While it doesn’t seem that long ago that I sat down to write the Term 2 article, a great deal has happened in that time.

**Funding**

First, on behalf of the Council and all parents of children in Catholic schools, I would like to acknowledge the amazing work carried out by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) and the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) to obtain a commitment from the federal government not only to additional funding but also to allowing the CEOs to distribute funding according to the needs of Catholic schools. The NCEC and CECV are engaged in ongoing work for the benefit of every school in our system, but the most visible aspect of this work is the negotiation of funding arrangements at both state and federal level. Both CECV and NCEC work tirelessly towards ensuring that Catholic schools get their fair share of funding and all of our children directly benefit from this work.

**School Bus Safety**

The second major development was the media announcement about all new school buses having seat belts installed and a retrofit of older buses on a gradual basis. This is something that we have been talking to the Victorian government about for some time now. The CECV has been working with the parent bodies of government and independent schools on this issue. While significant headway has been made, there is still some work to do. The VCSPB will continue to raise this issue until such time as all school buses have seat belts. We have an online survey about bus safety issues and I encourage you all to complete that survey, so that Catholic school parents’ voices are heard by the government when making decisions about the safety of our children on buses.

**Victorian Institute of Teaching**

In June, I attended a parent and student consultative committee meeting at the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). The Chair of VIT and the CEO attended this meeting. It was a great opportunity to hear from the regulator about the systems that are in place to ensure that teachers in all sectors are fit and proper persons to teach. I was very impressed by VIT’s systems and their commitment to teachers and our children.

**National Catholic Schools Parent Body**

In July I emailed all Victorian Catholic school parents about the establishment of the Catholic Schools Parent Australia (CSPA) body later this month. The VCSPB is pleased to be part of the work in establishing the body and in being a foundation member. As in Victoria, the VCSPB through the CSPA will work at the national level for Catholic schools and students.

**VCSPB Council**

The VCSPB Council is seeking new members. The role and value of parent leadership in Catholic education is an important element in our system. Current VCSPB Council members are involved because it is:

... a great opportunity to work at state level to ensure that a Catholic education remains accessible to all and retains its Catholic identity and values.

Two things unite us: a commitment to Catholic education and the drive to advocate for parents. If this rings true for you … why don’t you come and join us?

I urge you to consider your skills and gifts that you can share for the good of Catholic education in our state and nationally, and contact me or our Executive Officer for further information.

**Tracey O’Neill**
World Youth Day

We need saints without cassocks, without veils – we need saints with jeans and tennis shoes. We need saints that go to the movies, that listen to music, that hang out with their friends. We need saints that place God in first place ahead of succeeding in any career. We need saints that look for time ... to pray every day and who know how to be in love with purity, chastity and all good things. We need saints – saints for the 21st century with a spirituality appropriate to our new time. We need saints that have a commitment to helping the poor and to make the needed social change. We need saints to live in the world, to sanctify the world and to not be afraid of living in the world by their presence in it. We need saints that drink Coca-Cola, that eat hot dogs, that surf the internet and that listen to their iPods. We need saints who love the Eucharist, that are not afraid or embarrassed to eat a pizza or drink a beer with their friends. We need saints who love the movies, dance, sports, theatre. We need saints that are open sociable normal happy companions. We need saints who are in this world and who know how to enjoy the best in this world without being callous or mundane. We need saints.

Pope Francis, World Youth Day 2013

Sixty-three secondary school students plus teachers from 42 Catholic schools across Victoria attended World Youth Day (WYD) together with Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) staff.

Here is what some of our students attending World Youth Day had to say on the CEOM WYD Blog:

The week since I left has been the most amazing week of my life. It’s amazing to think that a week away from the family, with 3 million people from all over the world could influence your faith in such a way as it has influenced mine. Thanks for the opportunity. You have no idea how much of a positive impact it is having on me.

Elaine, Catholic Regional College North Keilor

I feel really pumped to go back into my everyday life and be a witness to the faith!!!

Andrew, Penola Catholic College, Broadmeadows

(continued page 3)
The quote ‘we do not inherit the world from our ancestors but borrow it from our children’ has never been more pertinent as we, the youth, will sustain the flame of faith and roar on in the name of God with merit and humility.

