Dear Parents, Staff and Children

Good Relationships are the Leading Influence on Student Achievement

Research indicates that positive relationships have more influence on student academic achievement than any other factor. The relationships involved are those between the parent and child, student and teacher, parent and teacher and the student and his/her peers. That is why educators today are putting more emphasis on developing these relationships to enhance the learning experience, and it is working!!

Each of these relationships has a special place in helping students reach their potential, but perhaps the focal relationship where a student’s education is concerned is that between the student and teacher. This relationship begins when the child enters the classroom. Because each child learns in a different way and at a different pace, teachers try to gather as much information concerning the child as possible. This helps determine the best strategy for achieving the school’s curriculum goals for the individual. Your child’s teacher also learns a great deal about your child by simply talking with and listening to him/her. Teachers want to know how your child sees himself/herself.

A parent’s relationship with his/her child’s teacher is also important. Parental input helps the teacher formulate learning strategies. Therefore it is very important for parents to make frequent visits to the school, attend parent/teacher conferences, communicate regularly with teachers and even volunteer to help in the classroom. This sends the child the message that his/her parents care about his/her education. You do not have to wait for a scheduled conference to communicate with your child’s teacher. The more communication that takes place between home and the school, the better it is for the student.

The third important relationship is between the student and his/her peers, so our teachers make frequent use of activities that encourage team building and peer relationships. A number of activities at school are designed to promote these kinds of relationships.

Finally, when a child enjoys a close relationship with his/her parents, it translates into higher achievement at school. Talk with your child…. and keep talking. Ask questions about school and offer to help wherever possible. This dialogue is more important than you know.

St Augustine’s is a (large) family and we enjoy the opportunity to discuss our work. Please take time to learn more about our programs and activities. As always feel free to drop in and say hello when you visit St Augustine’s. Have a great weekend.

Peace & Best Wishes

Jake Madden
Principal
LENTEN SEASON

Thank you to parents who came to our Ash Wednesday Years 3-6 Mass and Years K-2 Liturgy to mark the beginning of Lent which is a very significant time of the year.

Lent may be a time to give up things we enjoy such as chocolate or clothes shopping. But what does Lent actually mean for you?

Lent of course is the season to prepare for Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday and ends when the Easter Triduum begins on Holy Thursday.

Lent is a time of reconciliation. A time when we make space in our lives to think about our relationship with God and the ways in which we are responding or failing to respond to his love and care for us.

PRAYER, FASTING, AND ALMSGIVING

The three most important components of Lent are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Lent is a good time to focus on prayer, pray for those less fortunate and pray to develop your relationship with God. Fasting should be linked to our concern for the poor who are forced to fast by their poverty, so we could encourage ourselves to “fast” from fast food dinners and snacks, TV, video games, movies, etc., Through almsgiving we demonstrate acts of charity and social justice by spending more time thinking about the poor in a variety of ways like donating items to a local charity organization or giving up pocket money for Project Compassion which runs during the 6 weeks of Lent.

So, whatever you may choose to do during this Lenten season remember, “Giving is nothing by itself. But giving shared with the passion of Christ is a wonderful gift, the most beautiful gift, a token of love.” Mother Theresa.

MAKING JESUS REAL

Year 6 have been engaging with the Making Jesus Real program which is centered around the belief that we are the image of Jesus to all those people around us. We are His representatives and our actions should reflect His values.

The program is aligned with Religious Education program and Values Education program throughout Australia. It calls on students to work for peace, justice and the promotion of the common good of society.

Tess and Grace, in Year 6, were kind enough to share some of their personal reflections on the program.

Tess stated that it helped to connect the kids, in the cohort, with each other and allowed the more shy students to come “out of their shells”. Tess and Grace explained that the classes actually made a tally of how many “God moments” took place during the day. They were aiming high at 20 and came in at 15. Pretty good! They went further to reveal that God moments were when you experienced the kindness of someone else, or showed care and consideration for others. “This could be as little as smiling at someone you don’t normally talk to,” they explained.

