From the Director

What makes a good school? What are the indicators of a 'successful' student? There has been robust public debate about this during the past three years particularly, since the Government launched the Gonski Review and began to shape up its 'National Educational Reform Agenda'.

There is a genuine desire currently to improve schooling in Australia. Our Federal Government has compared the achievement of our students with those countries whose young people do better than ours, at least in terms of external testing in Literacy and Numeracy, Science and Technology. These tests, however, are limited in terms of evaluating what makes for a comprehensive, quality education for young people during their years at school.

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians states that young Australians need to become: "Successful learners, Confident and creative individuals, Active and informed citizens".

The Vatican document The Catholic School, describes the task of Catholic education as firstly, "integrating all the different aspects of human knowledge through the subjects taught, in the light of the Gospel," and secondly, "growth of the virtues characteristic of the Christian".

Authentic educational achievement cannot be measured easily; it involves a process of slow and respectful human growth towards maturity in our students. Of course that does not preclude the acquisition of skills and knowledge that must be measured. But it would be selling our country short to presume that standard testing alone can be a reliable indicator of a student's or a school's educational achievement.

Numeracy, Literacy, ICT Use, History, Geography etc. will continue to be assessed in schools according to agreed standards. Conscience, integrity, respect for human dignity, a sense of the sacredness of the created world, capacity for community service, aspiring to live like Christ, Who "went about doing good"... These are aspects of learning that are immeasurable but essential in providing an all round 'great education'.

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Issue 27 – 2013
As part of the Federal Government’s ‘Closing the Gap’ initiative that endeavours to address key issues around the differences in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Sacred Heart Catholic School at Geeveston and St James Catholic College at Cygnet are working collaboratively on a shared project. The project has two major components: an educational component and a cultural one.

Within the educational component, teachers from both schools come together monthly in their teaching teams to share best practice teaching, learn from professional readings and research, and to challenge themselves to raise the standard of literacy teaching and learning in their schools. Each teaching team is pursuing an element of literacy that they wish to explore further. This has resulted in some dynamic projects such as a set of parent information sessions entitled ‘Beyond Home Readers’, an exhibition by Kinder and Prep teachers and students called ‘Making their voices heard’ as well as explorations about the best teaching strategies for reading and spelling. This exciting and innovative project is unique and is aligned with the latest research in the professional learning of teachers.

The cultural component at Sacred Heart Catholic School has been phenomenal. Local Tasmanian Aboriginal artist Leigh Oates has worked with students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, to create a traditional campsite in the bush area behind the school. Over six weeks Leigh involved the students in the making of a dome hut and shelter. Students also learned about bush foods and the importance of ochre. Another highlight was making spears and learning to throw them! The culmination of the cultural sessions was a cook-up of kangaroo stew and damper, prepared and cooked by the students. St James Catholic College Grade 4 class were invited over to share the meal and celebrate the importance of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture to both schools.

Both Sacred Heart Catholic School and St James Catholic College look forward with enthusiasm to continuing with this project, knowing that it will raise the educational outcomes of our students as well as their awareness, understanding and appreciation of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture.
All schools in our Catholic System are doing their bit to promote understanding of Aboriginal perspectives in their communities. We feature some examples:

- Larmenier Catholic School at St Leonards has recently included some fabulous interpretive panels into their playground. They have also planted vegetation suitable for bush tucker and basket weaving.

- St Joseph's Catholic School in Queenstown is one of our schools proudly displaying the beautiful plaque in recognition of Aboriginal tradition. Pictured at the plaque are Aboriginal students from the school.

- Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School in Lenah Valley marked Sorry Day with a prayer service. This included a welcome to country from Tasmanian Aboriginal students, a song sung and composed by Grade 3 student Johnathon and a powerful dramatisation of the book The Rabbits by John Marsden.

Understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures is a priority for all Australian schools. In line with our gospel values, the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office and Catholic schools work very sensitively with all Tasmanian Aboriginal communities.

Check out the newly refurbished Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG):
www.tmag.tas.gov.au/learning_and_discovery
St. Joseph is a huge part of the Catholic Identity on the West Coast. Both Catholic schools in the area are dedicated to him. March 19 is the feast of St. Joseph and both schools celebrated in style.

