

Catholic Education

Today



CATHOLIC
EDUCATION
MELBOURNE



NAPLAN and
school funding

TERM 2, 2017

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AND COURAGE

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Holy Spirit Prayer

Saint Augustine (Loyola Press)

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,
That my thoughts may all be holy.
Act in me, O Holy Spirit,
That my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,
That I love but what is holy.
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,
To defend all that is holy.
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit,
That I always may be holy.

Amen.



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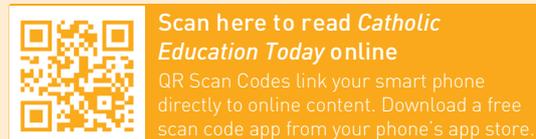
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From the Executive Director



Stephen Elder
Executive Director

Catholic schools are part of a mission dating back over two centuries: a mission to provide an education imbued with the Church's values of compassion and charity to whoever wants it. Because of this sense of service we have always sought to make our schools as accessible and affordable as possible. Suddenly, this is all under threat.

For more than 50 years successive federal governments, Liberal and Labor, have recognised the work of Catholic schools and helped them in their mission. Under the new 10-year funding plan of Malcolm Turnbull and Simon Birmingham this all seems set to change.

The federal Government currently funds Catholic schools as if they were all the one big school, averaging out student support across the entire Catholic education system. This method of funding schools is known as a system-weighted average, and was recommended by the Gonski Review.

Averaging out government funding for students across the system means Catholic schools can average out parent fees, particularly at a primary level, providing a saving to many families while still providing the special programs that meet the distinctive needs of individual school communities.

The Government now plans to replace the existing method, and effectively treat Catholic schools as if they were independent schools. This will mean funding for individual Catholic schools will be determined using each school's individual Socio-Economic Status or 'SES' scores, a bureaucratic yardstick.

Catholic education has presented Senator Birmingham with compelling research that SES scores are biased in favour of wealthier families by underestimating how much they can afford to pay in fees. Meanwhile, the financial means of lower and middle income families is overestimated.

This change also comes with an expectation that parents will be charged fees based on their school's SES score. There is no evidence anywhere across Australia that parish schools can set fees at the level the government will expect and remain viable.

We're not alone in our concerns about SES. The architect of the SES model, Professor Stephen Farish recently said that 'the SES scoring system is outdated and needs to be reviewed ... It is clearly not working at the top end for the more prestigious schools ... It is clearly time to overhaul it.'

The new model will also lead to a massive funding cut for students with disability. Based on the government's proposals and current data, funding for students with disability in Victorian Catholic schools will halve over the next decade.

In total, Catholic schools will see funding for students with disability fall by 17% over the same period.

Parents have a part to play in this debate. We need you to write to the Education Minister Simon Birmingham to tell him that his funding package needs work. Visit www.cem.edu.au/funding for more information. ✦

Sorting Out the Funding Facts

What the Turnbull Government's *Quality Schools* Funding Package Means for Catholic Schools



Since its release at the start of May there has been extensive media coverage of the Turnbull Government's new education funding package, *Quality Schools*, and what it means for Catholic schools.

As is often the case with political matters there have been exaggerations and distortions in some reporting, so it is important that the members of our Catholic education family know the facts.

The Catholic education authorities around Australia believe the government's proposals are a direct attack on the independence of the Catholic school system and the right of parents to choose a values-based education for their children that will lead to an increase in fees.

At the moment, federal funding for Victorian Catholic schools is allocated using what is known as a system-weighted average or 'one big school' model. A committee, consisting of school principals, finance officers and other Catholic education leaders consult with schools, to distribute funds across schools on a basis designed to meet their individual needs and

circumstances. This enables Catholic education to provide additional funding to meet the cost of special needs – such as a high proportion of students from non-English speaking backgrounds – that could inflate the fees at one individual school by sharing the load across the system, keeping fees to a minimum in all our schools.

The government wants to do away with this and has introduced a system focused on individual schools and their social-economic status or 'SES' scores, a statistical measure that is supposed to represent the 'capacity to contribute' of school communities – the ability of parents to pay fees.

Catholic education believes SES scores are fundamentally flawed and overstate the ability of Catholic school families to pay and has provided the government with detailed research in support of this position. It's also worthwhile noting that while the government says it is fully implementing the findings of the Gonski review of school funding, the final Gonski report recommended the development of a replacement measure for SES scores 'as soon as possible'.

As individual schools, an SES score-focused funding system will rob Catholic education of its ability to assist schools with their special needs the way it currently can *and* will increase fee pressure.

It's important to note that the government's proposals are not yet law. We hope that with other members of the Catholic education family right around the country we will be able to persuade the Coalition to amend its planned measures or the opposition and other parties to block them in the Senate.

You, too, can play your part in this and we urge all parents to carefully read and act on the material being provided to principals and school communities on how each of you can make your voice heard and help fight fee increases. Visit www.cem.edu.au/funding for more information.

Catholic schools are not crying out for any special deal. Instead, all we are asking for are funding arrangements that are fair and equitable and in the best interests of our schools and their school communities. ✦

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Pentecost –

A Gift of Courage

We have just celebrated Pentecost, the feast of the Holy Spirit – a great feast of the Catholic Church.

Every year Archbishop Denis Hart, the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, releases a 'Pentecost Letter to Youth'. This year his letter reflects on one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit: courage. It could be a great conversation starter with your teenage daughters and sons and, though it is directed at secondary students, its themes could easily be discussed with younger children.

