

Today



Many hands
make a difference

TERM 4, 2019

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TO ACTION

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ON FIRE

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ARCHDIOCESE

The wisdom of a new start

Prepared by Simon Stevens, Education Officer,
Catholic Leadership, Catholic Education Melbourne

In prayer, as things begin,
we are reminded that wisdom dances with us:
'When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when [God] established the heavens, I was there,
and I was ... rejoicing before him always'.
[Prov 8: 24, 27, 30]
A new journey has depth and is full of mystery,
yet wisdom is 'easily ... found by those who seek her'.
[Wis 6: 12]
As near as our next breath, she is equally
full of mystery and needs to be discovered:
A new beginning brings with it
the 'hidden wisdom of God', [1 Cor 2: 7]
which is why we seek to begin, anew, always.



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Editorial

Another outstanding year for Catholic education is ending. Schools will be taking part in the preparations of the Advent season before closing for a well-deserved break, and each of us will begin that period of coming together to celebrate the miracle of Christmas.

It is a busy time of year, when many of us are preparing for time with our families before the fresh start that the new year brings. So it is inspiring that many young people chose to travel the 3,400 km to Perth to celebrate the 2019 Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF).

ACYF is a highlight of the 2019 school year, giving young people from our schools, parishes and the Church's wider network the opportunity to spend time with fellow pilgrims, deepen their relationship with Jesus and celebrate the future of the Church in Australia.

The pilgrimage began with a commissioning event in late-November. Spring sunshine welcomed more than a thousand young people from schools across Melbourne as they walked from St Augustine's Church to St Patrick's Cathedral. A festival atmosphere inspired pilgrims and passers-by during the walk, which was followed by a moving liturgy by Archbishop Peter A Comensoli, and a concert and BBQ.

The journey continues as the Melbourne pilgrims arrive in Perth to 'listen to what the Spirit is saying' – the theme of the 2019 festival, with exhilaration building as the event progresses.

Highlights of the program include a workshop with Archbishop Peter, live music performances in the pavilion, Riverside Theatre and Summer Garden, and a panel on fighting modern slavery with Archbishop of Sydney Anthony Fisher OP, Grace Forrest and Elizabeth Payne.

The Catholic education community in the Archdiocese will only benefit from the participation of so many of our young people in the event, connecting to the Church and a deeper faith. It is our hope that the energy brought back from the festival will permeate through the lives of their schools and our parish communities.

To everyone in our education community, may you have a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy new year. To the families of those leaving our schools, thank you for entrusting us with the education of your children. We hope we have provided them with the tools to make a thoughtful and faith-filled contribution to society, and wish them every success as they move on to further study and into the workforce. ✦



Advent

A season of endurance and hope,
and a call to action

In today's modern, on-demand world, where our favourite songs, films and television shows are only a 'hey Google' away, it is surprising but also reassuring to know that the season of Advent, celebrated in many Christian churches, still marks a time of endurance, anticipation and preparation, and a call to action in readiness for the coming of Christ.

Advent signifies the beginning of the Church's liturgical year and is characterised by the rotation from one gospel writer to the next, a sort of 'changing of the guard' each season. This year's season, beginning on Sunday 1 December, sees us moving from Luke to Matthew's story of the long-expected Messiah, who brought God's kingdom to earth.

As this new year in the Church begins, the readings of the four Sundays of Advent constantly remind us to stay awake and be prepared, and to seek strength and reassurance from what is in our midst in anticipation of encountering Christ. Advent, in its fullest sense, speaks of this encounter in three ways: the baby born of God himself, the omnipresence of his Spirit in our lives and the preparedness of Christ who is to come again. In celebrating Advent, this multidimensional nature is ritualised in many ways. The journey and endurance of faithful believers past, present and future are symbolised in a much-loved Christian tradition carried out in churches, classrooms and homes with the lighting of the Advent candles.

In line with the opening verse of the Mary Lu Walker song, 'Light the Advent candle', the first purple candle in the Advent wreath asks us to stop and think about

“Advent, in its fullest sense, speaks of this encounter in three ways: the baby born of God himself, the omnipresence of his Spirit in our lives and the preparedness of Christ who is to come again.”

what it is in fact we are preparing for. While getting caught up in the excitement of Santa and tinsel in the lead-up to Christmas is almost unavoidable, the first week of Advent is a timely reminder that we are active participants, called to action along this journey towards Christ.

