



From Dr Frank Malloy

Dear Colleagues,

There has been much in the media in recent weeks critiquing the changes in NAPLAN testing format, timing, and reporting. Educators are well aware that these changes are a direct outcome from the 2020 Independent Review of NAPLAN, and were forecast by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) 12 months ago. Teachers, Principals, system leaders, and academics across the country were consulted in every jurisdiction and sector during this review. The Education Ministers of Australia and ACARA have been faithful in the implementation of key findings. After 12 years of NAPLAN and 10 years of the My School Website, a thorough evaluation of this large cohort testing regime was timely. The added disruptions to the test caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 added to the opportunity to consider a reset to the test in light of learnings over the past decade.

Key issues reported among teachers in 2020 which have informed changes include:

- i. The time delay of almost 7 months for students and teachers from the actual test dates until results were made available.
- ii. The need to appropriately utilise technology to aid the administering, marking, and reporting of the tests.
- iii. The need for a more explicit focus on achievement by students for each year level of testing, reflecting more readily a student's proficiency at their current stage of schooling.

ACARA has attempted to address these issues and others. Marist educators have actively contributed through their various State and Territory peak Catholic education bodies to this important national initiative.

As Marist educators we do need to be able to appropriately challenge some of the misunderstandings around the reporting of NAPLAN that have at times prevailed in some sections of the media. At the end of November last year, the Chief Executive Officer of ACARA David de Carvalho was compelled to issue the following correcting statement.

Media reporting using NAPLAN data to show the "best performing" public and private schools in Australia highlights how misleading media reports can be when it comes to education. The problem with "league tables" presented in these news stories is that they take no account of the educational advantages that the students who are enrolled in these so-called "top-performing schools" bring with them. Many of these students have parents who are affluent and well-educated themselves, which is an enormous advantage.

For example, the student populations at both the "top performing" primary and secondary schools in NSW are in the top 1% in terms of socio-educational advantage which takes into account parental education and employment.

To heap credit on the schools they attend, just because they are getting high scores, is to mistake the outcome for the educational input provided by the school. Many of these students would do just as well at other schools.

*A more accurate and meaningful approach to assessing the educational input that a school provides is found in the changes to the My School website that ACARA introduced in 2020. **This allows for a fairer assessment by comparing the increase in average NAPLAN scores at a school between two tests (e.g., Year 3 and Year 5) with the increase achieved by all other students across the country who had the same starting score and the same level of socio-educational advantage.***

It provides authoritative and accurate information that parents can use to assess which schools are really making a difference.

Marist Schools Australia has consistently advocated greater emphasis on the measure of learning gain in the reporting of NAPLAN results, as the statistical comparison for a school with students with similar socio economic advantage and students with the same starting score provides helpful external information for parents, school leaders, and teachers in the evaluation and validation of the educational experience for students in their school. As David de Carvalho explains, it is a more accurate and meaningful approach to assessing the "educational input" that a school provides.¹

The Catholic Church has long prioritised high quality, innovative school education. All Catholic schools are founded on the person of Jesus and as Marists we aspire to *make Jesus known and loved through quality Catholic education*. Book III of the Church's *Code of Canon Law* devotes the first chapter to Catholic Schools. In the context of the NAPLAN debates, noteworthy is Canon 806 section 2, that states:

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Directors² of Catholic schools are to take care under the watchfulness of the local ordinary that the instruction which is given in them is at least as academically distinguished as that in the other schools of the area.

The emphasis is clear. Comparisons matter. In Australia we have a sophisticated tool which provides a well researched and internationally recognised approach to compare schools that goes beyond the immediate local area. Our schools must ever seek to generate among parents confidence in the quality of learning and teaching, and confidence that the manner in which we do this will lead their children to experience God's love.

This week we celebrate Ash Wednesday and commence the Lenten Season. Schools are encouraged to consider along with the usual commitments to Caritas through Project Compassion, the International Marist Appeal for those so tragically devastated by the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey.