In *Be Courageous*, Archbishop Hart asks young people to think about real-life heroes and examples of courage. He points to Jesus, who chose to live a courageous life. Jesus had the courage to listen to God's will for his life, and the courage to do what he believed to be right, no matter what others thought. For Jesus, living courageously meant caring for those in need and acting with gentleness, not force. It meant being 'willing to sacrifice ourselves for others', he writes.

At Pentecost, Jesus 'sent us his Spirit to live in us', as he promised in the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit lives deep inside all of us, giving us courage and boldness if we will only open ourselves to its presence. And this Holy Spirit, writes Archbishop Hart, 'must be given away to others who so need Christ in their lives'.

As parents we want our children to *be courageous* – to stand up for what they believe when their friends disagree or people ridicule them, to be true to themselves despite the temptation to go along with someone else's ideas of what they should do.

As Christians we want our children to have the courage to be disciples of Jesus. In today's world, it's not easy to be Christian, to live Christian values when so much in society challenges them with alternatives that seem (superficially) more attractive. We want our children to, in the words of Pope Francis, 'have the courage to be alternative'. We want our children to have the courage to stand for those in need – the bullied, the sick and elderly, those who are discriminated against, refugees and asylum seekers, the lost and the lonely – and do something to support them.



At World Youth Day in Krakow last year, Pope Francis issued a challenge to young people:

My friends, Jesus is the Lord of risk ... Jesus is not the Lord of comfort, security and ease. Following Jesus demands a good dose of courage, a readiness to trade in the sofa for a pair of walking shoes and to set out on new and uncharted paths.

Archbishop Hart calls on young people to have 'the courage to pray and ask God to reveal his dream' for them – and to have the courage to follow that dream. It will take 'commitment, perseverance and sacrifice', but 'the Holy Spirit of courage' will be with them on the journey.

Pentecost celebrates a change, a transition, in the disciples: after Easter they began to understand more fully who Jesus is and who we are meant to be until, with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they embrace the courage to share this understanding with the world. Pentecost is an invitation to us too, to open ourselves to the power of the Holy Spirit and to embrace the courage to live the gospel more fully. ✦

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For Jesus, living courageously meant caring for those in need and acting with gentleness, not force.
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The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne has a range of resources related to this letter available at www.cam.org.au/youthletter.



Developing Virtuous Children: *Fortitude*

This is the second in a series of four articles, which explores the virtues of temperance (self-control), fortitude (courage), justice (giving to others what is rightly theirs) and prudence (good judgement), and how to foster these virtues in our children.

“ Encouraging children faced with a challenging homework task is another way that parents can help develop this virtue. ”

In Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation, *The Joy of Love*, released in March 2016, he dedicated a chapter to ‘The Better Education of Children’ where he speaks about the role that parents play in nurturing faith and virtues in their children.

Fortitude, also known as courage, involves firmness and constancy in pursuing what is good despite difficulties. It is resisting the appeal of the easy way out in favour of doing things properly, which is generally more difficult and, not infrequently, unpopular. Put another way, it involves not taking an easy option because of a higher and nobler goal. In *The Joy of Love* Pope Francis writes: ‘We have to arrive at the point where the good that the intellect grasps can take root in us as a profound affective inclination, as a thirst for the good that outweighs other attractions.’ Essentially fortitude is the habit of not losing our composure or peace of heart when there are difficulties, fear or discouragement.

For parents trying to develop this virtue, it is important to encourage and help children to understand that ‘conquering fear’ doesn’t discount the possibility that things can go wrong or badly. Parents can help their children to see that good and worthwhile achievements involve some risk or personal cost. It is reaching a higher or greater good that makes the difficult task worthwhile. Helpful ways to do this might include watching great athletes in their sport and discussing with children the hard

work and sacrifice that athletes may have endured in reaching their ‘professional’ or ‘elite’ status; listening to beautiful and inspiring music together and discussing the hours of practice that this would have involved; or working through a difficult task around the home and reflecting on the satisfaction of having ‘conquered’ the problem. Encouraging children faced with a challenging homework task is another way that parents can help develop this virtue.

We also need to ask whether we as parents are modelling fortitude. For instance, rather than giving up or getting angry when situations get difficult, do we demonstrate different ways in which we can calmly solve the dilemma? Have we asked others for their advice or assistance? Have we done some research to see whether there are alternatives? Are we able to explain to our children that this is a challenge that needs to be overcome, and it’s important enough to keep going? Children learn what they live, so if they see parents able to make commitments, stick to goals and work diligently toward them, in spite of adversity or challenges, there is a higher chance that they will adopt and model that behaviour. †

Strong Women in *Leadership*

It's not unusual for siblings to enter the same profession, but sisters Denise and Noelene Hussey have taken their commitment to teaching all the way to principalship. Denise (Principal of St Michael's School, North Melbourne) and Noelene (Principal of St Anne's School, Sunbury) share with us what it means to them to lead Catholic primary schools in the 21st century.

Is this where you thought you'd be?

DENISE: I went from this to that and then came to teaching and didn't think when I started that I would last more than four or five years. But Noelene was always going to be a principal. She used to teach me out in the chicken shed and send me out because I was talking. Noelene has been a massive influence and inspiration for me and helped me get through my first year as a principal.

NOELENE: I was a deputy principal at a school, and my principal there said I should apply for principalship, and I just laughed at her ... and then I got the job. That was about 18 years ago and it's been such a privilege. There's so much trust put in by parents, and catering for students with special needs and seeing success there is really satisfying.



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We don't just focus on [the child's] cognitive needs, but also their spiritual, physical, social and emotional development.
”

DENISE HUSSEY

Principals Denise (left) and Noelene Hussey

What do you like most about working in a Catholic school?