As the song continues we are urged to think of humble shepherds, who in Luke's Gospel are the first to receive the Good News of God born into our world. Then, as we light the third candle (the pink one), we think of the heavenly rejoicing of angels who revel in the anticipated peace on earth at the Saviour's birth. The song concludes with the lighting of the white candle on Christmas day, commemorating the joy, peace, love and hope born into the world, to live on forevermore.

This December, as we journey through the weeks of Advent, may it mark for all of us the beginning of a reawakening in ourselves, to be enlivened and prepare for the coming of Christ. As we light the candles around the Advent wreath, may we be reminded not only of the journey that began so long ago, but also of our enduring role along this path of life to be the risen light of Christ for all those we encounter. For it is through this light that came into the world that we are born into the full grace and truth of God. ✝

STEM makes a difference

The STEM MAD (Making a Difference) Showcase returned in October with even more schools and students working on ways to make the world a better place.

Introduced in 2018, the STEM MAD Showcase gives students a chance to focus on problem-solving using science, technology, engineering and mathematics. STEM challenges enhance creative thinking, critical analysis, collaboration and evidence-informed decision-making.

Held at the Catholic Leadership Centre, almost 100 teams of primary and secondary students demonstrated their investigations into health, the environment, animal welfare, wellbeing and more. As well as students visiting other students' displays, judges and sponsors visited each team throughout the day and awarded prizes for outstanding projects.



Major Awards (Primary)

- 1st place: St Anne's School, Sunbury (Water Catchment Board Game)
- 2nd place: Nazareth School, Grovedale (Sustainable Sorting App)
- 3rd place: Clairvaux Catholic School, Belmont (Angelman Syndrome)



Major Awards (Secondary)

- 1st place: St Monica's College, Epping (Robotic Arm)
- 2nd place: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Bentleigh (Lemurs)
- 3rd place: St Columba's College, Essendon (Cube Chair)



FOR THE FULL LIST OF WINNERS, VISIT WWW.CEM.EDU.AU/NEWS-EVENTS/OCTOBER-2019/STEM-IS-MAKING-A-DIFFERENCE.ASPX



National Catholic Education Conference 2020

The National Catholic Education Commission and Catholic Education Melbourne are proud to be co-hosting the 2020 National Catholic Education Conference (NCEC 2020) at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre from 6–9 September 2020.



Held every four-to-five years, the conference brings together school and system leaders, educators, clergy and religious, students, education professionals, researchers, families and other groups interested in Catholic education to promote examples of best practice, and plan future directions to continue the flourishing of vibrant and authentically Catholic learning communities across Australia.

What makes NCEC 2020 so unique is that everyone involved in education is represented in the organisation of the event. Education system administrators and principals sit with clergy, parents and students in helping to define and shape the content of the conference.

The last conference was held in Perth in 2016, and attracted more than 1,300 Catholic education leaders. For NCEC 2020 in Melbourne, we hope to attract between 2,000 and 3,000 participants from across Australia and Oceania.

Inspired by Pope Francis' call for Catholics to 'speak boldly and listen humbly', to rediscover our capacity to listen and be silent in order to make space for the beauty of God, the NCEC 2020 theme: *The Future is Listening* seeks to provide an opportunity for participants to explore, discern and be inspired by the richness and responsibility of Catholic education and leadership within a contemporary Australia.

The year 2020 also marks the dawn of a new decade and a new era, and NCEC 2020's theme is an invitation to all involved in Catholic education to ask of ourselves what imprint on the future can Catholic education make on not only the young people in our care, but Australia as a whole.

Further enhancing our overall theme are the four streams that NCEC 2020 participants will be able to immerse themselves in throughout the event:

- Catholic Identity and Mission
- Leadership and Governance
- School Improvement
- Communication and Community Engagement.

NCEC 2020 will also provide a special opportunity to celebrate 200 years of Catholic education in Australia and to reflect on how the Catholic school sector has flourished since its humble beginnings.

More information about how to take part in this exciting event will be shared with parents and students through schools and this magazine in the early part of next year.

On behalf of the National Catholic Education Commission and Catholic Education Melbourne, we look forward to welcoming you to this important event.

Visit ncec2020.edu.au for more information and to register your interest. ✦

Artwork: Molly Cook, Year 4,
St Mary's School, Greensborough

“

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**2020 NATIONAL CATHOLIC
EDUCATION CONFERENCE**

The future is listening

MELBOURNE • 6-9 SEPT 2020

Education transitions – a whole-family experience

This time of year marks the beginning of many changes for students as they prepare to commence primary school, a new year level or secondary school. Then there are those who are transitioning to adulthood at the end of their school years, whether entering university or TAFE, or the workforce.

