Introduction

2008 has been another productive year in our school. The continued growth of our school is an exciting time with our school population now reaching over 330 students.

An increase in the school population has also seen a demand for more facilities and resources and this has remained a priority this year. The completion of Stage 6 of our Building Program means that we now have the capacity to cater for our school becoming “double-streamed K-6 by 2010.

More importantly this has allowed us to cater for more families looking for a Catholic education for their children.

It is with pleasure that I present our 2008 Annual Report for Mater Dei Catholic Primary School.

1. The School

School Vision Statement
Mater Dei Catholic Primary School is a Christian environment where the relationships between staff, children, parents, clergy and the community are underpinned by Gospel values.
Mater Dei Catholic Primary School is a faith community that is committed to the development of the whole person.
Mater Dei Catholic Primary School is committed to developing lifelong learners who will become contributing members of society.

Patron and Logo
Our school name “Mater Dei” is Latin for “Mother of God”. This means we have a special devotion to Mary, Mother of God, who is our school patron. Our school motto, “One in Spirit” is something we try to instil within the school community.

Catholic Identity

Religious Education
The school this year welcomed Father Bernie Thomas to our parish and we have worked closely with him and the Sacred Heart Parish in providing opportunities for the students to continue their faith development.
Sacramental programs were the main focus for our Year 2 (Reconciliation), Year 3 (First Holy Communion) and Year 6 (Confirmation) classes. The students and teachers put a lot of time and effort into preparation for these sacraments and were joined by family and friends to celebrate these special occasions.

A desire to have students develop closer links with the Sacred Heart Parish has again seen us hold our whole school masses at the Parish Centre. Class masses are held regularly in our school and the infant’s paraliturgies are always a favourite with parents and grandparents.

The pastoral component of our faith saw children raise almost two thousand dollars through their involvement in the missions fundraising, project compassion and other charitable events throughout the year.

Our staff was very thankful to have the opportunity to be involved in a spiritual development day led by Sr Kerry Cusack. This day allowed staff to focus on their own relationship with God and was a most rewarding day for all concerned.

A Message from key School Bodies

School Council Report
The main focus of our School Council this year has been the addition of appropriate facilities and resources to meet the growing school population.

We were able to complete Stage 6 of development of our School this year. Under the direction of builder Geoff Byrne, the construction, incorporating two classrooms, a teacher’s work area and another toilet block was completed well ahead of schedule and the area has been utilised in this second half of the year. The support of the Sacred Heart Parish and the Diocesan Provident Fund have again been instrumental in completing this next stage of development.

Improved lighting for our two car park areas has also been completed this year.

Under the direction of the School Council, the Mater Dei Building Fund was launched this year. The purpose of this Fund is to raise money for the construction of a multi-purpose centre for our school. Such a centre would incorporate a hall for assemblies, concerts etc as well as a chapel for masses.
Fundraisers for this Fund this year, have been most innovative, with a House & Land project undertaken as well as a most successful Garden Viewing weekend. The home was constructed in Tatton under the guidance of parent Peter Hurst, with the assistance and donation of materials from many tradesman and businesses from within the school community.

The School Council approved & funded a part-time maintenance person for our school this year. Pat Plum was appointed to this position and has certainly been kept busy around the school.

I would like to recognise the efforts of Father Bernie in his initial year in the Parish. He has been a great supporter and spiritual mentor of our school during this time.

I would like to thank my fellow Council members for the vision and expertise they have given to our school.

Richard Harrison
Chairman

Presidents P&F Report:

"The end of the year approaches and our work for the moment is almost complete. We should remember the many blessings we have received this year, the friendships we have made, the challenges we have met, the struggles we have endured and the achievements we have celebrated. We should all be thankful for all the graces bestowed on our entire school community." (Source unknown)

It is with great pleasure that I present the President’s Report for the Mater Dei Parents and Friends Association, (P&F) at this the 2008 Annual General Meeting. Tonight marks the end of my 4th year as President, a role I have thoroughly enjoyed. In those 4 years the Mater Dei P&F has raised in excess of $140,000 for our school. In this year alone we have presented the School Board with cheques for $35,000 with more to come at the commencement of the 2009 school year. This is a tremendous effort for a relatively small school.

I am very fortunate to be part of a truly remarkable group of people who provide leadership, support and advocacy for parents within the Mater Dei School community. They are always looking at innovative ways to support our school community, not only with fund raising activities but also organising and assisting in school activities that unite the entire school community. It is extremely satisfying when our P&F’s fund raising ventures are examined and copied by other schools.

With the recent official opening of our new buildings, we now have a school that is ready for double stream schooling from Kinder to Year 6. However with these essential buildings in place we must now look to the provision additional buildings to compliment and enhance the educational processes of our children. With this in mind we now must work towards, the Multi-purpose centre, (already the subject of fantastic fundraising activities), a larger library, larger school office and teachers staff room area. These are our long term goals whilst continuing to support the school where ever needed.