NOELENE: I like the community aspect of our work and working in partnership with our families to make sure our students can get the best education they possibly can. Developing relationships with families and learning their stories is very important. It's about giving a sense of hope, not only to our students but also to our staff and families.

DENISE: It's that the child is at the centre of all that we do. We don't just focus on their cognitive needs, but also their spiritual, physical, social and emotional development. It's all about the relationships we develop with all those who are part of our community.

A Catholic educator requires ...

DENISE: As leaders we have to have high expectations and set high expectations in our learning. These expectations go hand in hand with the way we treat and respect each other.

NOELENE: Empathy, humility, understanding, a sense of justice, care and respect. It's important to have a sense of the wonder and awe of how special our kids are and their relationship with God and their community.

The greatest challenge for parents today...

DENISE: Understanding life in contemporary Australia can be challenging for families arriving here, and their experiences can be very different to how their children experience school. In schools we've gone down a path with technology, and it's a balancing act with families who may not have the same sort of access to technology. With children exposed to so much information it's hard to bring them back to the importance of spending time with each other.

NOELENE: Parents are really time poor, and mum and dad are often working, so it's a challenge to have family time to spend together. We're in such a materialistic world, and kids want the latest of everything and it can be hard for parents to keep up with everything. It puts a lot of added pressure on families.

By the time I retire...

DENISE: This is my first principalship and there's been a challenge to rebuild numbers at the school, so I'd like to see St Michael's as a school as first choice for families in our community. But there's so much more I still want to do and there's still so much to learn. The families in our schools really value our teachers and that's something I want to continue building on. At St Michael's our theme is 'Good Today, Better Tomorrow' and by the time I leave I would like to think that this will be the culture driving our school forward.

NOELENE: I'd like to see our teaching profession seen in a more positive light and held in high esteem in our community. Our teachers work hard and always want the best for their students. There are more and more demands put on them each day and this needs to be recognised by all. ✦

Who's Afraid of

NAPLAN?

As our world of the 21st century has become more tightly integrated through technology, so it has also become ever more competitive. In many ways this is a good thing, because competition drives technological progress and economic prosperity. But, like most things in life, moderation is key, and any positive thing is transformed into a negative if taken to excess.

“ACARA has gone to great lengths to reassure parents that the test has little bearing on the long-term academic outlook for their children.”

NAPLAN, the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy was introduced in 2008 by then-federal education minister Julia Gillard, and was designed as a system of diagnostic testing for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. It is meant to provide parents and teachers with a snapshot in time of how individual children are performing in the key areas of numeracy and literacy. The data also provide state and territory governments with information on the effectiveness of particular programs in schools and to identify areas that are in need of improvement.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Agency (ACARA), which administers NAPLAN, has gone to great lengths to reassure parents that the test has little bearing on the long-term academic outlook for their children:

The best way you can help your child prepare for NAPLAN is to reassure your child that NAPLAN tests are just one part of their school program, and to urge them to simply do the best they can on the day. The use of services by coaching providers is not recommended.

Nonetheless, recently we've seen multiple articles in the media on high levels of NAPLAN-related stress among students. The *Herald Sun* has reported on acute levels of anxiety among Australian students by comparison to their global peers. A study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and



Students at St Peter's School in South West Sunshine

Development (OECD) in 72 countries found that '90 per cent of Australian 15-year-olds want to get top marks', and that parents 'often pay substantial tuition fees and expect their children to gain admission to top-tier universities'. It also noted that 'teachers may emphasise the need to do well on a test to gain access to better jobs or university'.

Anxiety levels in NSW have increased as a result of the recent decision by the New South Wales government to require a minimum NAPLAN threshold for entry into university-oriented high school courses. Education Minister Rob Stokes announced that students with sub-par NAPLAN scores will 'have to pass additional online tests' to be eligible for the NSW high school certificate.

An article that ran in the *Daily Telegraph* under the title 'Stress for Students in a Class of its Own' related how 'worried parents are frantically turning to private tutors to help their kids cram for the NAPLAN exam'. These extracurricular sessions often involve expensive private seminars on weekends and over school holidays. One seminar provider charges \$440 for a four-day NAPLAN seminar focused on Year 9 students.

Victoria has so far declined to implement a NSW-style NAPLAN requirement for entry into our VCE.

>> CONTINUED PAGE 8



Teacher Elloise Pellissier helping her students in the classroom

“ Excessive focus on NAPLAN can have a narrowing impact on school curriculum at the expense of science, history, art and other subjects that contribute to the fostering of well-rounded students. ”

Principal Karen Bergin, at St Peter's School, South West Sunshine, believes that anxiety surrounding NAPLAN is unhelpful.

'We talk to our families about how this is only one moment in time. If someone hasn't succeeded as well as the parents had hoped, there are probably reasons around that, and it can be around anxiety. Anxiety is becoming, as we know, a very big issue for our children and for our parents as well,' Ms Bergin said.

Excessive focus on NAPLAN can have a narrowing impact on school curriculum at the expense of science, history, art and other subjects that contribute to the fostering of well-rounded students. An overly test-centred education system can impede the development of children who are resilient, compassionate, well-adjusted, ethical creative entrepreneurial thinkers.

This is a phenomenon that is of particular concern to Catholic education, which has as its focus the full flourishing of each student across religious, physical, cognitive, emotional and social domains. This 'broad brush' approach to child development is central to Catholic Education Melbourne's *Horizons of Hope* educational framework.