They said that by making Jesus their role model they were having a deeper desire to connect with others, to do good and show compassion. Grace explained that she noticed her classmates becoming “less selfish and more willing to lend a hand”. The girls made clear that “it makes you think about what kind of person you are and what you need to change in order to be more like Jesus”.

Tess explained that when spending a few days in Sydney recently, she saw a man giving food and money to a poor homeless person. “It made me think about what I had and how I should be grateful for everything God has given to me. I can give back to God by helping others” she said. “Like, going without the ice cream and giving the money to Project Compassion during Easter”.

What inspiring things Year 6 are doing and what beautiful images of Jesus they are creating.

Let us leave you with this:

"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me"

Matthew 25:40

Paddy Dent - Leader of School Evangelisation
Mary Machatsch - Coord: Religious Education Curriculum
SPORT NEWS

Basketball and Rugby 2013
If you are interested in playing basketball or rugby for St Augustine’s or you have a team already playing that wants to remain in the competition in 2013 and you have not seen either Mrs Kama or Mr Hammond, please see Mrs Kama in the sports office to make sure you don’t miss out.

We need more Year 4 boys and girls to help make teams in the Saturday competition.

Rugby Training
Rugby training has started on Thursday afternoons to prepare for the upcoming Year 5 and 6 “Sevens Competition” and the Friday night competition. Training is from 3:15 pm - 4:00 pm on the school field. Please watch KnowledgeNET in case of cancellations due to bad weather.

Rugby 7’s
Term 1 sees the Primary Schools’ Rugby Sevens at four convenient locations including Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey and Taree. The winning team from the MNC Regional Final will head to Sydney for the State Championships and see the British Lions play the Waratahs. The Coffs Harbour competition will be held on Thursday 7 March at Coffs Rugby Park from 9:30 am, for Year 5 and 6 students only.

POLDING Summer Sport Trials
Congratulations to the children who travelled to Newcastle last week for the Polding Trials. Special congratulations to Siena Bordignon and Noah Dalton who made the Basketball Polding Team and to Regan Dougherty who made the Tennis Polding Team. A great effort from our school.

Clarence Zone Swimming Carnival
Congratulations to the children who travelled to Grafton for the Clarence Zone Swimming Trial Carnival on Thursday. Special congratulations to the children who have made the Clarence team. Names will be posted on KnowledgeNET soon.

Thankyou to the parents who travelled to Grafton for the day. We appreciate your support and assistance throughout the day.

Winter Sport Trials
Children who wish to participate in the Winter Sport Trials (Rugby Union, Rugby League, Netball, Hockey and Soccer) are to return forms to Mrs Kama as soon as possible. These trials are on Wednesday 27 February at St Francis Xavier school from 4:00 pm.

Liz Cambage Visit
On Valentine’s Day we had a very special visit from current Opal, WNBA, WNBL and Olympian Liz Cambage. Standing at 203cm tall, the children were very excited to see her and listen to her stories about the Olympics and life travelling the world as a professional basketballer.

Swans Visit
Daniel Hannebery and Shane Biggs from the Swans AFL team visited St Augustine’s this week. They spoke about how they became professional AFL players and answered questions from the students. AFL fans, both students and teachers, were excited about the visit.

Dan Hammond—Sports Coordinator

Yr 1 Parent Reading Information Night
On Tuesday 26 February the Year 1 teachers will present important information about the school’s reading program and how this can be supported at home. There will also be information about KnowledgeNET and how parents and carers can use this to support their child’s learning. Please bring along your carer’s username and password.

We hope to see you on Tuesday night at 7:00 pm in the Year 1 Cohort Learning Centre.
QUALITY INN CITY CENTRE
22 Elizabeth Street
COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450
Telephone: 6652 6388

Quality Inn City Centre
St Augustine’s Centenary P&F Assoc Golf Day 24 March 2013

Entry forms for our great golf day were sent home to all families last week. Please return your form and money to the office as soon as possible as spots are filling very quickly. All afternoon spots are now full. If you would like to play but don’t have a team, hand your form in and we will find you one. This is a great community day and we thank you for your support.

