

Parent Talk



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Parent Talk 2023 Issue 2

Welcome to Parent Talk



Welcome to the second edition of *Parent Talk* for 2023. Last week I was in beautiful Moree, the CCSP Chair, Wayne Davie and I attended the Annual Isolated Children's Parents Association (ICPA) Conference. Many of our families living in rural and remote NSW have chosen to send their children to Catholic boarding schools far from home. This places additional challenges on families. CCSP and the ICPA are strong and supportive representative associations who are driven by their desire to support parents and carers in the education of their children. While in Moree, it was lovely to visit Jamie McDowell, Principal of St Philomena's, a co-educational K-10 school in Moree, who, like all principals I have spoken with, is passionate about building a flourishing school community where Catholic values are evidenced in all they do.

The year has started with lots of enthusiasm from the CCSP Council and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander committee. With a state election imminent, it has been important for CCSP members to meet with both the Minister for Education and Early Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell MLC and Ms Prue Car MP, the Shadow Minister for Education and Early Learning. We are committed to working



collaboratively and ensuring the needs of Catholic school parents and carers are made known to the Minister – whomever that may be following Saturday's election.

We are also committed to delivering events and initiatives that reflect the information we receive from you – thank you to those who have responded to our survey. This information helps us select suitable presentations that support you in your parenting role.

We will welcome **Dr Justin Coulson** on **29 March** with a registered audience of over 1500 participants – a clear indication of your requirement for this information.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Parent Committee is also excited about a new initiative about to be launched. We have engaged a well-known Aboriginal author and will be providing free of charge to "early birds" a copy of the featured book to allow parents and carers to read along with their child while the author reads to your child. A great way to stop, take time and connect with your child in a meaningful way that supports their learning.

As we approach the end of Term One and continue preparing for Easter, I pray you find time to reflect with gratitude, share your gifts with generosity and give thanks for the gifts of others who do the same.

Stay safe, take care of yourselves and each other my friends,

Catherine Garrett-Jones

Executive Director, CCSP

Free Justin Coulson event - 29 March



CCSP invites NSW/ACT parents, carers and staff to attend a FREE webinar to assist you to support children in your care.

Dr Justin Coulson is the co-host and parenting expert on Channel 9's Parental Guidance.

You must register to attend the webinar or access the recording after the webinar.

Wednesday 29 March 7.00pm

[Register here](#)



Justin Coulson Webinar -Anxiety and Resilience- 29 March 2023-7.00pm

Please use this form to register for the upcoming webinar on Wednesday 29 March 7.00pm.

This 60-minute webinar is designed for parents and carers of children and young people in Catholic schools in NSW and ACT.

This presentation will be recorded, however only available for a short period of time. You must be pre-registered to access the recording.

Your information will be not passed onto any other parties unless required by law and will follow the Australian Privacy Principals (APP).

First Name *

Last Name

Email *

Please retype your email *

I live in the Diocese of *

- ☐ Armidale
- ☐ Bathurst
- ☐ Broken Bay
- ☐ Canberra and Goulburn
- ☐ Lismore
- ☐ Maitland-Newcastle

☐ Parramatta

☐ Sydney

☐ Wagga Wagga

☐ Wilcannia-Forbes

☐ Wollongong

☐ Not sure

My child/ren attend *

☐ Catholic Primary School

☐ Catholic Secondary School

☐ Independent Catholic Primary School

☐ Independent Catholic Secondary School

☐ Other Primary School

☐ Other Secondary School

☐ None of the above

CCSP advocating for parents and carers



You may have read in the media about the Australian Law Reform Commission inquiry into Religious Educational Institutions and Anti-Discrimination Laws.

The consultation paper for the inquiry, released at the end of January 2023, proposed such dramatic changes to employment and teaching that it would have made religious schools almost indistinguishable from state schools.

The proposed changes would remove or severely restrict the ability of Catholic schools to prioritise the employment of staff and enrolment of students from our faith background, or to operate and teach in accordance with our Catholic ethos.

A recent survey on school perceptions showed 63% of the general population, 82% of Catholics and 79% of Catholic school parents believe religious schools should be 'entitled to require employees to act in their roles that uphold the ethos and values of that faith' and the school should be free to favour hiring employees who share these values. (Utting, 2021)

Over 400 submissions were made to the inquiry, [CCSP made a submission](#) on behalf of NSW and ACT families whose children attend Catholic Schools. [Catholic School Parents Australia \(CSPA\) made a submission on behalf of all families in Australia whose children attend Catholic schools.](#)

We will keep you informed with updates from the inquiry.



