confirmed a link between recent alcohol consumption and violent and antisocial behaviour among students. The level of antisocial behaviour and alcohol consumption increased for both boys and girls in secondary school.

Download the report at: http://www.aracy.org.au/cmsdocuments/violent_and_antisocial_behaviours.pdf

Violent and antisocial behaviours among young adolescents in Australian communities

An analysis of risk and protective factors



SEVEN MUST KNOWS ABOUT BOYS

No. 1: You must like them

Take the time to nurture a relationship with your sons or the boys that you interact with. Some boys like to talk; others like to share an activity; some like you as an adult to do something for them; others are very kinaesthetic and love to be touched, cuddled and hugged; while some just love gifts and mementoes. Work out the relational preferences of the males in your life.

No. 2: Most boys just want to blend in

Boys are group-oriented by nature. They want to fit in. They tend to play group games and form themselves into structured friendship groups. Boys generally don't want to stand out from their crowd.

No 3: They are hierarchical and they like to know who is in charge

Boys like limits and boundaries as they make them feel safe and secure. They also like to know that someone is going to enforce those rules so don't be afraid to be 'in charge'.

No 4: Many boys hide behind a mask

Some boys, eight years of age and older, wear a mask to protect themselves from being hurt or to portray a tough guy image. They will attempt to communicate with that mask. Refuse to communicate with a mask. Make them feel comfortable, joke with them, even tickle them but get them to drop the mask if you really want to get through to them.

No. 5: Loyalty is an incredibly strong driver for boys

Understand that a boy's loyalty to friends, family, teachers and cause are key male drivers and you go a long way to understanding the male psyche. They are incredibly influenced by their peers, which can hold many of them back. It takes a brave boy to get too far ahead of the pack so they often hold each other back when it comes to achieving.

No 6: Use short-term goals to motivate them

Want to know how to motivate a boy to learn? Just make sure he can see some type of benefit in the task he will work hard to get it. You need to make sure the benefit is tangible and the gain is foreseeable.

No. 7: A boy's brain matures differently than a girl's brain

In the first five years of life a boy's brain is busy developing gross motor skills, spatial skills and visual skills. So boys often start school with a distinct disadvantage when it comes to learning and fitting in.



Michael Grose

THOSE LEAGUE TABLES AGAIN

FEARS about league tables ranking schools based on student results will be short-lived and Australia can avoid mistakes made in other countries.

The predictions come from the incoming chief executive of the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), Peter Hill, who is charged with introducing the national curriculum and school reporting system. Dr Hill said the assessment of school performance has to move away from simply reporting test results to measuring the progress and improvement students made at school.

He said comparing schools on the basis of absolute performance, such as test marks, was insufficient by itself, but measuring student improvement put every school on the same level. "I believe there will be difficulties in the early days and there may be mistakes -- we don't know," he said.

"But I think we can become educated over time, become more spirited and discerning users of data in ways that don't need us to make inappropriate choices and damn schools that are doing a good job but are serving more disadvantaged communities."



NEW TEACHER LEADERSHIP BODIES

Commonwealth and state education ministers have established a new Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) which replaces the former Teaching Australia. The new body will play an important role in setting and using professional standards, creating innovative national professional learning activities, researching and improving pedagogy and school leadership and celebrating and learning from outstanding practice in schools.

Further information can be obtained from the Teaching Australia website at: <http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au/ta/go>

As a result of the recent Masters Review the State Government has established a Queensland Education Leadership Institute (QELI) to support the development of school leaders to deliver quality teaching and learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy, through professional development networking and research.

Unfortunately parents are not represented on either body.



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We're on the Web!
www.pandf.org.au

STATE COMMITTEE HAPPENINGS

The annual Christmas function to thank those who have supported the Federation during the year will be held on Friday 27th November at the Francis Rush Centre and guests will welcome the Minister for Education and Training Mr Geoff Wilson.

The State Committee will meet in Brisbane on November 28 for an historic joint meeting with the NSW Council of Catholic School Parents (CCSP) which is the equivalent body in that state.

With the introduction of the Australian curriculum and education moving in the direction of greater federal government involvement, the meeting will offer an opportunity to collaborate on areas of mutual interest to parents, particularly the issue of the future funding of our schools.

In order to continue to maintain an effective service to our communities and to promote the interests of parents in the wider educational environment, the State Committee has determined to marginally increase the levy for 2010 by 1.7%.