HELPERS NEEDED: If you are able to help out on the day for an hour or so, please contact Tess at the school office. We need helpers selling raffle tickets and on the betting and water holes. The helpers have just as much fun as the golfers.

BIKE RAFFLE
Alister Scotford from Ventoux Cycles and C.ex Coffs have very generously donated a bike (for a male or female) to the value of $650.00. Tickets for the bike (to be drawn on the Golf Day) have been sent home to all families today. Tickets are $2.00 each or $10.00 for six. Please return these to the school office together with the money as soon as possible.

Scott Bohringer—P & F Committee Secretary

SCHOOL PHOTOS
Our School Photo day will be Tuesday 12 March. Order envelopes have been sent home. Please return envelopes to the class teacher or office by Friday 8 March.

If you require sibling photos, the teacher must be notified by the students. These photos are taken on the day and you can view these later on the internet and pay for them at that time. A password will be notified after photo day.

All children are to wear full school uniform on Tuesday 12 March.

SCHOOL DROP OFF ZONE—OPPOSITE CHURCH
A reminder to all parents that the ‘drop off zone’ is to be used only for a very short time for dropping off students from 8:00—9:30 am and from 2:30—4:00 pm. Parking is not allowed and drivers are not to leave their vehicle during these times. Please be quick at the drop off zone to avoid vehicles queueing up over the pedestrian crossing and creating a dangerous situation for our students.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC INFORMATION NIGHT
A note has been sent home with students who are involved in the Instrumental Music Program advising of a Parent Information Night to be held on Monday 25 February at 7:00 pm in the school hall.

All the music tutors will be in attendance and will outline how the instrumental music program works and will give information on homework procedures, care of instruments and rehearsal/performance sessions.

EMAIL ADDRESSES
If you know of any parent/carer who is not receiving our school emails with Newsletters and notes, please ask them to contact the office and supply us with a current email address.
As you would be aware St Augustine’s School is celebrating its 100th Birthday in 2013. A number of events have been organised to encourage the Coffs Harbour community to come together to celebrate our 100 years of education.

Your child has received a Centenary events card (with a fridge magnet) outlining the major Centenary events for this year. Please note the Gala Dinner information on the back of the card. More information about this event will be revealed as the year progresses but we do encourage you to get a group of friends together and purchase your tickets early to avoid disappointment. Tickets for the Centenary Gala Dinner are on sale at the C.ex Club. Go to the Centenary Events page on our school website and click on the picture (see below) to purchase tickets online.

If you’d like some extra cards to hand out to “ex students” and their families please collect some from the school office. We hope that you will be able to join us on these occasions.

Sponsorship and participation opportunities that may interest your business are available. A variety of options have been designed to meet your specific needs.

Please refer to our website and click on the Centenary link to view sponsorship options.

For additional information please email: torourke-cox@lism.catholic.edu.au
OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Invoices - Invoices were sent home last week by post. Please ensure payments are brought up to date as soon as possible to help us meet our financial commitments to the Service.

Medication/First Aid – Following our last Newsletter and letter dated 12 November 2012 to families, we still do not have updated information regarding medication/first aid information for all children who attend After School Care. As a matter of urgency, can you please ensure you advise us of all current medication/first aid requirements needed by your child. If you are unsure, please call me and I can go through the information we currently have on file for updating.

Birth Certificate/Immunisation Certificate – We still require copies of the Immunisation and/or Birth Certificate for some students. Can you please ensure these documents are forwarded to school without delay in order for us to comply with current legal regulations. Thank you.

