



TERM 2 NEWSLETTER

Apply Now for 2018 PIE Grants!

We are delighted to announce we have signed a new three-year agreement with increased funding from the state government to support Catholic school communities to bring parents and families closer to their children's learning and encourage their participation in the life of our schools.

Applications are now open for Parents in Education grants of up to \$2,500 and will close on Friday 6th July.

Late applications will be accepted up until Friday 13th July but will receive secondary priority by the selection panel.

Schools can apply for retrospective funding for initiatives commenced in Term 2 (for expenses paid from 3rd April) and those for planned for Terms 3 and 4.

The 2018 grants are targeted at two broad areas:

- Encouraging and promoting greater participation of parents/caregivers who are not well represented in their school and preschool decision-making processes, and/or
- Increasing parent/caregivers' understanding of what children are learning and how they can support their child's learning and education at home and through positive relationships with educators.

Schools may submit more than one application and may also cluster and submit joint or separate applications.

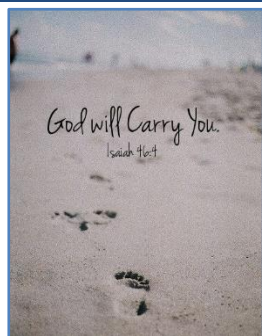
Applications can be initiated by a formal parent group (e.g. board, P&F) or individual parents/carers. They must:

- focus on promoting parent/carer participation in decision-making and/or parent engagement in learning or school-family partnership approaches
- be supported by the school principal or delegate
- include an appropriately detailed budget.

I said ... I can't go on ... but **Jesus said I will carry you.**

I said ... I am too tired ... but **Jesus said I will give you rest.**

I said ... impossible ... but **Jesus said all things are possible.**



Less than a Cup of Coffee

The Federation supports parents to be visible and have their voices heard in lots of different ways – in state and federal politics, in education policy and decision making, in Catholic education, in schools and preschools, in the community and in the media. We promote and protect the right of parents, carers and families to have a say in how their children are educated and to engage in helpful ways with their children's learning and schooling.

By parents. For parents. With Parents. For the benefit of our children and the schools they attend. For less than the price of a cup of coffee per child per year.



Travelling a Rocky and Rewarding Road

It was agreed many years ago that the Catholic education office (CESA) would ask schools to pay membership fees to the Federation *on behalf of their parent communities*. This was because P&Fs were struggling and many were shifting from fund raising to 'friend raising'. This agreement worked well. We sometimes had differences of opinion but we respected each others' roles and the importance of parents being able to self-organise and speak for themselves.

Then without notifying or negotiating with us, CESA told schools to stop paying our fees in April last year. It later told us it didn't think we should stay with the Australian Parents Council (we've been a member for 50+ years) and was concerned about our committee's culture and membership.

Soon after, we asked Archbishop Wilson for help and he set up a joint meeting. He said he would decide what would happen and was confident of finding a satisfactory way forward. But in early 2018, he advised he would not be continuing the mediation process and had asked CESA's new director to pick it up. We met with Dr. Neil McGoran in March and have agreed to write a paper on our objectives and intentions. Dr. McGoran has said this will help him to make a recommendation to the SA Commission of Catholic Schools (SACCS) about future system support for the Federation's role and CESA's relationship with it.

Tough as the road has been and still is, our President Kylie Ind says it has also been rewarding as the committee has re-focused on what matters most and become a real team.

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The Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities (SA)



Governments and Church Respond to the Royal Commission Recommendations

Responding formally to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has announced a new national office for child safety will open on 1st July. Its first tasks include the development of a national framework for child safety and a set of principles for child-safe organisations.

'The Royal Commission has made it very clear that we all have a role to play to keep our children safe – governments, schools sporting clubs, churches, charitable organisations and of course all of us – we all have a vested interest in the safety of other people's children not just our own. Those children are our future. We owe it to them that they are protected.' (Prime Minister)

The Prime Minister also said he was confident that a national redress scheme would be available from 1st July and that he will make a national apology to survivors of child abuse on 22nd October during National Children's Week.

President of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Coleridge is due to meet soon with the Vatican on the Royal Commission recommendations and the final report of the Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council which completed its work in April. He has said he will also discuss 'the situation of the Church in Adelaide which has been difficult with the trial of Archbishop (Philip) Wilson' (www.catholicleader.com.au).

The South Australian parliament passed legislation in 2017 which means SA priests will be legally required from October to report admissions of child sex abuse made under the confessional seal to the police.

Bishop Greg O'Kelly (Diocese of Port Pirie) who was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Adelaide when Archbishop Wilson recently stepped down, spoke out on ABC Radio last week saying '[The legislation] doesn't affect us ... we have an understanding of the seal of confession that is in the area of the sacred ... [Church law lays down that] 'it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray in any way a penitent in words or in any manner and for any reason'.