The Walking Country program which commenced in the Armidale Diocese Schools this year is focused on building school and community relationships through consultation, listening and conversation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. A program of meet and greet visits has commenced led by the CCSP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee Chair and Armidale Diocese Representative Jason Allan, along with Armidale Catholic Schools Office Indigenous Education K-12 Officer Karen Tighe and Parent Engagement Officer Catherine Ible.

Schools are encouraged to invite their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and carers to a meet and greet either on the school campus or another location. These visits will build on the foundations families have with their school and encourage parents and carers voices to be heard through a shared vision of respect, responsibility and relationships.

The last five years has seen an increase in our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments across the Diocese of Armidale and that enrolment is now 15% of the total student population. This *Walking Country Program* will help to strengthen the relationships families and schools needed to meet the students specific learning needs.

Our schools have a rich Indigenous culture encapsulating the stories of the community Elders and families who are deeply connected physically and spiritually to the land and Walking Country with each other will foster Country, culture, community and curriculum through sharing conversations, insights, concerns and successes.



Parent representatives and Diocesan Executive Officers from across NSW/ACT met on 10 March at the first 2023 CCSP Council Meeting.

CCSP Chair Wayne Davie, welcomed Lizzie Watkin, Executive Officer, Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and Sean Van Wyk, Community Engagement, Catholic Schools Broken Bay to their first CCSP meeting. Most dioceses in NSW/ACT employ a professional officer to facilitate local parent engagement initiatives and to provide support for their parent representatives on the CCSP Council. We thank these officers for attending our meetings and thank the dioceses for their ongoing commitment to the work of CCSP.

Representatives discussed the challenges facing many families in their dioceses and ways that CCSP can assist in supporting families. CCSP are currently working on several projects that will assist families including updating the resource [Students with Diverse Learning Needs, A guide by Parents for Parents](#).

Danielle Cronin, Director Education Policy CSNSW, and Cathie Renfrew, Senior Project Manager CSNSW, presented on the CSNSW Connected Communities Project that has been approved by the NSW/ACT



Bishops. CCSP has been invited to assist by providing an authentic parent voice to the project. CCSP members will be providing feedback to the project team.

Danielle and Dr Anne Ryan, Dioceses of Wagga-Wagga.



We will keep you informed about CCSP initiatives in future issues of *Parent Talk*.

Term 1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee meeting



Aunty Mary Atkinson placed the Bible in the prayer space at the beginning of the Term 1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee meeting, held on March 9.

Chair, Jason Allan from the Diocese of Armidale warmly welcomed the newest member James Haynes as the parent representative for the diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

The committee discussed the importance of, when planning for new schools that a Yarning Circle and Sacred Space be included in the designs.

"Going outdoors frees the mind to hear sounds and breath the air."

commented Jason Allan.

Kiri shared the news that from 2023 onwards the Bathurst Diocese will hold two Aboriginal Masses. At each Mass schools in the chosen Parish will be invited to attend and play a role with their parents also being invited. The first Mass is being held in Bathurst Cathedral on Tuesday 30th May during National Reconciliation Week.

Danielle Cronin, Director Education Policy CSNSW, and Cathie Renfrew, Senior Project Manager CSNSW, presented on the CSNSW Connected Communities Project that has been approved by the NSW/ACT Bishops. They showed a video about showcased Redfern Jarjum school as an example of a school connected with their community. Committee members have been invited to provide the project team with feedback to assist the project team.

Respect for human dignity



Respect for the dignity of the human person is a principle of Catholic Social Teaching and the basis of right and respectful relationships.

As parents and carers of young people, we want children and young people to have positive experiences, healthy relationships and opportunities to learn. We want them to respect others and respect themselves. We want children to be able to use the internet in a safe and secure way.

Curiosity is part of children's development. Children may be accidentally exposed to images on the internet that are not age appropriate or in keeping with family values. They may be invited to provide inappropriate images to "online friends"

Depending on your own upbringing, it may be difficult to have conversations with your children about these topics. The key message from many sources of parenting research is the child will be better off if they have a trusted adult they can speak with.

We have collated information from several reputable and reliable sources that may assist you to discuss these issues with children in your care.

