



## CEO/Principal's Message

Dear Parents and Carers,  
Welcome back to Mater Dei for 2012. I hope you were able to enjoy some peace and relaxation over Christmas and New Year.

Last Thursday all Australians paused briefly to celebrate Australia Day; obviously an important day in our calendar and in the hearts and minds of all Australians. I use the term "all Australians" deliberately, conscious that it means different things to different people. To mark Australia Day, the Catholic Bishops' Commission for Justice, Ecology and Development released a statement urging political parties *"to work towards a common approach to asylum seekers, so that human beings do not become pawns in a political argument...and to honour the Australian sense of justice and compassion to establish a defined limit to incarceration in detention centres for people who are not criminals"*. In the statement, Bishop Eugene Hurley, Bishop of Darwin makes the following point: *"The fact is that the vast majority of asylum seekers held in these detention centres will be found to be refugees, and as such they have a perfect right to be here. That is clear. The real problem is the way we respond as a community. What I have learned is that I should never judge until I know their story and when I've heard their story, then compassion is all I feel. I know there is popular rhetoric about turning the boats around. The important focus for me is not the boats, but the fact that each boat is full of human beings whose stories I do not know. This is not a legal matter but a matter of human rights, indeed a matter of morality"*.

At Mater Dei, as a Good Samaritan School, we have a particular preference for the marginalised in our community. Let us hope and pray that throughout 2012, our political leaders respond with dignity, compassion and justice to the needs of those most marginalised in our community.

Elsewhere in the newsletter, there is reference to a number of upcoming important events. Please make a note of these so that you may be fully aware and involved in the life of your child at Mater Dei. Most importantly, is the Parent Information evening on Monday 13 February. The information evening this year will, I hope, have a more practical focus in communicating some important aspects of daily school life at Mater Dei. We will also be launching our **Future Directions Statement**, an

important document that will chart the course of our school and organisation over the next four years. I hope therefore that as many parents and carers as possible are able to attend this evening.

Please also be particularly attentive to the information sheet sent home this week regarding new protocols for schools in recording student absences. These protocols apply to **every** school and are mandated by the Minister for Education. There are significant obligations on parents/carers and schools to both track and record student absences accurately. There are also very specific limits about the numbers of days students may be absent for various reasons. Please be especially vigilant about providing written explanation of your child's absence from school and of communicating the reason for the absence **at the time of the absence**.

A very special welcome to the following students and their families who have joined our community in 2012-

Justin Buda	Trystan Budge	Jett Charlton
Harry Dickinson	Harrison Golden	Trey Maclou
Stefan Menillo	Kyle Neilson	Erik Sinclair
Charlotte Skinner	Matthew Stone	Joel Wade
Harrison White		

I know this begins a wonderful new journey in the life of your family and child in the caring and supportive community that is Mater Dei.

Finally, a very warm welcome to Mr Sid Conte (Secondary C) who joins the teaching staff of Mater Dei this year and to Mrs Karen Taylor who has been appointed in the new role of Executive Assistant to the Principal. We also welcome in a permanent capacity, Mrs Carmen Nardi who will work with Debbie Gates in the Development Office and Beth Andrews who will continue to work as a Social Educator at Teralba. I know that our extended community will make each member of staff especially welcome.

I look forward to catching up with you at one of the many upcoming events at Mater Dei.

*Tony Fitzgerald, CEO/Principal*

**CANTEEN WILL BE RESUMING ON FRIDAY 10 FEBRUARY.**

Could all orders please be placed in paper bags (separate lunch and recess orders) with your child's order, name, class. No envelopes please. The orders need to be brought to school no later than Thursday. We welcome any new parents to help out or to come for a chat. If you would like to help out you can contact Kirsty 46481334 or Tanya 46580180. (Menu attached)

**TAXI VARIATIONS**

The Department now requires 7 working days notice for variations i.e. change of residential address and change of before or after school address. And that is 7 working days after parents have returned a form which will be forwarded to you by me upon request.

**Anne Lauder, Business Manager**

**2011 End of Year Student Reports**

End of Year Reports were sent home with students and posted to others on the last day of school last year. If you did not receive your child's report, please let the school know.

**Commencement of School Activities**

The following dates are when various school activities will commence for the term:  
Week Commencing Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February –  
Swimming Program, Secondary Sport (Tuesdays Session 3), Primary Sport (Wednesdays Session 3), Community Access.