The ACT government has also passed a law which will make it illegal for priests to not report child sexual abuse confessions from 1st April next year. Archbishop Christopher Prowse (Canberra & Goulburn) said in the Canberra Times on June 6th 'The government threatens religious freedom by appointing itself an expert on religious practices and by attempting to change the sacrament of confession while delivering no improvement in the safety of children ... Sadly, breaking the seal of confession won't prevent abuse and it won't help our ongoing efforts to improve the safety of children in Catholic institutions'.

Archbishop Prowse has deeply regretted the Catholic Church's role in institutional child abuse, asked for forgiveness and highlighted what steps have been taken over many years now to protect children and prevent abuse also said 'What sexual abuser would confess to a priest if they thought they would be reported? If the seal is removed, the remote possibility that they would confess and so could be counselled to report is gone.'

Writing in The Advertiser on 16th June, David Speers of Sky News reminded us all that the Royal Commission only looked at the abuse of children in institutions like churches, schools and community groups, and not in family homes and family relationships where most abuse occurs. But he went on to say that despite its limited focus, the Royal Commission made important recommendations about 'clearing up what needs to be reported' and 'nationally consistent laws to share information on children's safety and wellbeing'.

Police, schools, GPs, childcare centres and soccer clubs should be able to share information with each other about suspected abuse. Yet too often privacy laws prevent them doing so ... For all the focus on whether priests should break the seal of confession, the information sharing recommendation would have a far greater impact in protecting kids. (David Speers)

Another problem is the dog's breakfast of mandatory reporting rules. Each state and territory has a different set of rules making it difficult to work out exactly who is required to report exactly what signs of abuse. (David Speers)

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Updated Australian Family-School Partnerships Framework

Prepared by the Australian Parents Council and Australian Council of State School Organisations with support from the Australian Government and many education stakeholders, this national framework was endorsed by all Australian Education Ministers in 2008. It was updated last year to reflect developments in engagement and partnership research, policy and practice and is now available as an online resource at <https://www.education.gov.au/family-school-partnerships-framework>.

Intended mainly for use by school leaders, teachers and school teams, the framework outlines:

- a partnership vision;
- a set of core principles to guide relationship and partnership building with parents, families and communities;
- descriptions of the seven key dimensions of effective partnerships;
- evidence-based characteristics of effective partnerships;
- practical strategies, case studies, resources and accessible research to support partnership planning and implementation.

The mud map on the next page of our newsletter can help you to meaningfully navigate the updated framework online.

If you would like an A3 poster of the framework's core elements (principles, characteristics and dimensions) please email us. We have a limited number of free copies.

Effective parent engagement has a positive influence on:

- Early literacy acquisition
- School readiness
- School adjustment
- Cognitive development
- Motivation
- Attendance
- Belief in the importance of education
- Engagement in school work
- Social and relationship skills
- Self-regulation behaviour
- Sense of personal competence
- Wellbeing
- Enrolment in higher level classes
- Academic achievement
- Retention
- Graduation
- Participation in post-secondary education



FOOD ... for thought

The ACT Government partnered with parent organisations, the Catholic Education office and Independent Schools Association in 2014 to develop a shared understanding of parental engagement in the ACT. After looking at the evidence and consulting widely with schools and parents, it was agreed that parent engagement has two components:

- *Family-led learning* focused on high aspirations for children, shared reading, a positive environment for homework, parent-child conversation, a cognitively stimulating home environment and support for social and emotional wellbeing; and
- Family-school partnerships that encourage positive parent-teacher relationships, communication about children's progress, and engagement in the school community, while equipping parents to effectively support and encourage their children's learning and wellbeing.

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A Mud Map for the Online Family-School Partnerships Framework

The revised framework is a great resource but it is difficult to navigate. Hopefully this will be addressed soon but, in the meantime, the Australian Parents Council has produced this guide.

Go to: <https://www.education.gov.au/family-school-partnerships-framework> and click on:

1. **Research and Resources** (left side tab) to read the **fact sheet** on *Parent Engagement Research*.
2. Click back and then on to **Family-School Partnerships** (left side tab) to read the **vision**.
3. Now click on **Family-School Partnerships Framework** (left side tab) to read the **core principles, dimensions** (don't click on the link at this point) and **characteristics** of effective partnerships.
4. Click on **Parent Engagement in Learning** (left side tab) to read the **three fact sheets** on *Parent Engagement, Learning at Home* and *Partnerships*.
5. Click on **Family-School Partnerships Framework** (left side tab), scroll down to the key dimensions and now click on **seven key dimensions**. Then, click key dimensions in the right-hand box to read the **content of each dimension**. Strategies relating to each dimension can also be accessed from this page.
6. Click back and go to **Research and Resources** (left side tab) and click on **Case Studies – Our Stories**.
7. Then click the main heading **Research and Resources** to look at resources and links.

