It is with much pleasure that I present to you the VCSPB Annual Report for 2012 in my last year as a member of the VCSPB Council and as 2012 chair. Having joined the Council in 2006, I leave the VCSPB after serving my maximum term on the Council allowed under the Constitution.

**Council members**
The current VCSPB Council members are:
- Tony Bentley (Chair)*
- Lisa Hughes (Deputy Chair)
- Matthew McIntyre (Treasurer)*
- Tracey O’Neill (Secretary)
- Dennis Torpy (CECV representative)
- Shayne Annett
- Liz Grogan
* Victorian representatives on the National Catholic Education Commission – Parent Committee

Vacancies exist in Sandhurst and Sale and each Melbourne region.

We thank the following Council members who have left to date in 2012 for their contributions: Jack Sheehan and Carl Stevens. We particularly thank Carl for his guidance and support as Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) representative from 2009 to August 2012.

**Meetings**
The Council schedules four meetings a year. The Executive meets between meetings.

**Key Interest Areas in 2012**
The purposes of the VCSPB are:
- to provide a forum to represent parents of students in Victorian Catholic schools
- to promote parents as partners in education with the school, Church and the community,

* The term parent refers to all parents of children in Catholic schools and is used to include natural, adoptive or foster parents, guardians and primary caregivers of students.
to promote the principles of Catholic education in collaboration with the Diocesan Bishops and promote Catholic schools as schools of first choice for Catholic families.

The key interest areas for the VCSPB in 2012 are:

- Funding of Catholic schools
- Curriculum and Transparent Reporting

Focus in 2012 – Communication

This year we continued to implement our Communication Strategy:

- to promote parents as partners in education with school, Church and the broader community
- to promote Catholic schools as first choice for Catholic families; and
- to continue to develop a clear presence and identity of VCSPB.

The key focus was to:

1. raise the profile of the VCSPB in the parent and school communities
2. raise awareness amongst parent communities of key issues in education
3. provide a link for parents to express their concerns, needs and views.

To enable this focus, Council members Lisa Hughes and Tracey O’Neill have, with Patricia Palman (Executive Officer) and the Communications and IT Services teams at the Catholic Education Office Melbourne, led the Council in developing a new logo and redeveloping our website. It is with great pleasure that tonight, I formally launch our new logo and website.

www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au

* The term parent refers to all parents of children in Catholic schools and is used to include natural, adoptive or foster parents, guardians and primary caregivers of students.
Changing the VCSPB logo involved a lot of thought and collaboration as we wanted the end product to symbolise our representation of parents with children in Victorian Catholic schools.

If you look closely at our logo you will see a Victorian Catholic school community bathed in the light of Christ. It is your school, no matter where you live in Victoria, the colours we have chosen unite us all.

The blue represents the coastal communities and the green represents metropolitan and rural communities. We have continued the colour theme into the website with each heading representing all of our communities (green and blue) which are bathed in the light of Christ (yellow).

Not only is it visually appealing but we hope it will convey the commitment that underpins the VCSPB:

*To promote community, represent and advocate for parents who send their children to Catholic schools.*

**National Catholic school parent body**

Given the changing and challenging education landscape, the VCSPB Council supports and is working towards the establishment of a national Catholic parent body to ensure that the views of parents in Catholic schools have an appropriate channel through which to pursue discussions with all relevant Church, government and other bodies.

**Links and Representation**

The VCSPB has on-going links with government and Catholic organisations relevant to parents including:

- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)
- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) – Parent Group
- Victorian Independent Education Union (VIEU)
- Victorian Parents Council
- National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) – Parent Committee*
- other Catholic parent bodies around Australia

* The NCEC Parent Committee is currently in hiatus.

During 2012, Council members attended diocesan educational board meetings, VCAA Parent Group meetings, NCEC Parent Committee meetings, the Queensland Catholic School Parents Conference and the National Symposium Engaging Parents and Families in Learning and Schools in Canberra.

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Submissions
The VCSPB made the following submissions during 2012:

- Parliament of Victoria Law Reform Committee Inquiry into Sexting
- Australian National Curriculum – Secondary Curriculum

VCSPB - the way forward
Council members and key stakeholder representatives from each (Arch)diocese met in July to reflect and plan for the future. It was determined that the key purpose of the VCSPB is advocacy, enabling the voice of parents as stakeholders in Catholic education to be heard, and informing views at diocesan, State and national levels.

A position paper prepared by Council expanding this purpose has been prepared to facilitate discussions with the CECV; it will also assist with further development of the strategic directions of the VCSPB.

Thank you to all Council members for their work and commitment to the VCSPB. To the CECV and all parents who have supported the VCSPB during 2012, a warm and heartfelt thank you for your support and interest in advancing the objectives of the VCSPB.

Tony Bentley, Chair