

# Taking it to the next level

A Strategic Plan for Marist College Canberra, 2007-2011

## Progress Report December 2009



In Semester 2 of 2009, the middle year of our Strategic Plan 2007 -2011, there has been consolidation of a number of the initiatives introduced in the first part of the year as well as extensive planning for further developments which will enhance the experience of the students at the college. The following reports from the leaders of each of the Priority Working Groups show the remarkable developments that have occurred and the innovations which are envisioned for 2010.

### Priority Working Group 1 – Identity and Values

The Identity and Values Group continued its focus on the task of raising awareness and understanding of the core values. Following the series of school visits conducted earlier in the year, the group also spent time evaluating the data collected and comparing the various initiatives in this area at different schools. PWG1 also worked with the Ministry Team on the development of next year's college theme, "Be compassionate, kind and gentle". Plans for 2010 include the further development of staff spirituality and work on the integration of RE across the curriculum.

Prayer and liturgy throughout the college this semester continued to focus on the core values, particularly faith and love. The establishment of a Mothers Prayer Group by Anne Hartwell (Junior School Mother) and a Tuesday lunchtime prayer group for staff and students by Nathan Ahearne, also served to heighten the awareness of prayer throughout the college.

The community service subgroup established by PWGs 1 and 2 continued its work on developing a proposal for a community service coordinator. The work of this committee and the appointment of a Community Service Coordinator are ongoing. It is envisioned that the already existing Mates programme will serve as a solid foundation for further work in this area.

### Priority Working Group 2 – Learning and Teaching

During 2009 PWG2 continued with the work of taking our learning and teaching to the next level. 2009 saw the introduction of the first of a number of significant changes that are beginning to 'overhaul' our learning and teaching at the College. These are changes that we believe will have a significant impact on the outcomes for our students in coming years. Year 4 and Year 9 both had new courses and structures in place for 2009.

Much of the work of the PWG throughout last year involved the writing of new courses for our Years 5, 6 and 10 students. This necessarily involved many teaching staff throughout the year including teachers from the Junior and Senior Schools working together on our Middle Years courses.

Our Middle Years course writing involved the production of our *Middle Years – Learning and Teaching Guide*. This guide was produced to assist with a range of ideas and suggestions to ensure that our vision for *Learning & Teaching @ MCC in 2012* can be realised in our Middle Years classrooms. This guide sets out a range of practical suggestions which can be used by teachers to take the vision and incorporate it into our learning and teaching practice. Kirsty Bell coordinated the writing of our new Year 5 and 6 courses which are being introduced this year.

With *Footsteps* in place in 2009 work began on the new Year 10 structure and courses to be introduced for 2010. Year 10 is designed to be a transition year between Year 9 and Years 11 and 12. Students will have the opportunity to explore their options within subjects that will lead to vocational or tertiary studies.

An enrichment type program will be offered in Year 10 which will link a range of generic skills into a number of courses throughout the year to enhance the students' learning opportunities within and beyond the classroom. This program will involve the students participating in a number of *PREP Sessions* (Perseverance, Reflection, Enrichment & Planning) throughout the year.

This year will see us begin work on the final stages of our current learning and teaching renewal. We have already begun work on both our Year 7 and 8 structures and courses as well as developing an *ICT Strategic Plan* across the College.

*Ian Hewitt, Assistant Head of School – Learning and Teaching*



Above: Year 9 students and Mr. Tony Sullivan (Footsteps Coordinator) at the end of 'The Great Race' in Sydney as part of Middle Earth.

### Priority Working Group 3 – Caring

*We will set new standards for an outstanding pastoral care program that is centred on the quality of the relationships between, and the support and care for, staff and students.*

- **Big Brother, Little Brother program [ Years 4-6 and 11]**

The inaugural program wound up early in November with class *thank-you* sessions organized by the *Little Brothers*. Over 80 Year 11 boys generously completed the program and the evaluations from both the Junior School teachers and boys were very favourable. A number of adjustments will be made to the 2010 program which will commence with a training session in February.

- **Vertical groups [ Years 7-12]**

Vertical House Groups were introduced in the senior school at the beginning of 2009 and boys, parents and staff have acclaimed their success. In November 2009, each House Group organized separate events to farewell their Y12 members and to welcome their new Year 7 members. These celebratory occasions are an important element of the vertical arrangement and represent a 'rite of passage' for those involved.