Under **Parent Engagement** is the easy-to-read research summary *Parent Engagement in Children's Education*.

Under **Family-School and Community Partnerships** you will find good resources like:

- *Learning Together: Engaging Parents and Families in School Learning* (inactive link so requires a web search)
- *Opening the School Gate: Engaging Migrant and Refugee Families*
- *Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships*
- *Schools and Families in Partnership: A Desktop Guide* (refugee backgrounds)
- *Teachers and Families Working Together* (disability).

Under **Connecting Learning at Home and School**, you will find good resources like:

- *Growing up Our Way: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Rearing Practices Matrix*
- *How can Parents and Families Positively Engage in Boarder Learning and Schooling?*

Under **Case Studies**, you will find:

- *Community Action Team: Thornbury High School.*
- *Parents as Partners in Indigenous Children's Learning.*
- *Sustainable School and Community Partnerships: A Research Study.*

There are also videos and a reference list, with many articles accessible free of charge.

8. Go back to the **Research and Resources** tab and click on **Key Dimensions of Family-School Partnerships** to review the **school assessment tool**.
9. Click back to the **Family-School Partnerships Framework** (left side tab), click on this and scroll to the end to read the **fact sheet** on *Building Partnerships*.

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Evenings at the Entertainment Centre and a Venue Near You

Tuesday 28th August, 7.00 – 8.45pm

How to live positively in a digital world, with Linda Cranley and Genevieve Johnson.

Wednesday 29th August, 7.00 – 8.45pm

Behaviours for learning and wellbeing, with Dr Justin Coulson.

Thursday 30th August, 7.00 – 8.45pm

No more bullying, with Lesley Harrison, Brett Murray, and Andrew Fuller.

Our new Minister for Education, the Hon. John Gardner, will open on Tuesday evening.

All sessions will be shown via webcast across the state so if you'd like to host one, or want to check for locations, visit the website (see below). You will also be able to watch them on YouTube afterwards through until 30th November.

For more information, including about the speakers:
<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/supporting-students/parent-engagement-education/parents-education-week>

Our New Partnership with Schoolzine

Schoolzine is quickly growing its reputation as a fantastic service provider in the Catholic school sector with the National Catholic Education Commission, Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association, Council of Catholic School Parents NSW/ACT and QLD Parents & Friends Federation of Catholic Schools already on board.

So we were really excited to accept the offer of a special partnership with Schoolzine to better connect with our parents and schools through its parent engagement communications platform.

The partnership will start with the introduction of digital newsletters that are mobile, tablet and desktop computer friendly and can be translated into lots of different languages at the click of a button. The newsletters will seamlessly link to our Facebook page and to SZapp – a free mobile app. It will be easier for us to do polls and surveys to gather parent views and inform our thinking and advocacy work.

As to where we go from there, who knows? With training under way, we are pretty sure our next newsletter will look different from this one!

Thanks CJ. You are a star!



School Fete Research

An Australian study tapping the views of school fete conveners from government and non-government schools confirms barbeques are the biggest money earner! Researcher Marie Balczun of the Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies says schools shouldn't rule out traditional fundraising activities or think the size of their community means a fete won't work:

'Fetes are often the major fundraiser for a school, with the average fete profit reported to be just under \$18,000. While larger schools naturally had higher average profits, smaller schools actually did better on a per-student basis raising more than \$70 per student, compared with \$30 per student for larger schools.'

'It was interesting to see that while amusement rides were the most popular activity to include in a fete line up, they can't beat throwing a snag on the barbie when it comes to the final fundraising tally. After a barbeque, rides come in as the second most profitable, followed by raffles, auctions and cake stalls.'

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The study showed that fetes make a difference to school income, with the average profit for large schools being around \$26,000 and, for small schools, around \$10,000.

Research partner Mandy Weidmann from the Fundraising Directory said the aim was to give fete organisers some guidance to enhance success. For example, it was found that information sharing saved time and increased profitability but only 40% of new fete committees had received a handover report from the previous committee. Other tips to improve fete management and boost profits include:

1. Start early – a year out if possible, straight after the previous fete.
2. Use online signup for volunteers – this will help with recruitment.
3. Prioritise safety – have someone responsible for Occupational Health and Safety matters.
4. Hire a portable ATM – more cash means more sales.
5. Have a wet weather plan – especially for the rides.

The study showed alcohol was available at 30% of fetes and there continue to be different views on this: ‘Some schools saw it as inappropriate, with a view that fetes without alcohol have a more family-friendly atmosphere. Others reported it was popular and easy to keep as a “kid-free” zone.’

The report can be downloaded free at QUT [ePrints](#).