'NAPLAN does not replace the much deeper, more sophisticated and more frequent formative or summative assessments of student learning done by school teachers, nor does it provide judgment on how "good" a student, teacher or school might be,' said Dr Bronwyn Hinz of the Mitchell Institute for Education Policy. NAPLAN's use as a diagnostic tool for individual students is also limited by the fact that its results are only released in October – towards the end of the school year.

Christ the King School in Braybrook received a 'substantially above average gains' letter from ACARA for the second year in a row in 2017. This letter is sent to schools that have demonstrated that their NAPLAN results from Years 3 to 5 and from Years 7 to 9 for that particular cohort of students have shown increases significantly above the state average for that year for either literacy or numeracy, or both. There were 18 schools across the Archdiocese of Melbourne to receive the letter in 2017.

Christ the King's results did not come as a surprise to many of the teachers at the school. 'We've gotten better at looking at where kids are right now, and measuring where we want them to go. We help them to set goals, working with parents to see what the goal is and what they can do to work on at home,' said Year 5/6 teacher, Lucy Dinoto.

A couple of years ago the school, working in partnership with Catholic Education Melbourne, identified areas indicated by their NAPLAN results that they felt needed to improve. One change they made was to include opportunities for sustained silent reading and reading for pleasure. 'The kids love it,' said Year 3/4 teacher, Vikki Benson, 'I just have to say it's "Just Right Reading" time and they're there, there's no "settle down, stop talking", they just love the time.'

And although changes included new programs, in an already-packed curriculum, the changes were also about assessing what needed to be removed to make space.

'There were some things that we had to make decisions about, and say "is this working for us, where's the proof, and if it isn't working for us then we have to let it go" and know that that was going to be ok. That was really a challenging time, but I think it was important to be honest about what we were doing and what our practices were, and whether it was having an impact or not. And they were big decisions to make,' said Ms Dinoto.

The staff spoke highly about their collegiality and the importance of supporting one another through these changes, and the importance of parent engagement.

Principal Brendan Gill was quick to note that while there is a lot of hype around NAPLAN in the media, echoed at times by the parents, it was nothing that causes too much stress at his school, 'My expectation here is that the teachers are very supportive of the kids and NAPLAN is something that's just an everyday event and you do your best,' he said.

Another recipient of the ACARA letter, at St Paul's School in Sunshine West, Principal Damian Casamento believes the school's Family-School Partnerships program has played a big part in his school's achievements.

'We've done a lot of work in the last two years looking at homework. We call it "learning at home". It's not about giving sheets and sheets of paper to do at home, it's about experiencing things with the family. And it's more than just parents coming on an excursion or coming to watch an assembly; it's about parents engaging.'

When asked about anxiety in parents and students, Mr Casamento noted that 'We don't see a lot of anxiety. I tell the staff, I want the kids to be able to do the test, in terms of understanding how to complete the test. But I don't want it to be a huge focus. I don't want the kids so anxious and worked up about it that they can't do it.'

That said, the staff of St Paul's were proud when they heard what the students had achieved, 'I tell the kids at the start of the year, "I want you to be the best you can be", and that's sort of the mantra we have here and the staff all get on board, and work hard with our community, so we are all very proud of the achievement,' said Mr Casamento. ✦

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My expectation here is that the teachers are very supportive of the kids and NAPLAN is something that's just an everyday event and you do your best.

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BRENDAN GILL
PRINCIPAL
CHRIST THE KING SCHOOL,
BRAYBROOK

Arual completing
a NAPLAN test



Seventeen schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne received a letter from ACARA this year, indicating that last year's students had achieved significantly above average gains between their Year 3 and Year 5 results (for primary schools) or between their Year 7 and Year 9 results (for secondary schools). We congratulate the staff and students in these and all Catholic schools for their hard work.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Both Numeracy and Literacy

- Christ the King Primary School, Braybrook
- St John Bosco's School, Niddie
- Holy Eucharist School, St Albans
- St John's School, Mitcham
- St Peter's School, Clayton
- St Gerard's School, Dandenong North.

Literacy

- St Monica's School, Footscray
- St Joseph's Primary School, Boronia
- St Augustine's School, Frankston South.

Numeracy

- Corpus Christi School, Kingsville
- St Paul's School, Sunshine West
- St Peter's School, Sunshine South West
- Christ the King School, Newcomb
- St Joseph's School, Springvale
- St Anthony's School, Noble Park.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Numeracy

- Simonds Catholic College, West Melbourne
- St Kevin's College, Toorak.

Note: Our Lady Help of Christians School in East Brunswick did not receive the letter for above average gains, but in 2017 is celebrating five consecutive years of above average results in both Years 3 and 5. ✦

How Can Parents *Change* Their Perception of NAPLAN?

NAPLAN is now complete for another year. With all the discussion in the media surrounding the implementation of NAPLAN online, how do we as parents acknowledge that NAPLAN has a role to play in school improvement and accept that tests are a reality in schools and that throughout their lives, our children will be constantly tested and challenged in many areas of their personal and professional lives? The VCSPB sought reflections from one parent who had previously experienced NAPLAN and another just beginning the NAPLAN journey with her children.

By Tracy Connors, VCSPB Council Member

As a mother of five, NAPLAN was high on my list of 'need-to-knows' when sending my children to primary school. There is so much information, misinformation and unknowns surrounding it, especially for parents who haven't experienced it before. So with my eldest twins in Year 3 and facing NAPLAN for the first time, I needed to do my research and, interestingly, there was a chasm between perception and reality.

