



PARENT FOCUS

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President's Message

We continue to promote and protect, to the best of our ability, the interests, rights and responsibilities of Catholic school parents & children in a range of areas, including appropriate educational provision, positive school/community relationships and partnerships, public funding and financial accessibility.

This work is done via various submissions, policy development responses, delegations, meetings and through our membership on a wide range of bodies, such as the Catholic Education Commission and its Standing Committees, the Curriculum Council, the WA College of Teaching, the Rural & Remote Education Advisory Council and many others.

Parents are invited to continue to contact us regarding issues of mutual interest or concern which arise from time to time.

We also encourage your valued participation in the remaining Regional Seminars, the AGM & Conference session, Annual Mass & Dinner (details on page 4).

With Best Wishes to you in the vitally important work you do with your own children and in your school communities.

Chris Morris

Please circulate copies of this Newsletter to as many parents and key school community members as possible - it can also be downloaded from our website www.pff.wa.edu.au

CHECK OUT OUR 'NEW LOOK'

WEBSITE www.pff.wa.edu.au upgraded by **MONK MEDIA**.

Email paul@monk.com.au if you need website assistance.

New to our **Homepage** is a 'blog' for parents in our schools to comment on, discuss and network with others on issues of interest and/or concern which affect them and their children. We invite you to **Have Your Say** on current hot topics such as full time Kindy and 3 yr old education - **email us** at info@pff.wa.edu.au with topics of interest for inclusion in the 'blog'.

The upgraded Website will be launched around late April

Executive Director's Message

* **We welcome** our new Admin. Assistant, Claire Duncan, the former Executive Officer of the Catholic Schools' Performing Arts Festival (now Catholic Arts), who has recently commenced working with us 2 days a week, while my Secretary, Sue Collins, has reduced her time to 4 days a week. We can each be emailed at "name"@pff.wa.edu.au

* **Shortly**, Catholic School Principals will be surveying their communities to try to ascertain the level of any parental demand for full time Kindergarten provision for 4 yr olds and for learning programs for 3 yr olds - keep an eye out for the survey forms.

* **Recently**, there have been suggestions that the Federal Govt.

might extend its SES (Socio Economic Status)-based non-govt school funding model to govt schools. It would, of course, be very interesting to see an SES ranking of govt schools, which presently are almost fully-funded by State Govts (i.e., taxpayers), and there are, no doubt, some govt schools which need additional resources, but these are the Constitutional responsibility of State & Territory Govts.

The Commonwealth only entered the schools funding arena, via the Gorton/Fraser Govt in 1970, to try to partly redress the grossly inadequate levels of funding of **non-govt** school students by **State** Govts, which still only allocate 8% or 9% of their recurrent schooling expenditure to the 33.5% of students who attend non-govt schools. The **re-allocation** of **existing** Federal funding of the govt school sector according to a needs-based SES formula would be logical and equitable, but any proposal to markedly increase **Federal** funding for the (already fully-taxpayer-funded) **govt** school sector would need to be accompanied by a water-tight Commonwealth/State agreement to guarantee greatly improved levels of **State** funding for Catholic and other **non-govt** school students.

Otherwise we will **continue** to be the poor relations experiencing an ever-widening govt/non-govt school public spending gap.

Laurie Eastwood

PFFWA NEWS/EVENTS

PFFWA Seminars

Remaining 2008 Seminars:

- * North Metro Regional Seminar-
Tuesday 6/5/08 at St. Anthony's School, Wanneroo
- * South Metro Regional Seminar-
Tuesday 13/5/08 at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School, Hilton

CEO/PFFWA meeting 17/3/08

Items discussed included:-

- (a) CEO position/policies on School Camps, School Balls, education re Binge Drinking
- (b) Early Childhood Education issues and implementation
- (c) Proposed Review of School Board Constitution
- (d) Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (see column 2)

Mercy College, Koondoola Multicultural Festival

Our Executive Director, Laurie Eastwood, attended the Festival on Saturday 29 March and was very impressed with the level of organisation and the wide range of food, music & entertainment provided from various ethnic perspectives. For great pictures go to www.mercy.wa.edu.au and click on 'newsletters'

Grants info is available at www.ourcommunity.com.au/easygrantsplus

In recent times the PFFWA has acted as the Incorporated Auspicing body for a number of schools/ P&F Associations/ Parent Councils which were successful in obtaining various Grants for their school communities - from Lotterywest, City/Shire Councils, Office of Multicultural Interests, etc. - to fund the purchase of sporting equipment, assistance with costs of conducting **Multicultural events**, etc.-contact us for similar help.