# Taking it to the next level continued...

Surveys: Staff, Years 7 – 10 boys and parents were invited to participate in evaluations of the arrangement at the end of 2009. There was strong support from all stakeholders for maintaining the arrangement and a number of suggestions for tweaking were offered. 85% of parents who participated in the survey believed that the vertical group arrangement had worked well for their son and over 90% consider that their son has benefited from the opportunity to mix with boys from other year groups through his House Group. Over 80% of boys say that they look forward to House Group time; over 90% believe that they experience good care in their House Group and 85% say that they know the boys in their House Group well.

In November 2009, a training session was conducted by Marist Youth Care for all Year 12 boys to prepare them for their leadership role next year. As well, each Year 12 met with their House Group Leaders (HGL) before Term 1 commenced to plan for this year and to set goals for their Group.

In 2010 we plan to continue our professional development of HGLs as well as providing ongoing leadership training for the Year 12's. We also plan to ensure that regular time is set aside for gatherings in Year groups within Houses in order to provide time for the development of these important relationships.

## • Restorative practices [ Years 4-12]

In November 2009, Maurizio Vespa from Marist Youth Care conducted a peer mediation workshop for the 2010 College Leaders based on the restorative approach. We hope that the Leaders will be able to use these skills in their dealings with the younger boys in their House and in the Junior School. Maurizio will return to the College early this year to conduct a refresher course for the Leaders.

In 2010 we also plan to continue our education of staff and parents in the use of restorative practices.

## • Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) [Years 4-12]

PLPs engage the boys in reflection on their learning, goal setting and academic conversations with their House Group Leaders/ classroom teachers. In 2009, a number of House Groups trialled PLPs before a school-wide introduction from 2010. As a result of the trials, each of the booklets has been re-written for release at the beginning of term one. All boys in the Junior School will also be involved in PLPs from the beginning of 2010.

## • 2010 projects

In 2010 PWG3 will also be involved with the following:

1. **Merit level system**- upgrading the existing system for acknowledging and affirming boys' efforts and contributions
2. **Community service program** - developing a mandatory program for Years 11 students (in association with PWG1)
3. **Academic care charter** - completing and disseminating a new charter which draws on elements of the existing Charters of *Learning & Teaching* and *Caring*.

## Priority Working Group 4 – Leadership and Resources

The Leadership and Resources Priority of the College strategic plan has four distinct Focus areas: 1) Leadership; 2) Finances; 3) Environmental Management; 4) Information Communications Technology

## Leadership

Following extensive research of available literature it was decided to develop a Leadership Framework and a Charter of Leadership to include teachers, non-teachers, students as well as the formal leadership roles within the College. This framework is intended to support all, staff and students, in their leadership capabilities, to enhance professional learning, to provide channels for reflection, to encourage review, to build capacity and to provide a process of continual development of skills.

To enable members of the community to reflect on their capacity for leadership, a Charter has been developed based on five domains (Being, Relating, Learning, Doing, Transforming). The Charter of Leadership provides a platform for reflection, review, goal setting and development.

The Framework and Charter are completed and a review process for all staff, which flows from the charter, is now being investigated and researched.

## Finance

The Trust Deeds for the creation of the Marist College Foundation have been drafted and are currently under consideration by the Province. The establishment of the Foundation along with continual fundraising will allow the granting of bursaries to financially disadvantaged boys to ensure they are not excluded from experiencing a Marist education. In addition, the Foundation will raise funds through capital appeals to further build on the facilities that are available to our students.

The College has adopted a Financial Governance Framework that forms the policy basis of financial operations and compliance with both Province and statutory requirements of the College. It is also the basis upon which the College seeks to meet its various legal and other obligations while in continuous pursuit of its mission. The Framework also applies to the Foundation financial records.

## Environmental Management

The College has continued to reduce its water consumption, both inside and outside the buildings to the point where we now use approximately a third of what was used 5 years ago. In 2009 the Senior School boys' toilets were refurbished and had waterless urinals installed, thereby further reducing our water consumption. This was achieved with the assistance of the Federal Government's Building the Education Revolution Grant.

During 2009, the College sent one quarter of its waste to recycling. The Junior School trialled a comprehensive recycling program in the second half of the year. It is hoped this trial will lead to a College wide recycling program being introduced later this year,

## ICT

The College obtained substantial funding under Round Two of the NSSCF, which is one of the programs in the Commonwealth Government's "Digital Education Revolution" initiative. This enabled the College to incorporate a mix of additional computer labs and a significant number of laptops to provide in excess of 100 additional computers.

A trial of a wireless network to three areas of the College was undertaken, and during the holidays a comprehensive College wide wireless network was installed.