Through my research, I found that NAPLAN can provide benefits to both the student and school alike. Individual results can be used to identify areas for improvement or extension for that child. Results can also provide invaluable information for a school. A school can look at the results in isolation within a year level. It can also look at a year level cohort as it moves through the school by comparing their initial results from Year 3 to those when they are in Year 5. This helps inform the school about program strengths and weaknesses and areas for change.



“NAPLAN is just one of many assessments conducted throughout a year. Is it appropriate to judge a school by their NAPLAN results and therefore place such significance on that one test?”

I can see how some schools may place greater importance on NAPLAN than others, as these results are publicly available through the *My School* website – the data there may provide a level of influence. If you had a choice, would you send your child to a school that has predominantly red results, when there's a school down the road that has predominantly green results? How does the lower performing school compete for enrolments in that situation?

But then also ask, is a lower-performing result on NAPLAN necessarily a low-performing school for the remainder of the year? Consider what other factors are important to you as a parent when choosing a school. NAPLAN is just one of many assessments conducted throughout a year. Is it appropriate to judge a school by their NAPLAN results and therefore place such significance on that one test? Aren't there other important factors in assessing a school, such as its teachers, its behaviour management, wellbeing programs, subject choices and most importantly the culture of the school among other qualities, in determining the right school and the right fit for your child?

Parents may receive a level of comfort from a school in having an opportunity to compare their own internal assessments to the externally assessed NAPLAN for consistency of results. If your child is at a school where the teachers are regularly assessing the students, and know their students well, it will be rare for there to be an unexpected result. However, if this is something you do experience, it provides an opportunity for parents and the teacher to come together and identify what factors may have attributed to the result and how to support the child's improvement in those areas.

As a parent new to NAPLAN, I have recently seen my children go through their first experience of the test. Now we wait. While waiting for those first results, it provides parents with an opportunity to engage with the teacher, or the literacy and numeracy leaders at the school. To ask how the school analyses their NAPLAN data. To ask how it informs the way teachers teach and how the school develops their program. These questions will help you understand how your school uses the data and how it will benefit your child both immediately and into the future.

As a first-time NAPLAN parent, I was impressed with the way my school approached the NAPLAN testing with my children. It was not a significant focus of the teachings at the start of Term 2, and there was no pressure to perform. We were provided with written information before they sat their tests and we were fully informed about the process. I look forward to seeing my children's results and how that will assist in both my children's individual progress and informing the teaching staff for future development of the teaching and learning program. I encourage all first-time NAPLAN parents to also find out how your school will inform you about your child's first NAPLAN experience. ✦

By Jennifer Griffiths, VCSPB Council Member

As a mother of two daughters who have now completed their primary and secondary education, through my experiences of education with them, I came to realise that the most important thing to remember is to always spend a moment to talk about and enjoy the multiple aspects of your child's learning. Each piece of art, every story and maths and science project is valuable progress information that your child brings home from school. This ongoing discussion lasts for 13 years and is the most accurate and rewarding way to share in their achievements, progress and goals throughout their schooling life and beyond.

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It is in the partnership with teachers that we as parents are able to build a profile of our child's experiences and opportunities for learning in all areas of life .
”

As parents, we should always remember that NAPLAN is only one piece of assessment information that adds to and complements ongoing assessments that your child's teachers complete every day in many different ways.

It is in the partnership with teachers that we as parents are able to build a profile of our child's experiences and opportunities for learning in all areas of life including their wellbeing, relationships and social skills in addition to the rest of the curriculum.

When you receive the results of NAPLAN, discuss them with your child and their teachers as to what the results tell you about your child's strengths and challenges and how you can work together to support your child to improve in certain areas of their learning. If there were any surprises in the results then use this information to help set goals for next term together.

The dual purpose of NAPLAN is the important information it provides for our schools. It provides valuable data for staff to look more closely at the effectiveness of their teaching, to celebrate their successes and to make adjustments and long-term improvements to curriculum planning and to target specific strategies for student success. ✦

If you would like further information about NAPLAN, please speak with your school principal, your child's teacher or go to the ACARA website at www.nap.edu.au/naplan/parent-carer-support.





Star student's Spirit of Anzac Experience

In Year 9, our campus is in the old Anzac Hostel. Throughout the year, we learn about the ANZACS' war efforts in Gallipoli. When I heard about the Spirit of Anzac competition I was inspired to enter.

I entered a poem in the form of a video. The poem was from the point of view of a woman through various periods of her life. It starts with her having to see her father off to WWI, her husband off to WWII and finally her grandson in the Vietnam War. The video was of a girl walking towards the shrine, symbolising the current generation.

When I found out I'd won I could not believe it. I was ecstatic and excited for the trip in April. I knew that this would be an unforgettable experience and I couldn't wait for it to begin.

When the day had arrived for our departure, I promised myself I would make the most of the trip by embracing the Singapore culture and discovering more about the Anzac legend.

I learned something new every day on the trip. We learnt about the Anzacs war efforts in Darwin

By Adele Nicolas,
Star of the Sea College,
Brighton



I learned something new every day on the trip. We learnt about the Anzacs war efforts in Darwin and how important it is to this day.



and how important it is to this day. We also went into more detail about the days leading up to the bombing of Darwin and the aftermath of the event.

Singapore was better than I could have ever imagined. We were excited because we didn't know what each day would unfold. When most Australians think of war they either think of Gallipoli, or the Western front, and yes, while they are important events in our history, the history in Singapore is not as known. We learnt about the lead-up to the Fall of Singapore and consequences of the prisoner of war camps.