We are in need of laptops/iPads at OSHC - in order for the children to do homework. If you are thinking of buying a new one, please keep OSHC in mind when discarding of the old one, we would love to have it! Or if you want to donate a new one, we will be happy to let everyone know you did!

Please contact Brigitte (0417 666 494 or b.klinkers@lism.catholic.edu.au) to enrol your child into St Augustine’s OSHC so enrolment orientation can be organised. Thank you.

It is an absolute delight to see the new Kindy children settle into OSHC and make new friends. Watching the older children help and play with the younger ones has been great and we are very proud of them all. I’ve enjoyed meeting the new parents/carers for an enrolment chat/meeting. These give us the opportunity to know the family behind the child and makes communication with each other so much easier.

Please feel free to contact me with any queries you have in regards to OSHC and I will do my best to help you.

VOLUNTEERS

St Augustine’s OSHC would greatly appreciate help from volunteers during homework time. If you are a parent, grandparent, aunty, uncle, friend…..just contact Brigitte. A Working With Children Check will need to be conducted prior to commencement.

PLAYGROUP

Playgroup at St. Augustine’s is very popular and a time many parents look forward to each week. The coffee is fresh, the tea is hot and the milk frothed. St Augustine’s playgroup is not only for parents/carers and their children from the St Augustine’s community, it is open to all parents/carers and their under school aged child/ren.

Cost is $3.00 per family each week and we ask you to bring a small plate to share (either fruit, home-baked goodies, etc). A booking isn’t needed, but please write your contact details down upon arrival when paying the fee. Playgroup is located in the OSHC room (Albany Street entrance) of the school.

Brigitte Klinkers (0417 666 494 or b.klinkers@lism.catholic.edu.au)

King and Queen of our Ten Pin Bowling day during Vacation Care
**The Green Spot**

The children have now participated in one week of fundamental skills during the school week. Children do not automatically know how to throw, kick, run and jump as part of their growth and development. These are known as fundamental movement skills. In the same way kids need to learn the alphabet in order to read, they need to learn basic movement skills in order to lead a physically active, healthy life.

We have been encouraged by the improvement in one week of completing these skills and are looking forward to monitoring their development throughout the term. As you are aware the teachers are extremely busy during the week and so we would like to take this opportunity to thank the teachers for their involvement and support with this new program.

**School Lunch Box Ideas - Lunch box idea # 2 – Jazz up fruit and Veges**

Chopped up veggie sticks, also known as crudités, are great for the lunch box because “kids eat them without even realising it,” says Gare, who insists you can make anything interesting by just adding a novelty factor. “Put some Philadelphia cream cheese inside a celery stick or put three strawberries on a skewer. Make something that’s fun to pull out of their lunch box,” she says.

In fact, Gare believes that adding fruit skewers to the lunch box menu is a proven way to get kids to eat fruit, “especially if there is a surprise in the middle, like a marshmallow,” she adds. Another of Gare’s favourite lunch box creations is what she calls an ‘apprange’ - half an apple and half an orange stuck together. The orange keeps the apple from discolouring, and the kids delight in the oddity of two fruits in one!

**Drinking water** is the best way to quench your thirst. Even better, it doesn’t have all the extra sugar found in fruit drinks and juices, soft drinks, sports drinks and flavoured mineral waters. It’s okay to have sweetened drinks sometimes – but not every day. Did you know that 250ml of fruit juice or soft drink contains the equivalent of approximately **6 teaspoons of sugar**? Add it up: if one teaspoon contains 4 grams of sugar, just one drink a day puts almost an extra **9 kilograms of sugar** into your system every year!