The hard-to-have conversations

Plan and prepare

- Work out what you want to say and how you are going to say it

Gather information

- Below are some links to websites, videos, podcasts and fact sheets

Find the right time and right place

- A place where you both will be comfortable and can speak privately without being interrupted or overheard
- A car trip, walk in the park, baking cakes, shooting basket ball hoops, or gardening

Helpful conversation starters

- 'I want to talk with you about one of those awkward topics. Is that OK?' (Children rarely say 'no', but if they do, respect that, and then set up a time where you can talk.)

If the child reveals things that are disturbing, some phrases you could use are

- 'I understand what you're saying, and I'm glad you came to me about this. You're not going to get into trouble, but we need to trust each other, fix this and move forward.'
- 'You might not want to tell me all the detail, but if we can talk honestly about what's happened I promise I will listen and stay calm. No matter what happens, we can do this and I love you.'
- "Just like a super hero movie, what you have seen is not real - they are paid actors."

Keep having the conversations.

The CCSP website has links to additional information.

Jack Changes the Game - Online safety book available in Auslan

Jack Changes the Game by Tess Rowley is for parents and carers of 5-8 years to assist them to explain to children in their care the importance of being safe online.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/DUN43joJhIQ?showinfo=1>

Families can watch the video and download the [home learning activity for family including suggested questions and responses](#).

[ThinkUKnow](#) is a national program delivering online child safety information, which gives parents, carers, teachers and students information on how to stay safe online.

Presentations are aimed at increasing awareness about online child sexual exploitation. This includes avoiding unwanted contact, online grooming, self-generated content, sexual extortion and how to get help.

[Thinkuknow](#) was started in the United Kingdom by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) and was developed for Australian audiences by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) in 2009.

The program is a partnership between the Australian Federal Police (AFP), Microsoft Australia, Datacom and the Commonwealth Bank, and is delivered in collaboration with New South Wales Police Force, Northern Territory Police, Queensland Police Service, South Australia Police, Tasmania Police, Western Australia Police and Victoria Police as well as Neighbourhood Watch Australia.

They have [helpful factsheets](#) such as Parent Advice for posting images of their children online.

CCSP survey extended



CCSP wish to thank the many people who have responded to the survey launched in the previous issue of *Parent Talk*.

The feedback we have received is very useful in planning future parent education events. Gaming was an issue of concern for many families. On May 23 conjunction with the eSafety Commissioner CCSP will hold a parent education webinar *Getting the most out of Gaming*. [You can register here](#).

If there a matter concerning your child's education your child's teacher and school should be your first point of contact. Some respondents indicated they would like a representative from CCSP to contact them however they did not provide any contact details. If you would like someone from CCSP to make contact please email office@ccsp.catholic.edu.au

We will keep the survey open to provide more families with the opportunity to give feedback about the topics that you most want to learn about.

The short online survey is anonymous.

What parenting topics would you like CCSP to assist you with in 2023?

CCSP would like to know what topics interest you the most so we can offer relevant education for you and your family. We appreciate you taking the time to complete this short survey.

Question1

I would like to learn more about *

- ☐ Gaming and how it effects brain development in children
- ☐ How to keep my child safe online
- ☐ How to set limits for my children's screen time
- ☐ Consent and respectful relationships
- ☐ Behaviour patterns that signal my child is "not OK" and when to seek help
- ☐ The effect of watching pornography online
- ☐ Sleep patterns- children and young people
- ☐ Building resilience and managing anxiety
- ☐ Self harm
- ☐ Consent and relationships
- ☐ Vaping, Drugs and Alcohol
- ☐ Safe partying
- ☐ None of the above

Question2

I would like to learn more about assisting my child when transitioning to different school years *

- ☐ Starting Kindergarten
- ☐ Entering Year 3
- ☐ Starting Year 7
- ☐ Entering Year 11
- ☐ Out of school to work/TAFE/UNI
- ☐ None of the above

Question3

Technology and social media. I would like to learn about *

- ☐ What are some guidelines for daily screen time
- ☐ What impact does gaming have on my child's development
- ☐ What I do if my child is bullied online?
- ☐ Chat GBT. What is it? How will it impact education?
- ☐ None of the above

Question4

Interaction with my child's school. I would like to learn about *

- ☐ Family Engagement -what is it- will it help my child?
- ☐ What should I ask at a Parent/Teacher Meeting/conference?
- ☐ What is a Parents & Friends (P&F) organisation? What is the purpose of a P&F?
- ☐ Catholic Rituals - Ash Wednesday, Lent, Advent, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Liturgy and Mass
- ☐ How is the Catholic Church organised? What is a diocese? Role of a Bishop
- ☐ None of the above