Melvyn, St Monica’s College, Epping

Getting to know a vast array of young people hailing from countries — some I could only dream of visiting, others that had never crossed my radar — alarmed me to my own naïvety in believing that this journey was all about the group I was travelling with. Being immersed amongst millions of others who are all gathered to rejoice with one another and celebrate their shared faith while learning about fellow Catholics from around the globe of similar age and Christian experiences helped me gain a more insightful perspective on the true meaning of World Youth Day and my purpose to fulfil on this trip.

Emma, Genazzano FCJ College, Kew

This trip has so far been a life changing experience and we are both so glad that we got the chance to take this journey with God.

Nathaniel & Amber, Padua College, Mornington

People came in the thousands to get a glimpse at ‘Papa Francisco’. The hype of the crowd was immense and everyone was full of joy and excitement. People showed great emotion and love toward the Pope and what he represents. As he was driven down the path along Copacabana beach people chanted and shouted out to him. His presence was awe-filling and brought up so many emotions, I for one was crying tears of joy. I was blessed to be the second person back from the barrier and got a great view of the Pope, I was no more than two and a half metres away from him. As he went past where I was standing, a baby was passed to a volunteer and the Pope stopped to kiss the child on the forehead and bless him. This was truly a once in a lifetime experience and I feel so honoured and blessed to be a part of WYD 2013 in Rio de Janeiro.

Madeleine, Mount Lilydale Mercy College, Lilydale

It is so wonderful to be a part of such a positive and friendly environment where everyone is accepted despite their race or skin. I personally feel that our generation nowadays do not like to express their faith or talk about religion as maybe they are embarrassed or scared of what people might think. But coming to Rio where everyone is celebrating being a Catholic is such a great sight to see. I feel like everyone is a part of this community and have shown the true spirit of World Youth Day.

Cathy, Avila College, Mount Waverley

Being that close to the Pope was an experience that most people will never have. It was an overwhelming experience and made a few of us quite emotional.

The experience not only helped us strengthen and deepen our faith, but also taught us how to ‘make disciples of others’ when we arrive back home.

Raquel, Mercy College, Coburg
Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
A focus on know how rather than know what

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) has been provided in Victorian schools since 2002 as a direct result of the Kirby Report (Ministerial Review of post-compulsory education and training pathways in Victoria) in 2000.

VCAL is ideal for Year 11 and 12 students who want a widely recognised secondary school certificate that offers a more hands-on approach and practical work-related experience. VCAL is aimed at students who are more likely to go on to TAFE, an apprenticeship or straight into the workforce after school.

VCAL:

• provides an opportunity to engage every young person in learning, and in personal and social development
• extends the skills of young people and helps them to explore their dreams to fulfil their potential
• provides foundational skills needed for life, further study and work
• is exceptionally good at retaining students in secondary school
• assists with improving levels of literacy and numeracy.

With the combination of learning and doing in a real life context, student outcomes are broadened and enhanced. Learning is undertaken in the school or workplace and through service and participation in projects and vocational studies.

Demos (a think-tank in the United Kingdom) and the Assessment and Teaching in the 21st Century Skills Project provide evidence to support the desired outcomes of 21st century students in addressing the positives for young people to develop skills in the areas of:

• ways of thinking
• ways of working
• tools for working
• skills for living.

Students undertaking VCAL work towards achieving in each of these key areas.

VCAL equips students with the practical skills that employers need, helps them develop their initiative and resilience, and gain experience in teamwork and leadership. Students who have completed Vocational and Education Training (VET) units as part of their VCAL certificate will have developed knowledge and skills from nationally recognised qualifications that employers value. These may include industry awareness and use of tools, equipment and machinery.

VCAL also gives students the literacy and numeracy skills that are important for work and life. Students undertake four compulsory strands: literacy and numeracy skills; work related skills; industry specific skills; and personal development skills. The program also has the flexibility to allow students to design a study program that suits their interests and learning needs.

Upon successful completion of the program, the student receives a VCAL certificate, either for Foundation, Intermediate or Senior level, depending on which level they chose. Students also receive a Statement of Results listing all successfully completed Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Vocational Education and Training (VET) and VCAL units, as well as a Statement of Attainment for VET or Further Education courses.

VCAL has experienced dramatic growth since its introduction in 2002. In 2012 there were 442 providers with a total of 21,755 VCAL enrolments.*

Across Victoria in 2012, Catholic education provided for 2611 certificate enrolments to VCAL with 18 per cent of providers of VCAL within the Catholic sector.

* Information and assistance for this article supplied by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) and the CECV Pathways and Transition Team.

(continued page 5)
VCAL Achievement Awards: recognition for Catholic schools, students, teachers and partners.