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**COMING EVENTS**

**FEBRUARY**

25  Mark Green—Caritas visit  
Instrumental Music Program Info Night  
7:00 pm

26  Yrs K-2 Sausage Sizzle  
Yr 1 Parent Reading Info Night 7:00 pm

27  Dance Fever  
Winter Sports Trials

28  Rugby training 3:00 pm—4:00 pm

**MARCH**

1  Yrs 3-6 Swimming Program  
Diocesan AFL trials at Grafton  
Yr 4 at Parish Mass 9:15 am

5  Yr 6 Breakfast 7:30 am—8:15 am  
P & F Meeting 7:00 pm in the LARC

6  Dance Fever

7  Coffs Primary Schools Rugby 7's Tournament  
Rugby training 3:00 pm—4:00 pm  
Yr K Liturgy 10:20 am

8  Diocesan Swimming Carnival at Coffs  
Family Faith Weekend at Stuarts Point

11  Catholic Schools Week

12  **School Photos**  
Yrs 3/4 Sausage Sizzle  
Yr K Parent Reading Information Night

13  Dance Fever

14  Rugby Training

15  Yrs 3-6 Swimming Program  
Diocesan Winter Sports Trials—Grafton

20  Dance Fever

21  School Cross Country Selection Carnival

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**What’s In Your Child’s Lunchbox?**

At St Augustine’s we are participating in the Live Life Well at School initiative.

The children are involved in daily exercise with a focus on the Fundamental Movement Skills. An important goal for our school is to embed healthy eating habits with our children. Parents play a vital role in this as the food provided for lunchboxes is controlled by you.

Lunchboxes should contain healthy foods. We **strongly advise** parents and carers not to pack chips, Twisties, lollies, chocolates and foods high in salt and sugar. Fresh fruit is a much healthier option than foods such as bars and fruit straps.

The best drink option is water. A flyer attached to this newsletter supports this view. Children are encouraged to rehydrate during the day if they have water in their drink bottle. Please do not send cordial.

There is no doubt that behaviour is affected by the food children consume. This is evident both in the classroom and on the playground. We are working on this at school and ask that parents support us by providing only healthy options in lunchboxes.
Help your child ACHIEVE!

One way to help your child achieve at school is to work together with your child’s teacher. The parent-teacher partnership takes work from both sides to become a reality. Here are some ideas that will help.

5. Inform teachers of your child’s challenges and changes.
Life’s not always smooth sailing for kids. Family circumstances can alter. Friends move away. Illness happens. These changes affect learning. Make sure you keep your child’s teacher up-to-date with significant changes or difficulties your child experiences, so he or she can accommodate their emotional and learning needs at school.

6. Skill children to work with others.
Schools are social places requiring children to work and play with each other much of the time. Teaching manners to kids, as well as encouraging them to share their time, space and things with others are practical ways to help kids with their social skills. Talk through any social challenges they may have, helping them develop their own strategies to get on with others.

7. Respectfully seek joint solutions to problems and difficulties.
Resist the temptation to solve all your children’s problems or think you have the only solution. Most learning and social problems can be resolved when teachers and parents work together in the best interests of the child.

8. Participate fully in class & school activities.
There is a huge body of research that points to the correlation between parent involvement in a child’s schooling and their educational success. Quite simply, if you want your child to improve his learning then take an interest in his learning, attend as many school functions as you can, and follow the lead provided by your child’s teacher. This simple strategy will have a massive, long-term impact.

9. Trust your teacher’s knowledge, professionalism and experience.
Your child’s teachers are your greatest allies. Their training, their experience around kids and their objective professionalism puts them in a strong position to make judgement calls about your child.

10. Talk up what happens at school.
Your child will take their cues from you about how they see their school. If you want your child to value learning, and enjoy their time at school then you need to support your school and make sure he or she hears positive messages about learning, teachers and the school itself. You can set a strong educational agenda at home by talking up your school.

This type of 10 point plan is easy to read but hard to put into practice, particularly when you get busy or your child has significant difficulties. Choose two or three ideas from this list to really focus on in the coming year and you’ll find that the rest will fall into place. Good luck and nurture the partnerships you have with your child’s teachers.
Choose water as a drink

Drinking water is the best way to quench your thirst. Even better, it doesn’t have all the extra sugar found in fruit drinks and juices, soft drinks, sports drinks and flavoured ‘mineral’ waters.