As students make their way through these changes, parents are also impacted in their role as guide and supporter. This role is critical in balancing both letting go and helping children to navigate new territories, new relationships, and the challenges as well as opportunities that come with change.

CSPV has collated some reflections from parents on how these changes are very much a family experience. Children's completion of primary or secondary school also ends a stage in their parents' lives, as they have lived the journey alongside their children, investing emotionally, physically and financially in their education.

As I watched my youngest child transition to secondary school, I felt something I wasn't prepared for. I felt a grieving for the primary school community we were leaving after a very long association.

My daughters attended a wonderful Catholic primary school that I also attended years ago. I'd been actively involved on boards, fundraising, classroom activities, and felt part of the school community.

My daughter was very ready to move to secondary school, as her primary school had prepared her beautifully for the transition. I knew she would flourish, but was sad to say goodbye to a special part of our life.

As my daughter completed Year 12, I reflected on all the ups and downs we'd experienced on the school journey and how we had somehow reached the end of an era.

For many years our primary school had been a safe haven. One of support, learning, opportunity and love. As we transitioned to secondary school, it was me that struggled the most with the changes.

On my daughter's first day of school, her enthusiasm was infectious. Now she has come to the end of her journey, we see the same eagerness she had as a five-year-old to discover new interests and keep learning.

By Catholic School Parents Victoria



These examples emphasise the strength of relationships and community that school experiences provide for parents and how transition impacts other family members who are also navigating the changes.



My daughter leapt into Year 7, eager to make new friends and learn new skills. On the other hand, I felt extremely sad as we closed such a wonderful chapter of our lives and moved to the next phase.

When my son began school, it was an equally joyous and tumultuous time. It was joyous, as we all formed new friendships. It was tumultuous, as we came to grips with the role we played in his education – a role entirely new, given our previous interaction with school was as students!

These examples emphasise the strength of relationships and community that school experiences provide for parents and how transition impacts other family members who are also navigating the changes. As parents are invested in their children's education, it is important that schools engage families in the process to enable them to guide and support their children throughout the journey. ✦



Are you a Catholic school parent or carer with a passion to make a difference in education?

Catholic School Parents Victoria are a team of passionate parents of children in primary and secondary Catholic schools. As volunteer delegates we contribute parent perspective in education at a system, state and national level under the pillars of Parent Engagement and Parent Leadership in:



CSPV are seeking current Catholic school parents or carers to join our team in 2019-2021.

As a CSPV volunteer member delegate you will have the opportunity to contribute and provide parent perspective on education issues and policy in Victoria through engagement with parents as well as State and Catholic education authorities.

To apply as a volunteer council delegate you will have had experience on a school board or parent group at your school.

Please visit the CSPV website for further information on how to join and to download the CSPV prospectus at www.cspv.catholic.edu.au/join-us.



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Find us on

Engage, *empower* and excel

Donna Bryce has swapped the country for the coast. Leaving behind St Aloysius' School in Redan, she is the foundation principal of St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School, Armstrong Creek, which will open in January 2020.

What does a Catholic educator require?

As a Catholic educator, gospel values underpin everything we do. We welcome all to be part of our school community. We're not just learning the word, we're living it. By living our words and actions, we truly know what it means to be Catholic. It's about giving our students opportunities to engage in their learning and to be energised with quality, innovative teaching, empowering each child to pursue excellence.

We know that all children can learn. Some of them learn more quickly than others and in different ways but, to be authentic as an educator, it's important to create a culture where we nurture each child's wellbeing, where young people feel confident enough to make mistakes and learn from them, and where they learn in partnership with each other, their families and the community.

What do you like about working in a Catholic school?

Having the opportunity to educate the whole child. Developing each child academically, spiritually, emotionally and physically. Research indicates the close connection between children's wellbeing, safety and readiness to learn. We strive to provide a positive, safe school with a particular focus on enriching each child's wellbeing through regular physical exercise and daily practice of mindfulness.

We want children to feel valued, designing learning which is individualised with equity, dignity and respect. Educating the whole child provides a real sense of who each child is, constructing positive relationships with self and each other. This gives us the chance to build a meaningful and dynamic community of learners in Armstrong Creek.

Catholic social teaching is something that really resonates with me as a Catholic educator. It's something that assists us to live out the gospel values, to be stewards of creation and journey in harmony with God's creation to be ecological and respectful in all learning. It is also a way to help young people understand the rights and responsibilities that drive a caring, compassionate, productive school community steeped in sustainable learning.