It was an unforgettable experience and I am so grateful for the opportunity I had. I made lots of friends and memories on the trip and I encourage everyone to discover the significance of the Anzac history as it is important that it is passed on from generation to generation so that we don't forget how they shaped our nation. ✦

Adele was one of three students from Star of the Sea College to win the Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize Overseas Study Tour, along with Catherine Forsyth and Sophie Scott.



The Anzac Spirit in Our Schools

Remembering the men and women who acted with courage to protect our way of life is the essence of Anzac Day, and our schools mark the significance of the event in many ways.

As well as ceremonies in schools leading up to Anzac Day, schools have engaged in activities for some rich learning experiences for their students. Lest we forget.

- Students from **Corpus Christi School, Glenroy**, continued a tradition they began in 2010, laying a wreath for members of the 22nd Squadron at the Shrine of Remembrance.
- Students from **Our Lady of Sion College, Box Hill; St Luke the Evangelist, Blackburn; Our Holy Redeemer School, Surrey Hills; and Our Lady of Perpetual Succour School, Surrey Hills** joined with the Box Hill RSL for a local wreath laying ceremony.



Our Lady of Sion College, Box Hill

- **Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, Braybrook**, students are selling pins to raise funds and awareness for the Anzac appeal as well as participating in a local march.
- **Salesian College, Sunbury**, students have had first-hand experience examining World War I artefacts delivered from the Australian War Memorial.
- The library staff at **Ave Maria College, Aberfeldie**, have created a display of books to help students better understand the sacrifices of war.
- Students from **Sacred Heart Girls' College, Oakleigh; Loreto Mandeville Hall, Toorak; Marymede Catholic College, South Morang; and Star of the Sea College, Brighton** will also be participating in the Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize Canberra Study Tour in the first week of the Term 2 holidays to visit sites of national significance in Canberra.

Nazareth's Tribute to the Anzacs

By Gary Giese,
Deputy Principal,
Nazareth College,
Noble Park North



“Our students always show a wonderful sense of occasion and respect in our ANZAC Commemoration.”

Prior to 2015, Nazareth College held a short ceremony over the PA to commemorate Anzac Day each year. But in 2015, to mark the Centenary of the Gallipoli landing, a more substantial ceremony was held in the College's Wheeler Auditorium, bringing the whole school together.

The response from students and staff was overwhelming! The respect and reverence shown was remarkable; and that led to the whole-College gathering for the ceremony becoming an annual event.

This year's Nazareth Anzac Ceremony consisted of an outline of the history of the Gallipoli landing in 1915; a look at why Anzac Day is so important to Australians; a tribute to the original ANZACs including excerpts from letters written by soldiers who were in the first landing party; and concluded with a photo tribute to the relatives of staff and students who have served in the Armed Forces, including my own father who served in World War II. This is an aspect of the ceremony we hope to expand in future years.

During the minute's silence following the Last Post there was absolute quiet in the Auditorium. Our students always show a wonderful sense of occasion and respect in our Anzac Commemoration.

College Vice-Captains Antonia Scandizzo and Lia Catanzariti began the ceremony by leading the College in Prayer. Together they recited Psalm 91 – which is the basis of 'The Soldier's Prayer' prayed daily by many of those on the battlefields in World



Deputy Principal Gary Giese wears his father's war medals.

War One. Antonia commented that, 'Our Anzac Day Ceremony was very moving. It was truly eye-opening to see the number of staff and students who have family members who are war veterans. This ceremony helps us realise that Anzac Day has very personal connections for many people in our school.'

Lia said that for her the Anzac Ceremony was 'something that was truly unique and something that I will always remember... The ceremony gave me an opportunity to reflect on how much we should respect those who served and fought for our country.'

College Captains Sarah Machuca and Edward Wong also felt a deep sense of respect for the ANZACs and were also touched by the 'personal' connections of staff and students. Sarah said, 'The personal connections with the ancestors of students and staff who were soldiers helped create a truly emotional experience and gave us a better understanding of the respect due to those who fought for us under those treacherous conditions.'

Similarly, Edward commented that 'We were privileged to have a Whole School Assembly to commemorate Anzac Day. The ceremony made us all feel grateful to the brave soldiers who fought for our country. +



Corpus Christi School, Glenroy



Antonine College, Coburg

- **St Peter's School, Sunshine South West**, is one of 600 schools participating in the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Gallipoli Oaks Project, planting an oak tree on the school grounds as a lasting tribute to fallen soldiers of World War I.
- Student from **St Joseph's College, Newtown** and **Clonard College, Herne Hill**, joined together for a commemoration ceremony. The St Joseph's students then participated in workshops from learning about military life to making Anzac biscuits.
- Year 11 students from **Avila College, Mount Waverley**, have created poppies for an art installation.
- Visiting from Lebanon, Mother Superior Judith Haroun joined students from **Antonine College, Coburg**, for a special prayer service at the Cedar Campus.
- Grade 4 students at **St Monica's School, Footscray**, are organising this year's commemoration and using rosemary grown at the school as one of the symbols of remembrance. +



Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, Braybrook



St Monica's School, Footscray



Mercy-in-Action Immersion

Catholic schools frequently participate in a range of social justice programs, and some of those make very *concrete* differences to the lives of those less fortunate. Earlier this year, 26 students and 7 staff members from Mercy College, Coburg; Marian College, West Sunshine; and St Aloysius College, North Melbourne, travelled to Cambodia on a two-week immersion to build houses and contribute resources to the people of Phnom Penh.

“The generous contributions of the combined school communities meant that the students were able to help over 1000 children from hundreds of families.”



Tabitha Australia works with the Tabitha Foundation Cambodia to raise funds and work with volunteers to build over 1000 houses in Cambodia each year. The Mercy-in-Action students managed to help build 10 of these houses in their two week immersion, as well as decorating a classroom.