It’s okay to have sweetened drinks sometimes – but not every day.

Did you know that 250ml of fruit juice or soft drink contains the equivalent of approximately 6 teaspoons of sugar? Add it up: if one teaspoon contains 4 grams of sugar, just one drink a day puts almost an extra 9 kilograms of sugar into your system every year!

Why drink water?

★ It helps prevent decay and holes in your teeth.
★ The fluoride found in tap water in most areas helps you develop strong teeth.
★ Tap water costs a whole lot less than other drinks. Often we don’t feel thirsty, even when our bodies need fluid. That’s why it’s a good idea to drink water regularly during the day, and especially when it’s hot.

It’s also important to make sure you drink water before you play sport or games. Drink plenty afterwards too so that you make up for what you’ve lost through sweating.

Water and your body

★ About two-thirds of the human body is made up of water.
★ Water helps control your body temperature, carries nutrients and oxygen to cells, cushions joints, protects organs and helps to remove wastes.
★ Water is lost from the body through sweating, breathing and going to the toilet.
★ Dehydration – or not having enough fluid in your body – can cause headaches, tiredness, crankiness and poor concentration.

How much should I drink each day?

All children 4-8 years - 1.2 litres per day or about 5 glasses
Boys 9-13 years - 1.6 litres per day or about 6 glasses
Girls 9-13 years - 1.4 litres per day or about 5-6 glasses

Remember, you need to drink extra water on hot days and during moderate or vigorous activity.

"About two-thirds of the human body is made up of water."
STATE FUNDING CUTS TO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: UPDATE FOR PARENTS AND STAFF

Considerable uncertainty and anxiety arose among Catholic school communities in the latter part of 2012, created by announcements from the NSW Government of cuts in funding for NSW Catholic schools. This occurred despite the Government’s March 2011 election promise to Catholic school parents not to reduce recurrent or capital funding for Catholic schools. This circular explains the nature of the NSW Government’s funding reductions and their likely impact on Catholic schools over the period 2013 to 2017.

1. Recurrent Grants

Recurrent grants help fund the ongoing operation of Catholic schools, most of it used to help pay the salaries of staff. Grants are adjusted each half year in line with cost increases in NSW Government schools in the previous half year. At present the grants for each student in Catholic systemic schools is $946.14 for primary and $1,267.81 for secondary. The grant levels for Congregational schools vary according to the school’s assessed category of financial need.

From projected cut in grants to actual freeze

In early September 2012 there was a major public outcry when the NSW Government, as part of its current cost-cutting exercise, proposed an immediate and significant reduction to the per capita grants for non-Government schools. At that stage the proposed cut in the grants for Catholic systemic schools was $67m per annum. The quick and effective response of parents and principals forced the Government to reconsider its method of seeking to make savings in non-Government school grants, resulting in the announcement on 11 September of a four year freeze in grants from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017.

Modifying the freeze for special cases

The Catholic Education Commission (CEC) and the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) jointly requested the Government to modify the impact of this freeze by providing ongoing indexation of grants for two particular categories of students: (1) students with a disability, and (2) students in new schools. On 19 December 2012 the Premier of NSW, Barry O’Farrell, and Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli, advised the CEC and AIS that it had accepted this modification.

Managing the shortfall

For Catholic systemic schools, freezing grants from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017 means an overall reduction of $273 per primary student over the four years and $365 for each secondary student. The exact amount for each congregational school will vary. Making up for this shortfall over the next four years will be a matter for each school and/or diocesan authority. What parents may expect to see is some reduction in services to schools, reductions in levels of school staffing, or an extra rate of fee increase, or some combination of these.