Question5

Diverse learning. Each child is unique I would like to learn about *

- ☐ How to access learning support
- ☐ How to support my child at school
- ☐ What is a Personalised Learning Plan?
- ☐ How do I apply for Special Provisions for exams?
- ☐ What programs are available for academically gifted children?
- ☐ What sport pathways are available?
- ☐ None of the above

Question6

Helping my child at school. I would like to learn about *

- ☐ How to set good habits for homework and projects
- ☐ How to develop time management and study skills
- ☐ How to make new friends
- ☐ None of the above

Question7

Secondary School Families - I would like information about *

- ☐ Any impact Yr 7 & Yr 8 subject selection may have on future years
- ☐ Year 10 subject selections for HSC
- ☐ Vocational Education Training Options
- ☐ What subjects are compulsory for the HSC
- ☐ ATAR - what is it?
- ☐ Early Entry to University
- ☐ None of above

Question8

If I were to attend education events the best times for me are *

- ☐ Daytime Monday-Friday
- ☐ Daytime Saturday
- ☐ Daytime Sunday
- ☐ Monday evenings
- ☐ Tuesday evenings
- ☐ Wednesday Evening
- ☐ Thursday evening
- ☐ Friday evening
- ☐ Starting at 6pm
- ☐ Starting at 7pm
- ☐ Starting at 8pm
- ☐ I am not interesting in attending sessions

Question9

I am a parent/carer of *

- ☐ Primary School Student
- ☐ Secondary School Student
- ☐ Preschool Student
- ☐ Grandparent of student
- ☐ None of above

Question10

I live in the Diocese of *

- ☐ Armidale
- ☐ Bathurst
- ☐ Broken Bay
- ☐ Canberra and Goulburn
- ☐ Lismore
- ☐ Maitland-Newcastle
- ☐ Parramatta
- ☐ Sydney
- ☐ Wagga Wagga
- ☐ Wilcannia-Forbes
- ☐ Wollongong
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not sure

Question11

Is there anything more you would like to learn about ?

Question12

I would like someone from CCSP to contact me, my name and telephone number are

Question13

I would like CCSP to contact me by email

Celebrating International Women's Day



Catholic Schools NSW hosted a breakfast for students and school leaders to celebrate International Women's Day.

Attendees were privileged to listen to both the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC Minister for Education and Early Learning and Ms Prue Car, MP Shadow Minister for Education and Early Learning speak about their formation as parents and their early role models.

CCSP Executive Director Cath Garrett-Jones was invited by CSNSW to compare the breakfast. It was a wonderful opportunity to raise the profile of CCSP with leaders and students in the Catholic education sector. CCSP volunteer representatives were able to attend this networking event.

During the question and answer session Cheryl Murphy CCSP Councillor, Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, asked both women how they manage their responsibilities as parents of young children with a busy workload as elected representatives in the NSW Parliament. Both acknowledged that it is not easy to balance the needs of children with the pressure of working long hours thanking their families for the support they give then acknowledging that it takes a village to raise a child.

Dallas McInerney, CEO, CSNSW recognised the contribution that women make in education and family life.



Go forth and teach - Bishop Michael Kennedy



Bishop Michael Kennedy was installed as the ninth Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle in a liturgical reception at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hamilton, on Friday 17 March.

On the Solemnity of St Patrick, more than 550 guests, including Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Charles Balvo, Sydney Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP, bishops from around Australia and representatives from every parish in the diocese gathered for the event.

Bishop Kennedy was greeted on his arrival for the ceremony at Sacred Heart Cathedral by Elders of the Awabakal nation and welcomed to country.

He was greeted at the main doors to Sacred Heart Cathedral by Fr John Lovell, Rector of the Cathedral, and presented with a crucifix to venerate. As part of the Rite of Installation, Archbishop Balvo read the Apostolic Letter of Appointment and Archbishop Fisher guided Bishop Michael to the cathedral.

Bishop Kennedy was installed as the ninth Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle and welcomed by representatives of the people of the diocese including parishioners, families and clergy and then, in front of the altar, by representatives of other Churches, faiths and civic authorities.

The Bishop's motto is *euntes docete*, referencing Jesus' final words to the apostles to "go forth and teach".

The College of Consultors of the Diocese of Armidale met on Monday 20th March, 2023 and elected Monsignor Edward Wilkes as the Diocesan Administrator in accordance with Canons 416-430. The Diocesan Administrator leads the Diocese during the period until the ordination and installation of the 11th Bishop of Armidale.