Each student was asked to raise a target of funds in the lead-up to the trip, and the generous contributions of the combined school communities meant that the students were able to help over 1000 children from hundreds of families.

‘By designing and facilitating learning activities with the children, distributing donations of clothing, books, toiletries to families and funding hospitals, many Cambodians lives have been touched and changed forever by our works of Mercy,’ said Ms Jenny-May Wilson, a Marian College teacher and one of the leaders on the trip.

Alongside the call to action of the trip, the students were also introduced to a wealth of history in the third-world country, visiting key Phnom Penh sites such as the S21 Prison and the Khmer Rouge Killing Fields. ‘Some students found this really difficult as it was very intense and overwhelming. We met three survivors of the Pol Pot regime and they were generously brave enough to share their story and allow us to understand why education and resilience is so important in society,’ said Pia Taylor, Year 10 student at Mercy College.

Travelling next to Siem Reap in the north of Cambodia, students visited the Angkor Centre for Conservation of Biodiversity, a centre for animal repopulation of nearly extinct or extinct animals, and the Cambodian Circus for disadvantaged youth.

‘Although we did a lot of work, we also made sure to support the local economy by going out for dinner most nights to (mainly) restaurants that help victims of human rights abuses, such as sex trafficking and domestic violence, to start a new life with the help of non-government organisations,’ said Chloe Hocking, Year 10 student at Mercy College.

“ We have been taught much about ourselves and been inspired to ask ourselves how can we ‘be mercy’ to a higher level locally and globally. ”



Mercy College Middle School leader, Miss Zoe Wood, reflected on the collaboration between the schools, noting that it ‘enriched the spiritual, emotional and physical experience for each individual as we lived out the gospel and Mercy values’.

‘Just as important as what we perceive we have contributed to the people and fabric of Cambodia is what we have taken away. The Kildare Ministries values of compassion, hospitality, justice, hope, wonder and courage have been mirrored to us in many ways. By smiling faces, gentle bows of welcome and a dedication to accessing learning, we have been taught much about ourselves and been inspired to ask ourselves how can we “be mercy” to a higher level locally and globally,’ said Ms Wilson. ✦



Visit the Mary Glowrey Museum

Dr Sr Mary Glowrey JMJ (1887-1957) is only the second Australian to be considered for official recognition as a saint.

Born in Birregurra, Victoria, Mary qualified in medicine in 1910. From 1920 she lived in Guntur, India, where she became a religious sister and attended to the medical and spiritual needs of thousands of poor people.

Mary was declared a Servant of God in 2013.



Image: Mary Glowrey Collection

Location: Cathedral Hall, Level 2, 20 Brunswick St, Fitzroy. Australian Catholic University (ACU), Melbourne campus.

Hours: *Monday to Thursday 10am to 4pm, Friday 10am to 1pm. Or by appointment. Closed public holidays, Christmas – January. Groups of five or more must book.*

Contact: info@maryglowreymuseum.info

Find out more: www.maryglowreymuseum.info
Teacher and student materials are available for senior primary and junior secondary levels.



Made possible by the generous sponsorship of Australian Catholic University (ACU), the Melbourne Archbishop's Charitable Fund, Catholic Education Melbourne and by the owner of the Mary Glowrey Collection, Catholic Women's League of Victoria and Wagga Wagga. Mary Glowrey Heritage Ltd ABN 39 604 292 346

Father Wall Bursary

Archbishop Denis Hart heaped generous praise upon the achievements of five Victorian young people, as he presented them with the Father James Wall Bursary at the St Patrick's Centre in East Melbourne on 17 March.

The Father James Wall Bursary provides five leadership achievement awards of \$4,000, made annually to Year 10 Catholic secondary school students who demonstrate leadership potential in a range of areas. These include science, arts, public speaking, sporting activities, community service and social justice activities.

- Kathleene Mendoza, Catholic Regional College, St Albans
- Nicole Nabbout, Mercy College, Coburg
- Gabrielle Hurrel, Catholic Ladies College, Eltham
- Sophie Chan, Our Lady of Sion College, Box Hill
- Abbey Walsh, Catholic College, Sale. ✦



Victorian International School Student Awards

On 26 April 2016, the Victorian Government announced the winners for the prestigious Victorian International School Student Awards at a ceremony held at Parliament House.

The Year 12 Sports Achievement Award was presented to Ziyu (Mike) Chen from Whitefriars College, Donvale, who says, 'Sport has been a wonderful pathway for my integration and many true friendships ... I have had a great experience in Australia and sport has been a big part of it'. ✦

Applied Learning School and Student of the Year

Late last year Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College (OLSH), Bentleigh, and OLSH student Mikaela Hum were presented with the Applied Learning Awards for School and Student of the Year respectively (in the Bayside, Glen Eira and Kingston regions). OLSH College was recognised for its many programs and initiatives in Applied Learning, and Mikaela was recognised for her many achievements in applied learning, and her enthusiasm and generosity. ✦



A Reflective Holy Week



Before heading off on holidays, students at St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School, Epping North, were exploring and thinking deeply about Holy Week through reflective Holy Week displays. ✦

Sunrise at St Peter Julian Eymard

On 2 February St Peter Julian Eymard Primary School in Mooroolbark had a memorable first day of school with Channel 7's *Sunrise* program filming at the school, including a performance by the choir! ✦





Unique School Marks Milestone

Specialist school, St Paul's College in Kew, marked its 60th anniversary on 6 February. Originally a school for the blind, over the years St Paul's mission has expanded and it now teaches children with other disabilities and includes a bridging program, giving students experience in a mainstream school setting for part of the week. ✦