The CECV Pathways and Transition Team is extremely proud of these outstanding achievements. The VCAL Achievement Awards provide an opportunity to celebrate the great work being undertaken in VCAL by students, teachers, schools and partner organisations. Winners of 2012 VCAL Achievement Awards from the Catholic sector were:

**VCAL Student Achievement Award**

*Foundation – Personal Development Skills*
Emily Garrett (Lavalla Catholic College, Traralgon)

*Foundation – Outstanding Achievement*
Katelyn Gilbert (St Mary MacKillop College, Swan Hill)

*Foundation – Team Achievement*
Scott Armstrong, Tegan Geri, Paul Hannah, Nicholas Kelly, Timothy Pithie, Patrick Robinson, Dah Dee Taw Thoo, Charlotte Tobin, Bridgett Williams and Matthew Young (Catholic College Bendigo)

**Koori Student Achievement**
Kobi Laudani (Nagle College, Bairnsdale)

**VCAL School-based Apprentice/Trainee**
Caitlin Wood (Catholic Ladies’ College, Eltham)

**VCAL Teacher Achievement Award**

*Integrated program*
Andrew Wild (Catholic College Bendigo)

*Team Teaching*
Peter Flahavin, Cheryl Hunter, Monica Justin, Todd Proud, Lis Scott, Brett Van Berkel, Rhonda Waanders and Mark Warnock (Lavalla Catholic College, Traralgon)

**VCAL Teacher of the Year**
Todd Proud (Lavalla Catholic College, Traralgon)

**VCAL Partner Achievement Award**

*Workplace Learning*
St Joseph’s Regional College Ferntree Gully and Bunnings Scoresby

For more information

- Where to now (downloadable guide for students on the range of options available to them in their last two years of secondary school)
- VCAL for Life (a short video that introduces the VCAL to students and parents who are considering options for senior secondary study: 6.31 minutes)
- Frankston TV: Any Questions? (video: 4.55 minutes)

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‘What makes a Catholic school a good place to be?’

I was raised in a very Catholic home and always attended Catholic schools; there was never any doubt that my children would go to a Catholic school. I never questioned why this was the case until my children started school. Some of my reasons included wanting my children to learn about Catholic values and how to live their life according to those values.

Before the Catholic school saw the NAPLAN results, they were genuinely interested in her as a person; her academic prowess was secondary.

I also wanted my children to have a spiritual component to their education in a setting where the gifts and talents God had given them were valued by the teachers who taught them. When I was at a Catholic school in the UK everyone at school was Catholic and nearly all of us regularly went to Church. This is not the situation in Catholic schools today and it got me thinking about why parents do choose a Catholic school.

A friend of mine has decided to send her daughter to a Catholic high school. Her daughter is an extremely bright girl and had a scholarship to a prestigious independent school. She chose the less prestigious Catholic school because of the way that it handled the enrolment process and its commitment to social justice. My friend told me that even before the Catholic school saw her daughter’s NAPLAN results, they were genuinely interested in her daughter as a person; her academic prowess was secondary.

In contrast the other school was only interested in her daughter when it saw how academically gifted she is. Of course, every school is different and there are many state and private schools who also value the whole child, but for me I really believe that the ‘whole child’ is at the core of the Catholic education system. Of course academic results are important, but as parents we also want our children to be good citizens, to be happy and to be the best that they can be. Academic success is not for every child or every person and that is OK. There is so much to life that cannot be measured by academic ability. For life to be rich and full we need to value all of our skills and talents (not just those on a certificate).

TRACEY O’NEILL
Victorian Government discussion paper on senior secondary pathways

The Victorian Minister for Education, Martin Dixon MP, released a discussion paper outlining three new options for students at senior secondary level. *Strengthening Pathways in Senior Secondary Qualifications* presented three new proposals for recognition within the existing school leaving qualifications, the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL); the Victorian Baccalaureate, the Industry Pathways program and Specialist Programs.

The VCSPB participated in a consultation meeting with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) on 3 June 2013 to provide feedback and to inform the design of the Victorian Baccalaureate, Specialist Programs and Industry Pathways around equity and access for all students and the need for there to be a real benefit to students with any changes in rewarding and recognising the work of students.

The feedback from all stakeholders is currently being analysed by the VCAA.

### Proposed Pathways

1. **The Victorian Baccalaureate** will recognise students who achieve a specified level of excellence in a broad range of subjects. It will be available from 2014 in all schools.