The Government plans to keep Government school expenditure cuts ‘outside the school gate’, that is, in the administrative and central services provided by the Department of Education and Communities. This is not possible for Catholic schools that have far fewer centralised support services. So some impact on schools is unavoidable.
2. **Capital Grants**

*State Government contribution to capital*

Most of the cost of building and refurbishing Catholic schools is met by parents and parishioners through donations to building funds and contributions to repaying loans. The NSW Government has long eased the burden by subsidising, for up to 20 years, the cost of interest paid on a school building project. This Interest Subsidy Scheme was replaced in 2007 by a Building Grants Assistance Scheme (BGAS) which has been growing annually by funds transferred into it from expiring interest subsidies.

*Freezing the Capital grants*

On 12 June 2012 the NSW Government included in its Budget papers for 2012/13 a cap on the capital grants, but only on 10 December did the Government confirm that it had frozen the BGAS for four years at its current value of $11m. The NSW Government has still not made any public announcement about this additional cut to Catholic school grants. This is the first official notice of this cut to Catholic school communities.

*Modifying the freeze*

Following requests from the CEC and AIS that the Government rescind its decision to freeze the capital program, the Government advised on 21 December 2012 that it would continue to index the $11m annually by (a) movements in the relevant Building Price Index and (b) increases in non-Government school enrolments. Otherwise the cap remains.

*Impact on Catholic school communities*

The CEC has emphasised to the NSW Government that freezing the BGAS will put pressure on capital funding decisions: some communities may be required to borrow more, some new schools or extensions to current schools may not be built or built soon enough and some essential upgrades may be deferred. Moreover, it is the worst time to be reducing capital funds because the school age population in NSW is expanding rapidly.

3. **Teacher Development**

On 16 October Minister Piccoli announced that $2.2m would be provided for Teacher Development for the new NSW curriculum for all non-Government schools in 2013. CEC and AIS objected that this amount was grossly insufficient and did not reflect the relative proportion of NSW teachers in non-Government schools. The Government has now agreed to increase the funds it is making available for the non-Government sector from $2.2m to $8.6m to make it proportionate with the Government sector.

**Conclusion**

The CEC appreciates the right of the NSW Government to reduce expenditure on schools in what it sees as difficult financial times but regrets the fact that the Government felt the need to do so without adequate warning or consultation. Since education is the most significant, influential and long-term investment a State Government can make, reducing expenditure on schools is a risky and short-sighted measure. The CEC also appreciates the NSW Government’s response to its submission in December 2012, the processes instituted to monitor the cuts and the public assurances of the NSW Premier that the Government will restore funding to schools as soon as it returns to a more favourable and predictable economic environment.

Finally, the major issue for Catholic schools in 2013 will be the uncertain impact of the new Gonski funding model which is sure to become a key issue at the Federal election on 14 September. Your active participation may be called on again in the public debate on Catholic school funding in the context of the September election.

Bishop Anthony Fisher, op  
Chair

Brian Croke  
Executive Director
An invitation to a weekend of faith renewal, fun and socialising

**Family Retreat 2013**

enabling us to deepen our life in Christ Jesus leading to more enriched daily living

Two locations and dates to choose from

SDA Convention Centre
250 Grassy Head Road, Stuart Point
Saturday 9 March (midday) - Sunday 10 March (afternoon)

Camp Koinonia
29-41 Terrace Street, Evans Head
Saturday 23 March (midday) - Sunday 24 March (afternoon)

Facilitators

Adults: Martin Scroope
Young People: Kate Nestor and Matt de Dassel

More information

For more information please contact your Parish School Parent Representative or your Parent Assembly Cluster Organisers:

Jo Kelly: Richmond Region
Mobile 0407 706 454

Peta Rourke: Hastings/Macleay Region
Mobile 0400 420 614

Leanne Robbins: Tweed Region
Mobile 0407 143 975

Paul Edgar: Southern & Northern Clarence
Mobile 0427 118 122

Please register by 1 March 2013

To register please phone 1300 557 874 or email parents@lism.catholic.edu.au

This retreat, accommodation and meals are free to all families with children enrolled in Parish Schools in the Diocese of Lismore