Construction to Start on New Torquay School

With construction about to begin, Bishop Mark Edwards has blessed the building site for the new Lisieux Catholic Primary School in Torquay that will open in 2018. At the ceremony Bishop Edwards thanked all the workers who would be involved in building the new school on behalf of the young people of Torquay and wished them well for a safe and speedy build. ✦



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Premier's VCE Awards

The 2017 Premier's VCE Awards were announced on 27 April. Luke Macaronas from St Kevin's College, Toorak, was acknowledged as a VCE High Achiever, an award presented to students who have achieved study scores of 46 or higher in at least five VCE studies. In 2016 Luke was also the winner of the Plain English Speaking Award at both state and national level, and represented Australia in the International Public Speaking Awards in London in May, winning the entire competition.

In addition, 32 students from Catholic schools received Study Awards. ✦



VCE Seasons of Excellence Top Designs 2017

The VCE Seasons of Excellence Top Designs 2017 exhibition at the Melbourne Museum was launched 17 March. Several of the exhibitors were recent graduates of Catholic schools, including Saran Kim, the dux of Mater Christi College, Belgrave; and Tinotenda Mubayiwa, from Marymede Catholic College, South Morang.

When international student Saran Kim began in Year 7 at Mater Christi College, Belgrave, she 'could not speak English at all'. However, due to what Principal Mary Fitz-Gerald describes as her 'artistic skills, tenacity and hard work' upon completing Year 12 in 2016 Saran had accumulated an impressive array of awards and accolades including College Co-Captain and College Dux (with an ATAR of 99.8).

It's a long way from Zimbabwe to South Morang, but Tinotenda Mubayiwa brought a rich heritage to the piece of furniture he made in Production Design and Technology at Marymede Catholic College. The 2016 Year 12 student's seat was one of only five wood pieces selected for Top Design 2017, an exhibition highlighting the best work in VCE Product Design and Technology, Media, Visual Communication and Design and Food Technology from 2016. ✦



Stations of the Cross at St Thomas the Apostle

St Thomas the Apostle School, Greensborough North, were proud to present to our parish and school community, a liturgical presentation of the Stations of the Cross on 30 March.

The 200 students from years 4-6, sensitively and skilfully dramatised each Station of the Cross, presenting a powerful image of Jesus' journey to Gethsemane. Approximately 600 people attended the evening liturgy which had been a 6 week project to the end of Term One. ✦



St Leo the Great's Wheel-a-Thon

As part of Family Week this year, St Leo the Great School in Altona North decided to hold a Wheel-a-Thon to raise funds for CatholicCare. All children and families were invited to bring along anything with wheels! Bikes, scooters, rollerblades, prams and wheelchairs filled the schoolyard as children and parents wheeled around doing consecutive laps of the school. They were thrilled to raise almost \$2000. ✦





Picture: Steve Tanner, *Leader News*

Engineering Career for Genazzano Alumna

Genazzano FCJ College, Kew, alumna, Marielle Salom, is engineering a career in a traditionally male-dominated industry. She has spent the past few months working with the Level Crossing Removal Authority, and has just finished a stint on the Blackburn crossing removal project with CPB Constructions. Marielle has said that ever since her school days, she knew she wanted to become an engineer. She said that being a woman in a field dominated by men could have its advantages. 'Women have a different outlook and fresh perspective on concepts and ideas,' she said.

Article originally published in the *Leader*, 8 March

Rotary Donate Portable Microscopes to Ss Peter and Paul's School

New technology is taking Ss Peter and Paul's School kids out of the science classroom and helping them explore the world beyond. The Doncaster East school has 25 new magnifying microscopes that children can take outside to continue their studies.

They've taken delivery of the equipment thanks to a Rotary Australia program that saw thousands of the devices delivered to schools across Australia. Their portable, user-friendly design will allow students to look at things inside and out.

(Originally published in the *Manningham Leader* by Andrew Rogers)



Picture: Ian Currie, *Leader News*



Lord of the Flies – Young Ensemble Cast

After an extensive audition process, including workshops and call backs, 23 boys from across Victoria were chosen to join the Ensemble Cast of Sir Matthew Bourne's *New Adventures & Re: Bourne* adaptation of *Lord of the Flies*, at the Arts Centre 5–9 April. Hundreds of boys auditioned during a three month, Victoria-wide search for cast members last year. Included in the Young Ensemble cast is Christian Brothers College, St Kilda, student George Missailidis (Year 8); and Salesian College, Chadstone, student Campbell Phelan (Year 9).

Science and Engineering Awards

Combining his interests in music and engineering, St Kevin's College, Toorak, student Justin Mitchell has taken our first place in the Engineering category of the BHP Billiton Science and Engineering Awards announced recently with his invention of a tiny keyboard incorporated in the pockets of a hoodie, the wearer can create music anywhere. Supported by the CSIRO and the Australian Science Teachers Association, the awards provide a unique opportunity for young scientists to demonstrate ingenuity, inquisitiveness, excellence in experiment design and application to problem solving.



Photo: ABC news website



Mount Lilydale the Koollest Skool

At the end of 2016 Mount Lilydale Mercy College (MLMC) took out a top music award for producing the best and most wide-ranging album of the year – being named 'the Koollest Skool' – for their CD titled 'Takeaway'.

Kool Skools is a songwriting project run by Studio 52 in Collingwood that offers students across Victoria the opportunity to write and record their songs in a professional recording facility with some of Australia's top Sound Engineers and Music Producers.

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