2. **Specialist Programs** will recognise students who achieve a specified level of excellence in a specialised field of study.

3. **Industry Pathways** will provide a clear vocational pathway into selected industries.

### Why is Catholic education important in Australia and for the Church?

**One in five or 735,403 students currently attend Catholic schools across Australia.**

Lives have been formed and shaped by Catholic education since the first half of the 19th century.

Catholic education:

- is part of the educational offerings available in the community
- is a practical and proven means of spreading the knowledge, story and teachings of Christ’s message especially as families and parishes need to work harder at enculturation

From notes taken from keynote speaker Dr Peter Tannock at the Catholic Education Office Melbourne Staff Seminar held at the Catholic Leadership Centre on 19 July 2013 in Melbourne.

### Vote for the common good: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

With a federal election this year, the Australian Bishops have issued a timely statement. The statement is based on the principles of Catholic social teaching, such as protection of human dignity, respect for human life and a preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. Far from focusing on political parties or ideologies, the Bishops encourage us to take our democratic freedoms seriously. They remind us that, as Christians, we should be focused on what most contributes to and protects the common good.

### Making communication with VCSPB easier

Has your school activated its very own reserved VCSPB email account?

To facilitate communication with parents the VCSPB has established a reserved email account for each Catholic school in Victoria.

This email account is already available for your school but requires the addition of a password by the SINA administrator in your school.

A forwarding address may be added into this email account so that future emails are sent automatically to your VCSPB contact person or school board Chair.

If assistance is required in adding the password or forwarding address, please contact the Catholic Education Office Melbourne ICT Helpdesk on 03 9267 0422 or ictsupport@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au.
PARENT SEMINAR SERIES 2013

RAISING MIGHTY BOYS

Presenter: Michael Grose
Tuesday 10 September  St Joseph’s, Yarra Junction
Thursday 12 September  St Cecilia’s, Glen Iris

THE SECRETS OF HAPPY, CREATIVE, CONFIDENT AND COMPETENT KIDS

Presenter: Andrew Fuller
Monday 14 October  St Mary’s, St Kilda East

A FOR ATTITUDE TO POSITIVE PARENTING

Presenter: Julie Davey
Tuesday 17 September  St Lawrence, Derrimut

HOW TO STAY IN TOUCH ON THE ADOLESCENT ROLLER COASTER

Presenter: Bill Jennings
Tuesday 20 August  Kilbreda College, Mentone
Tuesday 3 September  Thomas Carr College, Tarneit

DAUGHTERS AND DADS

Presenter: Bill Jennings
Thursday 5 September  Ave Maria College, Aberfeldie

The Catholic Education Office Melbourne holds seminars across the Archdiocese of Melbourne for parents, carers and guardians of students in Catholic primary and secondary schools.

Various topics to assist with issues that arise during the course of a child’s school age years are addressed and discussed.

Seminars run from 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm
Cost $10 per person

More information
For further information or to register please contact your school or:

CEOM, Parent Seminar Series Coordinator
Doug Sandiford
Phone: 9267 0228
Email: parentseminar@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au

VCSPB annual General meeting

When: Monday 25 November 2013
Time: 6.00 pm – 6.30 pm
Location: Catholic Leadership Centre
Cnr Victoria Parade and Hoddle Street
East Melbourne

RSVP by 12 November 2013 to: secretary@vcspb.catholic.edu.au

A key objective of the VCSPB Council for 2013 is to seek support from each school by requesting a registered contact person. The role of the School Contact is to:

• ensure the dedicated VCSPB contact email address (vcspbcontact@schooldomain.catholic.edu.au) is activated.
• take any communication from the VCSPB to the school board (or where no board exists, to the parent support group acknowledged as such by the principal)
• communicate with the VCSPB on behalf of the school board (or the acknowledged parent support group)

If you have not yet indicated your school contact person, or if your school contact person has changed, you are invited to submit the information below.

SCHOOL CONTACT PERSON:

NAME ........................................................................................................................................................................

EMAIL ADDRESS .................................................................................................................. SCHOOL E NO. ......................

SCHOOL NAME ........................................................................................................ SCHOOL LOCATION ..............................................

TICK ONE:

☐ School board member
☐ Member of parent support group

NAME OF GROUP ..............................................................................................................................

EMAIL: secret@vcspb.catholic.edu.au or FAX: 9415 9325 to the VCSPB.