



“The Federation” A ‘Potted’ History

The Federation of South Australian Catholic Schools Inc. was formed in 1967 by a group of concerned parents. South Australia was the only State where government grants were not provided for children attending non-government schools.

Events leading up to formation of the South Australian Federation

- 1954 **Western Australian Federation of Parents and Friends formed**
Their goal was ‘that public funds made available by governments be equitably – not equally – distributed to all Australian school children.’
- 1962 **The Goulburn Incident**
The NSW government demanded that toilet facilities at Our Lady of Mercy Preparatory School in Goulburn be upgraded within 12 weeks of notification. In sympathy for what appeared to be an injustice, as there was not state aid available at the time, all Catholic schools in Goulburn closed their doors. Consequently 2,200 Catholic school children presented themselves for enrolment at Goulburn’s state schools. This doubled the enrolments in the state schools which were not able to cope with the extra students. The government capitulated and paid for the toilet upgrade. The ‘Goulburn Incident’ epitomises the ongoing fight for equitable funding of non-government school students in Australia.
- 1962 The formation of the national parent body, representing the parents of all non-government school children, now known as the **Australian Parents Council (APC)**.
- 1967 On 4 July a meeting of parents at Glengowrie Parish School met to consider forming a federation of parents and friends groups in South Australia to campaign for government aid. **Subsequently the Constitution of the Federation of Parents and Friends Associations of South Australian Catholic Schools was adopted.**

A concerted effort over the next few months was made in lobbying for government aid for non government schools. A planned strategy of meetings with politicians and the Premier Don Dunstan was carried out over the ensuing months.

- 1968 **First State grants of \$10 per student per year to non-government school** children in South Australia. Announced by Don Dunstan at the Sacred Heart College Speech Night.
- 1969 **First Commonwealth grants** to non-government schools announced by the federal Minister for Education, Malcolm Fraser.
- 1979 Federation office expands with the employment of a clerical officer for 5 hours per week.
- 1980 Federation receives first **Grant in Aid** of \$3,700 from State Government to assist with operational costs.
- 1983 A levy of \$2.00 per student to finance a campaign for educational funding justice. Levy monies paid into **Fighting Fund** which still exists today.
- 1984 **State Grants (School Assistance) Act, 1984** provides the legislative basis for schools assistance programs administered by the Commonwealth Department of Education and the then Commonwealth Schools Commission. This provided for a Commonwealth funding guarantee each quadrennium for per capita and special targeted programs.
- 1989 The Federation **appoints a part time Executive Officer** (10 hours per week, 37 weeks per year) funded by a levy of 15c per student.
- 1992 Federation celebrates its **Silver Jubilee**.

South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) allocates funds for the **employment of a Parent Participation Project Officer** for 10 hours per week.

Intense lobbying of State Government ensures that non-government school students will maintain their funding after a threat of reduction.

- 1993 Parent representation on the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Non-government Schools (NGSAC) for the first time.

5 July – **Federation Office relocates** to the Catholic Education Centre at Thebarton.

- 1993 State funding for non-government schools changes from a percentage of State Standard Cost (cost of educating a child in a SA government school) to an amount **based on the 1993 quantum with adjustments for CPI, enrolments and salary increases each year**.
- 1994 South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) reviews the funding distribution formula within the SA Catholic sector schools

1995 Commonwealth reviews the **'New Schools Policy'** (NSP). The NSP was a mechanism used by the Commonwealth government to regulate the opening of non-government schools.

1996 Commonwealth government introduces **the Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment (EBA)** as a mechanism to change the flow of funding to States as and when the enrolment of non-government schools students increases as a proportion of total school enrolments using 1996 enrolment data as a base.

Review of the SACCS, its charter, membership and committee structure.

1997 Commonwealth government reviews the General Recurrent Grants Program and the use of the **Education Resources Index (ERI)** as the mechanism for determining Commonwealth Funding Categories.

State Government introduces a policy for **planning** new and significantly changed non-government schools in lieu of **abolished New Schools Policy**.

1998 SACCS adopts new charter and new committee structure. Associations including the Federation lose representation – membership is now based on merit with nominations requiring approval of Bishops and congregational leaders.

1999 Commonwealth government announces new funding model based on socio-economic status (**SES**) of school population. Catholic schools moved to **Category 11 funding** (in dollar terms the 2nd highest funding category).