Monsignor Wilkes was Vicar General prior to Bishop Kennedy's translation. He is currently the Parish Priest of Saint Joseph's Parish, Uralla and Parish Administrator of Saint Patrick's Parish, Walcha. He will continue in these pastoral roles whilst undertaking the duties of Diocesan Administrator.

A prayer for Lent: Invite Us Deeper



The National Catholic Education Commission shared a Lentan prayer inviting us all to focus on those around us who may be in need.

Almighty and ever living God,
you invite us deeper into your world, your people, your Lent.
May this time be one of outward focus;
seeking you in those we often ignore.
Help us live a Lent focused on freedom, generosity, and
encounter.
Give us hearts hungry to serve you
and those who need what we have to give.
Amen

- Author Unknown

These are complex issues that school and broader communities are dealing with, and while we need a whole-of-community approach, school can be a starting place to support engaged and healthy young people.”

Reporting to the Minister for Education's School Advisory Council, the role will support the implementation of best-practice behaviour and inclusion in education.

Ms Mitchell said the new approach aimed to support teachers at a classroom level and would improve student learning outcomes.

Professor Cross welcomed the opportunity to work with schools across the state.

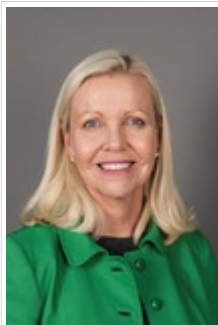
“Throughout my career I have been committed to improving the health, behavioural development and learning outcomes for children and young people. There are many ongoing and emerging behavioural challenges for students – especially as they grow up in a digital world,”

Professor Cross said.

“We need to use the best quality evidence to ensure we are at the forefront of actions to equip our students, their schools and families with the skills and tools to optimise their life outcomes.”

Catholic Schools NSW CEO Dallas McInerney welcomed the appointment and said

NSW schools appoint first Behaviour Advisor



NSW has appointed its first Chief Behaviour Advisor, tasked with leading improvements in student behaviour and wellbeing across the three school sectors.

Minister for Education and Early Learning Sarah Mitchell welcomed Emeritus Professor Donna Cross OAM and said her appointment was a critical step in ensuring a consistent, evidence-led approach to improving student behaviour in NSW schools.

“Professor Cross is a leader in the field of children’s mental health and brings with her decades of experience in education, public health and research, having worked with governments at a state, local and international level, including with the UN,” Ms Mitchell said.

“Her appointment as a specialist advisor on student behaviour is a proactive and necessary step in addressing existing, as well as new and emerging, issues in our schools.



“This is an important cross-sectoral initiative that will help improve behaviour in our schools and I’m pleased that the government has made this appointment in a timely manner,”

Providing independent advice to the Schools Advisory Council, the three school sectors have agreed to a number of priorities for the role, including:

- Evidence-based, inside the school gate and system/sector wide approaches to address cyber bullying
- Evidence-based approaches to student re-engagement, with a focus on addressing school refusal
- Inclusive and evidence-based practice approaches/responses to low-level behaviours
- Best practice school-based approaches to challenging behaviours

Professor Cross will start in the role on 27 March 2023 on an initial two-year engagement.

Source Ministerial Press Release

Reminder there are vouchers to assist families in NSW



There are several vouchers available for parents and carers to assist families with school aged children.

The Premier's Back to School NSW Vouchers program provides 3 x \$50 vouchers, totalling \$150 for each eligible student.

The vouchers can be used:

- towards the cost of school uniforms, shoes, bags, technology, textbooks and other [eligible expenses](#)
- before 30 June 2023.
- [to apply click here](#)

The \$100 Creative Kids voucher may be used with a registered activity provider for registration, participation and tuition costs for a range of creative activities, including arts, drama, dance, digital design, coding, and music lessons. For more information [Click here for more information and to apply for the voucher](#).

The Active Kids \$100 voucher is for parents and carers of school-enrolled children to use towards sport and active recreation costs each year. Voucher 1 is valid January to December and Voucher 2 is valid July to December. [For more information click here](#).

The \$100 First Lap voucher is for children aged 3 to 6 years who are not enrolled in school. The voucher can be used for a structured swimming lesson program with an approved First Lap provider. The voucher is valid until 30 June 2023. [Details of the First Lap program](#)

CCSP thanks the NSW Government for creating these programs and suggests families use the vouchers to help reduce their living costs.

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