There was Mass at Queenstown in the morning, then Fr Mike Delaney, the busy and well travelled Parish Priest of the area, hit the road to Rosebery for Mass there too. Parents and younger siblings were part of the occasion. At Rosebery, Mary Anne Collins spoke to the children at the end of Mass about how their Project Compassion fundraising can make the world fairer. Later in the day she spoke to the children in Queenstown as well.

Both schools ran fun activities during the day including some novelty races, drama, singing and a special assembly. Principal Rod Linhart at St Joseph’s Queenstown talked to the children about their own fathers while celebrating Jesus’ earthly father. He spoke of the value of humility where people keep on doing the right thing without looking for acknowledgement. At Rosebery St Joseph’s role as a carpenter was recalled by carpentry objects brought up in the entrance procession.

There is a tangible family spirit at both schools and a warmth that defies the often harsh West Coast environment. Being small schools, much of the time is organised around buddy activities with the older students taking significant leadership and caring roles with the young ones. The smiles on the faces say it all!
An ability to use numbers is a basic skill that students need to grasp, but who knew gaining that skill could be so engaging? It certainly seems to be in our Catholic primary schools where all types of materials are used to help students make mental connections with the world of numbers and mathematics. We caught some students at St Peter Chanel in Smithton using blocks and some at St Joseph’s in Rosebery and Queenstown busy on their computers.

At Sacred Heart Catholic School in Geeveston, Grade 1 children were using coloured blocks to explore groups of ten while Grade 4 students were excitedly sorting and counting used bottle tops and bread clips in a quest to reach one million. They’ve realised just how big this number is and how long it has taken to reach even one thousand, so they are asking for help from the broader community to donate more plastic tops and clips. As a bonus, students are learning about the throwaway society and environmental concerns and there are plans to convert the many clips and tops into artwork eventually.

Please send your plastic bottle tops and bread clips to Ms Debbie Campagna at Sacred Heart School, 4690 Huon Highway, Geeveston, Tas 7116, or drop them off at the Tasmania Catholic Education Office, Emmett Place, New Town.

A bright future, defined by a rich past.

The University of Tasmania was founded over 123 years ago, making it one of Australia’s oldest universities. Today we’re recognised as an international leader, ranked in the top 3% of universities in the world.* It’s that merging of rich heritage with strength of character that guarantees our greatest achievements are still to come.

*Academic Ranking of World Universities 2012
After six years competing in the annual University of Newcastle Science and Engineering Challenge, the Mount Carmel College Team broke through in May to win the State Final!

The strong team of 34 Year Nine and Ten students will now travel to Lismore, NSW, to represent Tasmania in the National Final.

Forty-six schools competed throughout Tasmania over six days in 2013 in this extremely popular challenge. It tests students' practical ability to work across a broad range of engineering areas with imaginative tasks involving novel and minimal resources. Competitors had to design and build versions of hovercraft, bridges, moon buggies and furniture while other challenges involved radar and electric circuitry to power an imaginary city.

Practical and intellectual skills are tested, as well as the ability to work as a team and under pressure. The Mount Carmel College students found the process was very much their forte because the College has a strong emphasis on design, build and test within the Science curriculum.

When the National Final is held in October, the Mount Carmel College team will be doing its best to bring home the trophy and have a great time in the process. All the best, girls!
healthy lives

All our Catholic Schools take their responsibility to educate children in healthy lifestyles very seriously, with daily PE, lots of sport and play and promotion of healthy eating choices.

Many schools are involved in the ‘Move Well Eat Well’ program. The concept is working at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School in Devonport and many other schools who are promoting healthy eating and physical activity as a normal and positive part of every child’s day.

A recent whole school effort took the form of a ‘Thumping Feet on Thursday’ walk when an impressive number of students, teachers and parents met in the grounds of the Devonport Recreation Centre and formed a ‘walking train’, arriving at school ready to start the day.

Pictured from top left and going clockwise are students from St Joseph’s Catholic School, Rosebery (2 photos); St Therese’s Catholic School, Moonah; Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, Devonport and St Peter Chanel Catholic School, Smithton (2 photos).

There are six healthy messages:

- Tap into water every day
- Plant fruit and vegetables in your lunch box
- Limit ‘occasional’ or ‘sometimes’ foods
- Move, play, go
- Turn off, switch to play
- Stride and ride