JOB VACANCIES

Are you interested in contributing your ideas, energy and enthusiasm, together with a team of other dedicated parents on the PFFWA Council, to have input into committees, working parties and other organisations within and around the Catholic & wider education systems? The PFFWA has been the **independent voice of Catholic school parents in WA since 1954**. Would you like to be an observer at our next monthly Council meeting on **Thursday 1 May at 5.45pm** at our office, **1st Floor, 101 Wood Street, Inglewood (above St. Peter's Primary School)?** Phone Laurie, Sue or Claire on 9271 5909 or contact your Association's P&F Regional Councillor for more information or a Council nomination form.

Information Corner

AuSSI - WA

The **Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative** commenced some time ago to promote 'environmental sustainability' education in all Australian schools.

AuSSI is an umbrella structure to existing sustainability initiatives – eg., Wastewise & Waterwise. PFFWA was invited to contribute to the WA model through input from stakeholders in Catholic Education. This is a great opportunity to contribute to something positive! Several government departments and other education sectors are also contributing. Please consider viewing the website:

<http://www.sustainschools.wa.edu.au/>

World Youth Day 2008

WYD, the largest youth event in the world, will be in Sydney 15 to 20 July 2008. Homestay info at www.wyd2008.org Metro hotels also have special rates for WYD 2008 at www.MetroHotels.com.au

Catholic Library of WA

A large collection of Books and Audiovisual materials is available from www.ceo.wa.edu.au / email catholic.library@ceo.wa.edu.au

Hear **Kathryn Robbie** on the **Family Prayer Crusade:** 7pm, 18/4/08, Floreat Parish and on the **Catholics Returning Home Program:** 9.30am - 2.30pm 19/4/08, East Vic Park Parish. For more info phone Thea Hackett on 9458 3724 or go to www.bne.catholic.net.au/crh

UNIMA 2008 Congress & World Puppetry Festival

Recently, 'Jenny & the Crunchkin Crew' participated in the PD Workshops at the Perth Concert Hall. Jenny's Therapeutic Puppetry has to be seen to be believed. Visit www.pff.wa.edu.au - look for the Resilience & the Home/School Partnerships brochure for Jenny's presentation details - or email her at crunchkin@optusnet.com.au

B.T.R.S. - July 3&4, 2008

The Western Australian College of Teaching - the Board of which our Executive Director, Laurie Eastwood, is a member - will conduct its annual Beginning & Returning Teachers' Seminar at the Burswood Convention Centre. This outstanding PD event usually attracts 400/500 new and returning teachers, who are encouraged to register online by 13 June 2008 at www.wacot.wa.edu.au

Australian Family Assoc.
Annual Conference 18/10/08
Ph. 93212333 /www.family.org.au

2008 Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards

Supported by the Australian Government, these awards are an activity associated with National Literacy and Numeracy Week (1-7 September) with a National prize Presentation Ceremony in Gunnedah, NSW, on 5 Sept. 2008. This year's competition has an environmental theme, and entries close on **2 June 2008**.

Award entry forms and information on poetry writing, resource notes for teachers and judges' reports are available at www.dorothea.com.au

The Parents Jury

The Parents Jury is a web-based forum for parents who wish to express their views and collectively advocate for the improvement of children's food and physical activity environments in Australia.

The Parents Jury advocates around the issues of children's nutrition, healthy food in schools, reduced food marketing to kids, improved physical activity environments and healthy supermarket checkouts.

Jury members can have their say on these issues through opinion polls and advocacy campaigns, participating in the online forum and even becoming a media trained Jury spokesperson.

Membership of the Parents Jury is free and open to all Australian parents, grandparents and guardians of children aged 18 and under. Join online today by visiting www.parentsjury.org.au

Family/School/Community Partnership Bureau

Speaking at the six-monthly National Parent Forum hosted by the Dept of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) at Parliament House, Canberra on 18 February, the Education Minister, Hon Julia Gillard MP, announced joint funding of **\$800,000** over 4 years to the Australian Parents Council (APC) and the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) to establish a Family/School and Community Partnership Bureau.

The Minister expressed strong recognition of the key role parents play in bridging the educational experience children receive at school and at home, and of the research which shows that schools with a high level of parent and community involvement achieve improved student learning, attendance and behaviour.