“It's important to create a culture where we nurture each child's wellbeing, where young people feel confident enough to make mistakes and learn from them, and where they learn in partnership with each other, their families and the community.”



What are the greatest opportunities for families today?

The greatest opportunity is when we work together with a family to get the best outcomes for their child's educational journey. It's about having clear and open communication, and knowing that our core purpose is for each child to excel beyond their potential. For parents it's about having faith in our Catholic education system, and for us it's about having faith in our parents working alongside. We've had families assisting with the design of our school uniform, as well as our two playgrounds. It's important for our community to be able to discuss what they want for our school and be an integral part of the formation of St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School. Together, enriching each other's journey, building a learning community of faith and excellence.

In five years time ...

We will be a thriving, welcoming and compassionate community of lifelong learners who recognise and respect the dignity of all, celebrating differences. I know that we will have created a culture where students will carry the mantra of St Catherine of Siena with them: 'be who you were created to be, and you will set the world on fire'. We know that we can't teach young people all the knowledge they need to prepare them for their lives, but we can teach them to be critical thinkers and passionate learners. If students are engaged in their learning, they're empowered to make that positive difference, excel and set our world on fire. †

This is me

Students at **St Peter's School, Sunshine South West**, took to the stage to perform *This is Me* in front of a sell-out crowd. The school's second musical production followed the story of Charlie and her dreams of performing in the school choir. With a finale that included every student in the school on stage, the show closed to thunderous applause from the delighted audience. ✦



For art's sake

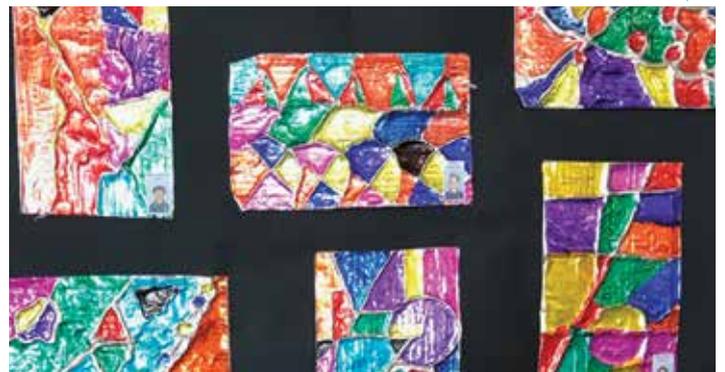
Holy Eucharist School, St Albans South, displayed the talents of its students at the school's art exhibition. With artwork connected to various events and learning experiences, the mixture of two-dimensional drawings, paintings and collages, as well as three-dimensional pieces in clay, foil and fabric, provided a unique insight into the talents of these young artists.



St Patrick's School, Mentone, created an art show inspired by the diversity of the world's landscapes. Bringing together the visual arts, music, design, science and geography, *Living in the Landscape* was launched with a gala opening for the community. Every student had individual artwork on display and there was also an auction of collaborative artworks created by each class. ✦



St Gabriel's School, Reservoir, held a two-day art show featuring works inspired by artists from different periods in history, as well as works involving photography, graphic and web design, and coding. Aside from the individual pieces created by students, each year level also produced collaborative pieces with their teachers. These were sold at an auction held at the school on the first day of the exhibition. ✦



StellaCon

Year 5 students from **Stella Maris School, Beaumaris**, held 'StellaCon' to showcase their original graphic novels and celebrate their love of the genre. The students produced hands-on activities, workshops, decorations and games to share all that they had learned, and to give attendees the opportunity to explore the visual and textual conventions of graphic novels. ✦



Dressed to See

Prue Spencer from **Genazzano FCJ College, Kew**, won the national Wool4School design competition in the Year 10 category with her submission, 'Dressed to See'. Prue's idea was to create a fashionable outfit that also featured cutting-edge technology to guide visually impaired and blind young women. ✦



Mixed netball state champions

The mixed netball team from **St Thomas The Apostle School, Blackburn**, are Victoria's school champions for the second year in a row. Runners-up in 2017 and victors in 2018, the students were committed, practised hard and worked incredibly well as a team to claim the 2019 title in September. ✦



Footy Colours Day

St Michael's School, North Melbourne, celebrated Footy Colours Day to fight cancer and support their neighbours at the Royal Children's Hospital. Nine News was on hand to capture the awareness and money-raising activities, and the students were joined by AFLW Collingwood players Eliza Hynes and Erica Fowler to lead them through some training drills. ✦