Gracious God, lead us in this period of inner reflection and examination.
May we be drawn inward to that silent, holy space that holds your Spirit.
This special time beckons us to see our life through
Jesus' eyes and the truth and reality of your love incarnate.
Give us the grace to enter the space of these days
with anticipation of our meeting.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Frank Malloy
NATIONAL DIRECTOR

1. Important to note is that due to the changes, ACARA has indicated the data set of past results from 2008 to 2022 will not be compared with the results from 2023 onwards.
2. The term "Directors" in the international context is understood to include Principals as well as leaders at a system or governance level.

MARIST SCHOOLS AUSTRALIA BOARD REPORT



From the Chair

Over the past few weeks in consultation with the National Catholic Education Commission, MSA has expressed serious concern about proposed changes to Australian law governing religious schools. The Chair of the Australian Bishop's Commission for Catholic education Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP, has explained that The Australian Law Reform Commission is conducting an inquiry into religious schooling, and a [consultation paper](#) just released indicates an intention to place severe limitations on the ability of Catholic and other faith-based schools to provide an authentic, faith-filled education.

Archbishop Anthony stated:

"This is the biggest threat to religious schooling in a generation.
If the proposals by the Commission are made into law, they would jeopardise our ability to keep our Catholic schools Catholic. We would have very little say in who we hire, losing our ability to prefer teachers who are Catholic and who actively live out their Catholic faith. We would lose our ability to ensure our schools are communities of faith, partnering with parents to form children in the faith. Even though our schools accept students from other faiths and of no religious faith, those who come to our schools expect the Catholic ethos to be upheld."

These concerns need to be raised at the highest levels of government!

Please send an email to Education Minister, the Hon. Jason Clare MP jason.clare.mp@aph.gov.au, asking him to preserve authentic religious education in this country.



Professor Brother David Hall FMS
Chair of the MSA Ltd Board



EARTHQUAKE IN SYRIA

SUPPORT THE MARISTS OF ALEPPO ASSISTING THE AFFECTED POPULATION

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per la Solidarietà Internazionale Onlus

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REMINDER

LAVALLA MAGAZINE

Please use Lavalla to share some news from your school with the rest of Marist Schools Australia.

The cut-off date for contributions for the 2023 editions of Lavalla are:

Wednesday 5 April 2023: Issue 1

Friday 22 September 2023: Issue 2

All submissions should be sent to Br Michael Flanagan (michael.flanagan@marists.org.au). Further information can be found [HERE](#).

Created + Called *a revolution of love and tenderness*



Staff at Chanel College Gladstone participating in the staff spirituality day program: 'Created + Called - a revolution of love and tenderness'.

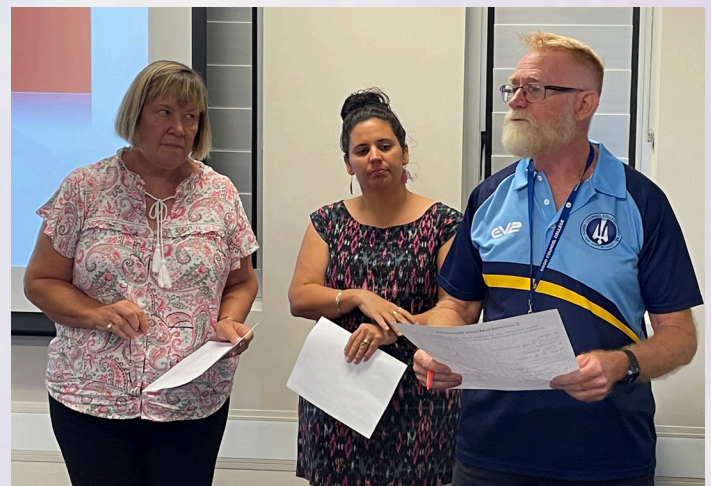


Tom Grealy, Jade Van Krimpen, Geraldine Dyer, Suzette Meiring and Kristi Bourke.

One Spirituality Day participant commented, "It was a reminder that all of us, including students and colleagues, are unique and loved at all times and that I have an important role in helping everyone at Chanel College to feel loved and valued to enable them to achieve their potential at all times".



The College Leadership Team at St Augustine's College, Cairns, prays a blessing over the staff at the beginning of the new year as part of the spirituality formation program 'Created + Called: a revolution of love and tenderness'.