She said the Govt will therefore provide funding to the two key national parent bodies, APC & ACSSO, to conduct research and develop pilot programmes to ensure schools are more welcoming to parents and the broader community, and to promote effective partnerships which will improve students' learning experiences / outcomes.

The 2008 School

Marketers' Conference will be held in Perth on October 8 & 9. Brochures are available from info@marketingschools.net

Term Dates - 2008

Term 2 : April 28 - July 4

Term 3 : July 21 - Sept 26

Term 4 : Oct 13 - Dec 16

Councillors' Profiles

Two new Councillors who joined us in late 2007 are:-

Patsy Di Prinzio (2007-)

Patsy and Claude have four children aged 4 to 14 years - at Our Lady of Fatima PS, Palmyra & Santa Maria College, Attadale. They have been involved in the P&F Assoc. and/or the Board at OLF over the past 8/9 years, apart from a 2 year stint in Texas from 2004.

Patsy's earlier employment was as a Mathematical Statistician and she has degrees in Stats and Maths & Computing.

At OLF she has been involved in a number of Art & Craft activities and various freelance projects, as well as with the Playgroup and the Children's Liturgy of the Word team at OLF Parish.

Patsy has also recently taken on the role of PFFWA representative on the AuSSI-WA Committee.

Liz van den Heuvel (2007-)

Liz and Clive have three sons aged 5 to 10 years, who also attend Our Lady of Fatima PS, Palmyra. She has served on the P&F Assoc. Committee and is presently on a school Sustainability Committee encouraging care for the environment through recycling, reducing and reusing waste products.

Liz has a Diploma of Teaching and taught for several years at Mary's Mount P.S., Gooseberry Hill, and St. Columba's P.S., South Perth. She has also studied Basic Counselling and would like to complete a Bachelor of Education in due course.

In the meantime, her interests include her family, Early Childhood Education, reading, swimming and bike riding.

State Budget Funding Submission

Below is a Summary of the Requests included in PFFWA's 5 September 2007 Funding Submission forwarded to the Minister for Education and Training, Hon. Mark McGowan MLA, with copies also sent to all State MPs:-

- (i) *an increase from 9.2% to 10.3% in the proportion of the State's total recurrent spending on schools currently allocated to the 32.7% of WA's total school population who attend Catholic and other non-government schools - to restore the govt/non-govt per pupil funding relativity to 2001/2 levels, when our 29.0% of the school population received 9.1% of the funds (at an estimated annual cost of approximately \$32m).*
- (ii) *an urgent review of the AGSRC (Average Government Schools Recurrent Cost) formula and its components, to ensure that this benchmark figure (used to calculate our children's funding entitlements) properly reflects total, real, average per pupil costs in government schools, and a reconciliation between the AGSRC figures (currently around \$7800 per pupil) and actual Budget spending (approx. \$11050 per pupil in 2007/8).*
- (iii) *a gradual increase in the Government's minimum recurrent funding commitment for each non-govt school pupil, from 25% up to 30% of the current AGSRC.*
- (iv) *an increase from \$25m. to \$40m. in the amount of funds available to the non-govt sector each year under the Low Interest Loans Scheme (LILS) - with a commensurate increase from \$15m. to \$25m. in the Catholic sector's annual proportion of these funds - and the introduction of a supplementary \$1 for \$1 (Government/Community) Capital Grants scheme (at an estimated annual cost of approx. \$25m. - \$30m.), and*
- (v) *further increases in the currently inadequate level of State funding for the large majority of non-govt school Children with Disabilities and Special Needs.*

All of the legitimate and very reasonable improvements sought in the Federation's Submission could be funded easily from the State's rapidly escalating annual savings which result from the fact that 123216 students currently attend non-govt schools in WA at an average saving to the State (i.e., a govt/non-govt spending gap) of \$7674 per pupil, resulting in total savings of \$945m in 2007/8.

We trust that these matters will be seriously considered in the framing of the 2008/9 pre-election State Budget.

PARENTS & FRIENDS' FEDERATION OF WA INC.

encourages members of Catholic School Communities & Parishes to participate in our

**54th Annual General Meeting &
Conference session on Early Childhood Education issues
7pm, Wednesday 18 June 2008
at the Federation office
1st Floor, 101 Wood St, Inglewood**

**2008 Annual Conference Mass
5.45pm, Saturday 21 June
at St. Thomas More Chapel, Stirling Highway, Crawley**

**2008 Annual Conference Dinner
7 for 7.30pm, Saturday 21 June
Royal Perth Yacht Club, Matilda Bay, Crawley**

More info at www.pff.wa.edu.au