Background:

The “Tom Ffrench Family School Partnership Awards” have been established to showcase and celebrate examples of innovative initiatives in Catholic schools in South Australia that build and nurture family/school partnerships.

The awards are named in honour of Tom Ffrench who worked tirelessly for the Catholic Church and Catholic Education in South Australia for 50 years until his death in August 2007.

Tom was a founding member of the Federation of Parents and Friends Associations of South Australian Catholic Schools formed in 1967. This group of determined people together fought successfully for funding for Catholic Schools from the State and Federal Governments.

For this exceptional service to the objectives of the Federation, Tom was elected to Life Membership in the early 1990’s.

The third annual Tom Ffrench Family School Partnership Awards were announced at the 44th Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities on 23 May 2011.
2011 Award Categories:

Faith Formation and Ministry awarded to:

**Our Lady Of Grace for its initiative:**
*“Protecting our Environment”*

This award celebrates the work of Our Lady of Grace School where through a range of exciting and innovative projects it has engaged all members of its community, including parents and families, to work together to protect our environment. The initiative lives out our Catholic community’s call to care for our earth and is, therefore, an excellent example of the work our schools undertake to engage with families in this ministry in response to the challenge presented by the Catholic Church’s ecological vision statement “On Holy Ground”.

Building Community awarded to:

**St Mary Magdalene’s School, St Thomas More School and Catherine McAuley School for their joint project: Elizabeth Community Connections**

This award recognises this innovative joint initiative designed to connect with parents and families in the three Elizabeth parish schools. The project employs a Community Development Coordinator whose responsibility is to promote parental involvement in their children’s learning and to support them to develop stronger connections with their children’s school. The project aims to create communities of welcome and inclusion that build parents’ confidence and capacity to support their children’s learning. This project is showcased as a leading practice model in the national Parental Engagement in Schooling in Low SES Communities project and associated resource for schools which is to be launched later this year.

Celebrating Diversity awarded to:

**Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Enfield for its commitment to engaging with parents and families from diverse cultures.**

This award recognises OLSH’s commitment to engage with parents and families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds as integral members of the school community. This is expressed in its holistic approach to reaching out and welcoming these families into the life of the school and inviting them to join as partners in the education of their children. This whole of school approach is also showcased as a leading practice model in the national Parental Engagement in Schooling in Low SES Communities project and associated resource for schools which is to be launched later this year.

‘Engaging Families in Student Learning and the Curriculum’ awarded to:

**St. Anthony’s School, Edwardstown for its initiative “Empowering Parents with the skills to be Effective Home Read Tutors”**

This initiative reflects one of the key dimensions of successful Family School Partnerships – connecting the learning at home and at school. It recognises parents as the first and continuing educators and as partners in their children’s education.

The project involves the provision of fortnightly reading sessions for parents of students in Reception to Year 2. The innovative nature of the initiative is that the information is delivered over time with opportunities for parents to practise the skills with their children and then share and reflect with the group at the next session.