Marcelle Foster, Loretta Slingo and Mike Wilson sharing insights into ways they can contribute to building a community of love and tenderness at Good Counsel College, Innisfail.

For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. Ephesians 2: 8-10

Australian Marist Solidarity NEWS

School Campaign Update 2022

Thank you for all the support shown during the 2022 School Campaign! Due to your ongoing belief in our programs, AMS has raised over one hundred and twenty thousand dollars that will go towards improving access to education for marginalised children in Timor-Leste. We wholeheartedly thank everyone for their contribution. Without you, our continued work in the region would not be possible. During the 1999 post-referendum violence, Timor-Leste saw 20% of primary school teachers and 90% of secondary school teachers flee the country. With 42% of the population below the age of 14 years, a shortage of fully qualified and equipped teachers has meant that teacher capacity is at an all-time low. Teacher quality is therefore a priority for AMS assistance.

Instituto Católico para a Formação de Professores (ICFP) is an AMS-supported, Marist run Catholic Teachers College in Timor-Leste. ICFP is one of only two providers of primary education teacher training in the country and offers accredited Bachelor Teaching. ICFP's goal is to strengthen the Catholic School system and provide the country with fully qualified teachers. It aims for student teachers to develop the qualities to "become good citizens and good Christians" (Saint Marcellin Champagnat). One of those qualities is a genuine love for students: "To educate young people one must first love them and love them all equally" (Saint Marcellin Champagnat). Trained in critical thinking, pedagogy and child development, the students are successfully employed upon graduation.

Wai-aca Community Pre-School is another example of the leadership and contribution of ICFP graduates. Thanks to Tomas dos Santos Moreira and his two classmates from ICFP, a new preschool in Mulia was established. By providing a learning experience for 4-6-year-olds in a safe and friendly space, the preschool expects an additional forty children will be able to commence year one at Mulia each year – beginning their education journey and extending the immense contribution to teaching made by ICFP.

A huge thank you to AMS donors for supporting teaching quality throughout Timor-Leste each year, and the constellation of benefits flowing to additional education settings such as Mulia Wai-aca Preschool. With your support, ICFP can continue to develop education leadership programs which are transforming the lives of young people in Timor-Leste.



New Marist School at Lautem

Many of you will be aware that the Marist Brothers are planning to open a new Marist school near the village of Lautem in the eastern part of Timor Leste. This will be a significant contribution to education in Timor Leste, with a lot of thought and planning going into the development of a school with innovative learning spaces and the highest quality of teaching and learning. The school will fall under the Marist Foundation Timor Leste and the Foundation's President, Br Peter Corr, is pleased to report that the builders are onsite and construction has finally started on the first buildings. Watch this space for more updates in the months to come!



Australian Marist Solidarity NEWS

Calls for AMS Student Ambassadors is back with this year's AMS Student Ambassadors Program. We also have upcoming events that you can register for below!

With the launch of the Schools Campaign Kit 2023, we are excited to announce that the AMS student Ambassadors Program is back for another year! Those nominated to carry out this role will be in charge of promoting fundraising activities within their schools and local communities, building on those relationships and sharing the impactful work undertaken at St Joseph's, Mabiri!

To support this campaign and also your other AMS engagement and efforts with your personal Marist partner communities, we highly encourage nominations for students who would thrive as an official AMS Ambassador. This can be done through the AMS Student Ambassadors Nomination Form. Access the link and then visit the tab "School Ambassador Kit:"

<https://www.australianmaristsolidarity.net.au/learn/>



If you have not done so already, could you please fill in the form and return it to: ams@marists.org.au as soon as possible, so that we can distribute badges and information packs. We launch our events calendar this year with our Teacher Briefing and Student Briefing. You are invited to hear first-hand from the AMS team about the schools' campaign, as well as our Program Partners at St Joseph's Mabiri.

Should you be interested to register for any of our events, please click on the link below:

<https://www.australianmaristsolidarity.net.au/partnerships/events/>

Upcoming events!