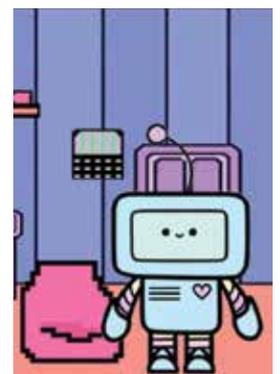
Democracy in action

Student leaders from **Catholic Regional College, St Albans**, met with their local Member of Parliament, Natalie Suleyman, to outline some of the issues important to young people. The students presented their proposal for all Victorian students to travel free on public transport and had a fruitful discussion about the state government's big projects in Melbourne's western suburbs. ✦



Girl power recognition

Five female students from **Salesian College, Sunbury**, were declared the national secondary school winners of the 2019 Tech Girl Superhero challenge. The students designed an app featuring a gender-neutral character named Codie. Its aim is to check in with young people and offer them a space to develop skills in reflection and breathing/de-escalation, as well as a planner to assist with time management. ✦





The Three Bridgeteers

Mount St Joseph Girls' College, Altona, was chosen to host this year's Aurecon Bridge Building Competition: an engineering challenge for secondary schools across Australia and New Zealand. Students Augustina, Tam and Sarvleen represented the college in the 2019 competition and were awarded first prize for building the strongest bridge. The Three Bridgeteers, as they named their team, built the 'Royal Trust Bridge' which weighed less than 200 grams yet held 85.6 kilograms. ✦

Connected through dance

The Kilbreda Dance Company (KDC), an initiative developed by dance teacher Cara Mitchell of **Kilbreda College, Mentone**, aims to connect students with the wider community, regardless of their year level. Students prepare their own choreography and teach it to others, offering everyone the opportunity to become involved with dance. ✦



Mercy Learning Centre

The new learning centre at **Mount Lilydale Mercy College, Lilydale**, was officially opened in September by Deputy Premier and Minister for Education the Hon. James Merlino MP. Part of a master plan to deliver modern, open, light-filled spaces that reflect learning opportunities for the 21st century, the Mercy Learning Centre brings together the library, lounges and seminar areas in a single community gathering place for students in Years 10–12. ✦



Resilience is child's PLAY

Year 4 and 5 students at **St Paul's School, Coburg**, are leading the way in making young people more resilient. Trained by Resilient Youth in the Positivity, Leadership and Activated Youth (PLAY) program, these students lead safe and creative games which aim to build resilience. ✦



Young voices provide a connection

Throughout 2019, the students at **St Macartan's School, Mornington**, have brought delight to their local retirement villages by singing to entertain the residents. The school's choir, which comprises 97 children from Foundation to Year 6, has regularly connected with older people living in the parish by visiting them each term to perform well-known songs. ✦



Victorian Early Years Awards

Good Samaritan Catholic Primary School, Roxburgh Park, was a finalist in the 2019 Victorian Early Years Awards under Category 4: Promoting Children's Health and Wellbeing. In partnership with local council and health organisations, the school developed ASPIRE which aims to support students and their families by providing earlier access to a range of early childhood education, health and development support services. ✦



Innovative schools

Ave Maria College, Aberfeldie, and **Genazzano FCJ College, Kew**, were recently named as two of the schools at the cutting edge of change and innovation in Australia. Now in its fifth year, *The Educator's* Innovative Schools 2019 list recognised these schools for their significant effort to break new ground in teaching and learning. ✦

2019 Scope Awards

Kristine Smith from the Student Learning Support team at **St Bernard's College, Essendon**, won the 'Community Do it Better Award' at this year's Scope Awards. Kristine and her colleagues Guy Logan and Lynette Dawson collaborated with students, teachers and Scope therapists to support the needs of a student with disabilities at the school. ✦



Stomp!

A group of boys at **St Mary's School, Mount Evelyn**, have been stomping their feet all year, yet they couldn't be happier. The latest participants in the school's Stomp group, the Year 5 and 6 students use their feet and hands to create a rhythm, and have been giving up their lunchtime to rehearse the complicated choreography. As well as performing at the school's end-of-year concert, the group was a popular feature at Catholic Education Melbourne's recent Celebration of Principalship. ✦



Tournament of Minds

Holy Saviour Parish School, Vermont South, entered a team in Tournament of Minds for the first time in 2019 and received an Honours Award in the regional competition. The students selected the STEM Challenge and their great results showed outstanding initiative, teamwork, resilience, problem-solving skills and enthusiasm. ✦





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