Review of South Australian Education Act commences.

Development of new curriculum framework –**South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework (SACSA)**.

2000 SACCS commences review of Funding allocations to schools.

2002 Federation participates in Senate Inquiry into the education and funding of students with disabilities and the State Government's Review of Child Protection.

2004 Federation leads a strong advocacy and lobbying strategy for increased funding to non-government schools targeting Federal MP's in marginal seats in the lead up to the Federal election.

2004 The Federation **adopts a new name** – The Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities (SA) – and revises its vision and mission statement. This reflects the changing nature of parental involvement in schools.

2005 Federation joins an **inter sector State Election Strategy** working group with SACCS, CEO, AISSA and the Independent Schools Parent Council to develop

a submission for increased state funding to non-government schools in the lead up to the 2006 state election and a strategy involving delegations school led delegations to MP's and candidates with parent involvement. This strategy is successful in obtaining promises of increased funding from both parties. On Labor's return to power, its promise of an extra 16 million dollars to be distributed based on needs is confirmed.

- 2007 The Federation celebrates its **40th anniversary** with a series of events including a Cocktail Evening in November with guest speaker John Schumann.

The Federation again leads a strong advocacy and lobbying strategy for increased funding to non-government schools targeting candidates in marginal seats in the lead up to the Federal election. Through its affiliation with the Australian Parents Council, the Federation is involved in a series of meetings with the Federal Minister for Education and the Opposition Spokesperson for Education.

The Federation is represented on the Education and Care Legislative Review Stakeholders Group advising the state Minister on proposed changes to a range of legislation governing education and care in SA.

- 2008 The Federation establishes the **Tom Ffrench Family School Partnership Awards** to showcase and celebrate examples of innovative initiatives in SA Catholic Schools that demonstrate a commitment to working in partnership with parents. These awards are named in honour of Life Member Tom Ffrench a founding member of the Federation who passed away in August 2007. These awards will be presented annually at the Annual General Meeting.

- 2009 The Federation undertakes a comprehensive communication strategy with affiliates regarding State funding to Catholic Schools in SA in the lead up to the 2010 State Election.

The Federation is a partner in a joint Independent/Catholic sector State Election Strategy to advocate for a commitment for increased funding and improved access to resources for Non-Government School students.

- 2010 The Federation launches the **Charter for Parents in Catholic Schools SA** and begins dissemination of a framed copy to every Catholic school in SA.

- 2011 The Federation actively engages in the **Review of Funding for Schooling** commissioned by the Federal Government. Prepares and lodges its own submission to the review and contributes to the development of the Australian Parents Council submissions.
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2011 The Federation is represented on a **SACCS Political Strategy Working Group** to drive political advocacy within CESA to complement the NCEC's national strategy as the Review of Funding for Schooling unfolds.

Revamped **Federation website** is launched.

2012 The Federation prepares a submission to the **Review of the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC)**. The reviewed structure of the NCEC maintains a parent representative selected by the Bishop's Commission for Catholic Education (BCCE) from nominations received from state and territory based parent organisations as advocated in the Federation's submission.

Federation launches its **Facebook** page.

Australian Parents Council **celebrates 50 years** of Influence and Innovation in August. Caz Bosch is awarded Life Membership.

2013 Federation hosts its **Inaugural Parent Leader Conference** on 25th May.

The BCCE selects Federation nominee Ann Bliss as the parent representative on the restructured NCEC.

Federation actively engaged in local, state and federal advocacy as the detail of the Federal Government's proposed funding model emerges.

Proposal by the eastern state Catholic school parent bodies to form a distinct national Catholic parent body (**Catholic School Parents Australia**), gains momentum with the support of Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), NCEC and state/territory Catholic Education Directors. The Federation engages in a process of discernment and plans a Special General Meeting to resolve its position to join as a founding member, remain affiliated with APC or be members of both.

On August 5th the Federation's Council voted to join **Catholic School Parents Australia (CSPA)** as a founding member whilst retaining its affiliation with the **Australian Parents Council Inc.**

CSPA was formally launched on 14th October and its inaugural AGM was held on 15th October.

2014 Federation Council undertook a **review of the organisation** resulting in revised strategic goals and organisational structure.