*Students at the 2011 Primary Presentation*

**2012 Student Leadership** Mater Dei are very proud to congratulate our new School Leaders for the 2012 year:

**Mater Dei Primary House Captains**

Blue	Olivia VENERAN
Red	Miles ANDREWS
Yellow	Nicholas PITHIO
Green	Chelsea MORRIS

**Mater Dei Secondary House Captains**

Blue	John ZARZOUR
Red	Jake NELSON
Yellow	Phoebe SAID
Green	Laura GOW

**Mater Dei School Captains 2012**

Rachael PATTERSON	Joel BEERS
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**Mater Dei Year 12 Student Councillors 2012**

Emma HARRISON	Sarah BEAN
James FITZPATRICK	Julian KENNEDY

**Major Award Winners for 2011**

**Secondary Major Awards**

The following students were worthy recipients of major awards at both the Secondary and Primary End of Year Assemblies last term:

- Mater Dei Peace Prize 2011 - ALICIA BRYLEWSKI
- Mater Dei Quota Club Award 2011 - Year 12 Outstanding Student - KATE FEENEY
- Mater Dei Ruben F Scarf Student Commitment Award 2011 - GENEVIEVE RYAN
- Mater Dei Mayoral Citizenship Award 2011 - JOEL BEERS
- Mater Dei Secondary Performing Arts Award 2011 - NATHAN LEICH

**Primary Major Awards**

- Mater Dei St John's Park Bowling Club Citizenship Award 2011 - MICHAEL BACKHOUSE
- Mater Dei Campbelltown Lions Club Award 2011 - Year 6 Outstanding Student - JADE DI GIROLAMO
- Mater Dei Primary Performing Arts Award 2011 - OLIVIA VENERAN

### **Mater Dei Living Skills Program (LSP)**

It was our pleasure to welcome **51 students** into the **2012 Mater Dei Living Skills Program** when we commenced Term One this week and in particular **eleven students** who began their participation in the LSP for the first time. As many of their peers were continuing their placements in the LSP the new students' arrivals were made easier by their friends and members of staff who greeted each and every student and helped them settle into their rooms. A phone call home to reassure everyone that all was progressing well and affirming messages in their diaries were appreciated by the students' families and their teachers at School. An excellent start!

This week we also welcomed **Jackie Guy** who joined the Richardson House team of Social Educators. We wish Jackie success and happiness in the LSP and believe that her previous experience in similar programs will add to the comprehensive program offered to our students.

Several students received good news during the holidays with advice that their applications for **ADHC Family Assistance Funding (FAF)** had been successful. Families had applied for FAF to purchase various items for their children including iPads and specially designed and manufactured bikes and these monies have already been forwarded to families. If you would like further details and assistance to apply for FAF for your daughter or son please contact me on **4654 8721** to discuss your requests and the process.

We would like to extend **a special invitation** to every student participating in the 2012 LSP and to their families to join our Social Educators at the **2012 Sunset Picnic** which will be held **on Monday 13 February commencing at 5.30 pm in the Wivenhoe Gardens**. Of course students who attend the Houses on a Monday night will go to the picnic with our staff but everyone else is invited to attend as well. An individual invitation will go home to each student's family next week.

### **Mater Dei Early Intervention Program (EIP)**

Services resumed for more than **50 children and their families** when the Early Intervention Program team commenced Educational Support, Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy sessions, Early Learning Groups and Initial Meetings this week. We were delighted to catch up with our continuing children, their parents and carers as well as to receive several new referrals for families seeking services with us for the first time.

Several of our children's families also received good news during the holidays as they too were successful with their **ADHC Family Assistance Funding (FAF)** applications for items including swing sets, sandpits and iPads. I am able to provide full details and information to our families regarding this funding and the way in which we apply for funding to arrange for items and resources.

We would like to extend **a special invitation** to every family whose child is receiving services in the Mater Dei EIP to join us **on Tuesday 14 February at 10.00 am in the EIP Hall** for the **2012 Welcome Morning Tea**. We will post individual invitations to our families next week.

And finally we will be scheduling every child's **Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP)** over the next couple of weeks to be held before Easter. Of great importance as well are the individual **Transition To School Plans** which we will be commencing this Term for more than **20 children** who will begin Kindergarten in Term One next year. The EIP team will provide professional advice to each family so that they are able to make informed decisions concerning the most appropriate School placement for their daughter or son and then lodge their applications before the end of Term One on **Thursday 05 April**. A busy but exciting year!

*Pamela Templeton*  
**Director of Services**

*The following (double sided) flyers are attached to this newsletter:-*  
*Canteen Menu*  
*Foster Care Information Session (Campbelltown)*  
*Managing Challenging Behaviours Collaboratively*  
*Parents Promoting Resilience*



*Alicia  
Brylewski,  
recipient of  
the 2011  
Peace Prize*

# DEVELOPMENT OFFICE NEWS

*A warm welcome to the new families in our community and welcome back to our returning families!*

## **Mater Dei *PEACE EGG* on sale again in 2012**

Now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year, this fundraiser has raised over \$185,000 for our students.

This Darrell Lea chocolate egg will be available from March 26.

This wonderful initiative is made possible because of the generous support of our volunteer parent and friend egg packers.

This year we will be needing volunteer help anytime between March 12 and March 27.

**No experience required!!!**

**Volunteer and order forms will be sent home soon.**

## **Diary Dates for 2012**



### ***Ladies Lipstick Luncheon***

***Friday, May 11,  
The Cube, Campbelltown  
Catholic Club***

***Mater Dei  
Charity Golf Day  
Monday April 2  
Twin Creeks Golf Club,  
Luddenham***



***Tickets for luncheon and sponsorship packages for both events are on sale now.  
Visit [www.materdei.org.au](http://www.materdei.org.au) or contact the Development Office.***