ADPROOFING YOUR KIDS

A sanity-saving book to help parents raise critical thinkers in a media-saturated world!

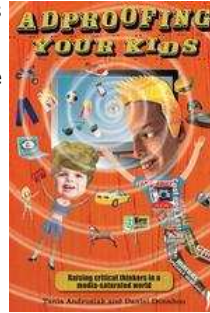
Adproofing Your Kids is a hands-on, practical book that offers parents the tools to alleviate the 'pestering' behaviour encouraged by marketers and advertisers. It also guides parents in helping their children think critically about the media messages that surround them on a daily basis.

Authors and parents, Daniel Donahoo and Tania Andrusiak began researching this book with their own concerns about the effects of media and marketing on young children today – and soon found that these were shared by families all over. The problems seem to arise from two clear facts: young children today spend more time immersed in electronic media and are subjected to more targeted marketing than any generation before them.

Parents also indicated they were highly concerned about their children's exposure to:

- advertising,
- inappropriate sexual messages,
- violent acts shown as acceptable responses,
- images of unattainable body shapes, and
- the effects of new technologies (particularly the Internet)

RRP \$24.95 paperback 224 pp



DID YOU KNOW???

A precious 10 litres of water rushes down the sink if the tap is left running when we brush our teeth for two to three minutes. In an average Queensland home of four people brushing their teeth twice a day, that's approximately two and a half wheelie bins of wasted water a week.

CARMEL'S CORNER

Internet and Phone Safety

We see and hear on television and in newspapers about incidents of cyberbullying and many parents think that their children wouldn't be involved in that. The fact remains that between 7–10% of students are bullied either by mobile phone or on the internet – emails, YouTube videos, comments or photos on facebook, on Twitter etc.

There are much larger numbers of students who participate in this bullying simply by sending one of these emails, messages, photos or videos on to someone else. They do not think of this as bullying but they are encouraging it by simply passing it on for someone else to see.

Also more than 15% of students are having a cyber conversation with someone they do not know. This person could be an older person or someone who is pretending to be a much younger person who could be very dangerous to your child if they give out personal details.

There are many programmes available on websites that provide information for parents and students. One of the newest ones is Smart Online, Safe Online (www.soso.org.au) which offers advice.

The website offers the following checklist for kids reminding them that cyberbullying takes many forms:

- Teasing someone by posting mean comments on their wall
- Not telling someone who you are online and telling them to "guess"?
- Creating an Internet poll, either over IM or on a Web site, about someone without their consent
- Creating a group page or forum thread about someone without their consent
- Posted pictures or information about someone on a Web site without their consent
- Teased or frightened someone over MSN chat
- Changed your profile status to embarrass or hurt someone's feelings
- Forwarded a private email or MSN message without the permission of the other person
- Logged onto someone else's social network without their permission. Sending threatening or unwanted messages

Two of the messages to students on this website are **"Share it and you're the bully too"** and **"Join in and you're the bully too"**. These are important messages for all.

The Australian Government also has a website – www.cybersmart.gov.au – which also has important information for teachers, parents and students. There are downloadable resources for parents – *Strategies to keep your children safe*. These are excellent, and give many hints on how to protect your children. There is also a pack that can be provided for every parent in the school. ACMA also provide free Internet Safety Presentations for parents and Professional Development for Teachers.

Your P & F may like to organise one of these information nights for parents so that we can all learn to protect our children and prevent our children from being involved in these hurtful activities that sometimes have serious consequences for those who are bullied.

Contact: Carmel Nash 0421 633915
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PARENTING AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Extra hours, multiple jobs and weekend work are all cutting into Australian family life, according to the latest Australian Social Trends released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). There are over one and a half million two-parent families with children in Australia, with most of these families having both parents working. In the majority (80%) of these working families, at least one of the parents said they were often or always pressed for time.

The main reason parents gave for feeling time pressured was trying to achieve a balance between work and family. Over half (58%) of all working couple families had at least one parent who usually worked extra hours and a similar proportion regularly working in the evenings. Most parents said they worked extra hours simply to get their work done. Many parents also worked weekday and weekend combinations, with over half of the working couple families reporting this pattern.

More details on these topics are available in the September edition of Australian Social Trends, 2009 available for free download from the ABS web site. <http://www.abs.gov.au>

How does this situation affect the traditional role of parents in the education of their children? Perhaps you might start the discussion at your schoolwhen you have the time!