Funding for Schooling in the Non-Government Sector

For much of Australia’s early history, churches, church communities and parents paid all the costs to educate children in non-government schools. Despite Catholic and other pressure, little changed until the 1960s when two things happened.

First, the NSW government told a Catholic parish school it must have separate toilets for boys and girls. The Auxiliary Bishop said the school would have to close if the government didn’t provide some dollars. The government didn’t budge and so the parents protested with the Bishop’s support: all the local Catholic schools closed, and the parents took their children to the state schools and demanded they be enrolled – but there was only room for half of them. The 1962 ‘Goulburn Incident’ created new interest and pressure in the debate about ‘state aid’ to church schools.

Second, the Menzies government held to its 1963 election promise and introduced a federal science grants scheme for non-government as well as government secondary schools in 1964. The Catholic sector saw this as a step forward in terms of governments recognising the contributions and funding needs of its schools. In fact, the science grants mark the point at which government attitudes about funding for non-government schools and students changed. Federal library grants followed in 1968 and, in between, most state governments started to give direct assistance to non-government schools.

The science and library grants were types of *capital* assistance (e.g. for buildings). *Recurrent* assistance (e.g. for staff wages, student resources and power) was introduced by the Gorton government in 1970. This was in the form of *per capita* (per person) grants of \$35 per primary and \$50 per secondary student for every student at a non-government school – meaning that the fee burden for all parents was reduced.

When the Whitlam government was elected in 1972, it implemented *needs-based* funding. On top of capital grants and per capita funding, extra funds were made available to address disadvantage in non-government schools. Needs-based funding continues to be an important funding principle today, though what ‘needs’ mean has changed across time.

Skipping forward, the Howard government introduced a new funding model for the non-government sector in 2001 (the socio-economic status model). While the previous model took account of school fees and resources, the SES model is based on census data (e.g. social status, parents’ educational background, family income) for small groups of households in the areas surrounding schools. Some Catholic congregational schools agreed to go into the new model, but the National Catholic Education Commission said its school systems would not because some schools would be worse off.

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Catholic school systems finally joined the SES model in 2005 after the government agreed that no school would be financially worse off at least for the next four years. Rather than basing funding on the individual SES scores of Catholic systemic schools, it also agreed that system schools would have a 'system weighted average SES score' (i.e. all schools would have the same SES score).

Following the first Gonski review in 2011, the Gillard government introduced a new funding model based on the *Schooling Resource Standard (SRS)*, this being an estimate of how much total public funding a school needs to meet the educational needs of its students. The SRS is made up of a *base amount* for every student and six *loadings* which give extra funding for disadvantaged students (e.g. disability, Indigenous, low SES) and schools (e.g. small ones). The base amount was worked out after looking at the funding levels of schools that had 80% of students achieving above the minimum NAPLAN benchmarks in reading and numeracy for three years in a row.

For most non-government schools, the base amount is reduced by the *capacity of parents to contribute* to school costs – and this is worked out using school/school system SES scores. The higher the SES score, the more the base amount is discounted - up to a cap of 80% of the base amount.

The Gonski report recommended the SES method should continue to be used for the time being, but that a new measure should be developed, trialled and implemented as soon as possible. Seven years on, this work had not been done and is a key reason why the Catholic sector has been very critical of the Turnbull government's new funding model. Criticisms include that family and household wealth are not captured in the SES and neither is family size, that household SES can vary a lot in the areas the census data is collected from, and that some very resource-rich schools benefit unfairly because they are located in lower socio-economic areas.

The federal Minister for Education Simon Birmingham responded to the criticism by asking the new National School Resourcing Board to review the SES methodology and arrangements for determining parents' capacity to contribute. The National Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Council of Australia have membership on this board.

Some of the board's findings were confidentially briefed last week and it is being reported in the media that perhaps \$1 billion more in funding will come into the Catholic sector as result of the board's review.

CathNews says the review 'is almost certain to recommend an improved approach to means-testing parents, probably through parental tax data rather than the existing SES system'.

A Blessing for Parent Meetings

May God, who is the source of all blessings and all that is blessed, be a part of this meeting ... at its beginning, at its end and all the tie in between.

May god's Holy Spirit guide us in all that is discerned and decided here. May the Spirit inspire us with words that say all they mean ... yet fall gently on the ears of all gathered here.

May God bless us with the ability to speak with integrity, and to work with uncompromising diligence.

May God help us to focus on what truly matters ... and give us the insight to discern what is right.

May god fill our hearts with love. May that love determine the course we take ... and shape all our interactions.

May God give us wisdom to make good decisions, courage to take the necessary risks, unshakeable hope to maintain a steadfast Spirit, good humour to keep things in perspective ... and deep trust so that as we risk, we remain grounded in God.

May god bless us with the personal joy of knowing that we have acted out of love, that we have done our best, and that we have served God with all our hearts.

Amen

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