We launch our first student event on the 14th of March 2023. We encourage all students to register via the link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/ams-student-briefing-tickets-423072700837>

You can find other exciting events to register to, on our events page via the link:

<https://www.australianmaristsolidarity.net.au/partnerships/events/>

- Teacher Briefing- 28 Feb
- Virtual Program Visit- 28 March
- Student Ambassador Workshop- 8 August
- Virtual Program Visit- 22 August



Connect with us to find out more.



MARIST YOUTH MINISTRY

WELCOME ANDREA!

EDWIN BAKKER

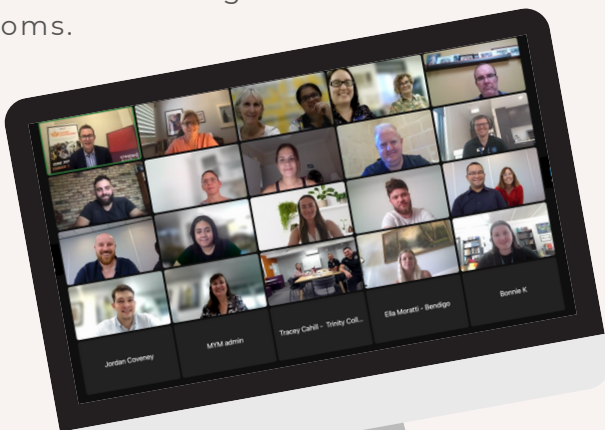
The MYM Melbourne team is pleased to welcome Andrea Grant into our midst. As previously announced, Andrea will oversee the MYM programs and events in WA, SA, and Vic, as well as serving as a team member at the MLF team. Andrea brings a lot of experience, passion for formation, and has already proven her valuable contributions to the team members, and various Marist school staff.



MYM FORMATORS CONFERENCE 2023

EDWIN BAKKER

During a busy commencement of the year, over fifty Game Changers Mentors gathered virtually to participate in the annual MYM Formator's Conference 2023. The aim of the Conference was to inspire, equip, and empower the Mentors in facilitating the Game Changers program in their school community. Throughout the two days, Mentors were provided with an opportunity to engage in keynotes around their evangelising role as Marist educators. Furthermore, the Mentors, representing twenty different Marist schools, were able to discuss the more detailed elements of the Game Changers in various breakout rooms.



Some feedback from the attendees

"It has helped me grow spiritually and has given me the confidence and opportunity to walk this journey with the young people."

"I learnt a lot from the quest speakers in particular, about how to strengthen my Marist journey and make more of an impact."

"The best part is connecting with Mentors from other schools...it gives us inspiration for the start of the year and how we can improve our Game Changers."

"I love the networking/meeting Marists from other schools."

"A great way to re-energise and recentre myself for Jesus and knowing we have great support on the journey."

Thank You!

The MYM Leadership team is grateful to all Principals for empowering staff to attend the Conference, those who contributed, and the Mentors who have taken this opportunity to prepare themselves for the year ahead.

MARIST YOUTH MINISTRY

MYM SYDNEY

JENI MILLER

Meet the new MYM Regional Assistants for 2023

Lucas Sharpley graduate from Marcellin College, Randwick (2022)

Olivah Tisbury- Brown from Marist North Shore (2021)

They are looking forward to working with students and young adults this year!

Olivah



Lucas

MYM SOUTHERN TEAM

ANDREA GRANT

The MYM Southern Team is thrilled to welcome two new Regional Assistants in 2023:

Kristy Allison

Kristy is a former student of Sacred Heart and will be based in Adelaide. In a short space of time Kristy has already organised a Young Adult launch and is gearing up for her first Marist Connect night on 21 March. Kristy embodies a strong, gentle style reflecting a depth of faith and commitment to the Marist story and spirituality. She is a wonderful addition to the team.

Sabrina



Kristy

Sabrina Batras

Sabrina is a graduate of Penola College in Melbourne. She brings the rich tradition of Mary MacKillop's story to her experiences in the Remar program. Sabrina's bright, bubbly personality as well as her highly developed social media and strategic planning skills are a brilliant inclusion to the Melbourne office.



We are delighted to have Kristy and Sabrina join the Southern team and alongside Grace Wake (VIC) and Issy Ochtman (WA) know they will do great things in 2023.