A committee is only as good as it’s members and at this stage I would like publicly acknowledge the amazing support that has been provided by all Executive Members, Vice President - Anna Keough, Treasurer - Liz Pangalo, Secretary - Cathie Morton and our School Board Representative Maree McAuliffe. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Chris Hall in the school canteen and Bev Seaman in our clothing store. I would also like to thank those parents who have either attended our meetings or responded to a call for assistance. Special thanks for the support and guidance provided by our Principal, Danny Malone as well as our Parish Priest Fr. Thomas.

Tom Murphy
President

2. Information on Key School Programs

School Determined Improvement Targets

SCHOOL RENEWAL

Every year the school, through consultation, must determine priorities for development in categories including Policy, Administration, Professional Development and School
Facilities. Priorities for our school included the training of teachers and incorporating the **First Steps Writing Program** into our teaching practice, the reviewing our existing HSIE & Science Policies, a staff spiritual renewal day, Assistant Principal & Religious Education Co-ordinator renewals and the continued development of facilities and resources to cater for our growing student numbers. This included completion of stage six of our building program (two classrooms, a teacher’s work area and a toilet block).

**Programs to Support Students**

**Current Curriculum Initiatives**

A curriculum review was conducted on our HSIE policies after consultation work on policy, assessment procedures and scope & sequences had been completed with staff.

A similar process is also being undertaken with staff in the Science KLA. The curriculum review for this will be conducted next year.

**First Steps**

The participation and implementation of First Steps Writing was a major focus for 2008. The staff completed six professional development sessions led by Kathy Hopkinson. Focussing on the following areas:-

1. Understanding the Writing Map of Development
2. Assessing and Supporting Students Writing Development
3. Contextual Understanding: Five Key Understandings
4. Use of Texts: Teaching Different Purposes and Forms of Texts
5. Conventions: A Student-Centred Approach to Teaching Spelling
6. Processes and Strategies: Supporting Students to Use the Processes of Writing to Compose Texts

Release time and support was also provided in for teachers to work in class groups planning and refining their skills in teaching of writing. The full implementation of this program will continue to be a focus in the coming years.

**Other Learning Support Initiatives**

**PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT LEARNING**

The school continues to focus on early intervention and hence have an emphasis on extra support in the early years at Mater Dei.

Kate Le Brocque is utilised as a Resource Teacher in the Infants grades working with classroom teachers in meeting the needs of children. Reading Recovery is another program aimed to support children in Year One experiencing difficulties in the literacy area. Kate has also taken small groups of primary students for Language classes with the main purpose being to improve student’s skills in reading, writing and the talking and listening areas.

Di Chambers has continued in her role as Primary Resource teacher, a role we hope to be able to expand in 2009.

It is always pleasing to see the large number of children in our primary classes who participate in the University of NSW competitions each year. These competitions are most challenging and yet we have had students achieve a high distinction, a large number of distinctions and credits. I applaud all of the children who enter these competitions as it exposes them to another form of testing which can only benefit them as they progress towards high school.

Separate competitions are held for English, Maths, Science, Computers, Spelling and Writing.

The School Council’s commitment to technology continued this year with the purchase of six Interactive Whiteboards to be utilised as a teaching tool within classrooms.

**EQUITY PROGRAMS**

As part of our HSIE studies each class selects another culture to study. Cultures that are studied include Aboriginal, Egyptian, French and Japanese. This enables children to gain a greater understanding of other cultures from countries within our region.

Brungle School near Tumut was an excursion venue for our Year 4 students. This school provides a great insight into Aboriginal customs and artefacts.
Student Support Programs
Peer Support was provided again with the focus for the unit being “Keeping Friends”. This program, which brings together students from K-6 in small groups and is led by Year 6 students, is aimed at providing strategies for children to take on a more positive outlook. Besides building these skills, the structure of the groups allows students to build up a network of support across the grades.

Our buddy system continues to be a successful way to orient new Kindergarten children into our school. Children in Year 5 and 6 are paired up with children from Kinder. The older children certainly enjoy this opportunity.

The Life Education Van visited our school again in 2008 and it provides an opportunity for children to look at appropriate health and lifestyle choices that will affect their long term well-being. Units of work are undertaken in individual classes in the weeks following the visit to reinforce the concepts introduced.

Students with special needs again received funding from the Catholic Schools Office to allow teacher assistants to work with them in classrooms to enhance and support their learning.

Another Diocesan initiative has been the formation of Language classes in schools to assist “at risk” children in this area. Eight children from our primary grades have benefited from these classes run by Mrs Le Brocque.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility
The school initiated this year the “One in Spirit” award which, each fortnight, recognises a student who is demonstrating the values promoted by the School.

We have displayed posters around all areas of our school as a visual reminder of appropriate behaviours.

Late in the year our staff undertook training in The “You Can Do IT” program which promotes respect and responsibility in students. Planning for this program will begin next year for implementation in 2010.

Student Performance
Statewide Tests and Examinations
The table below indicates the percentage of students who have achieved national minimum standards in literacy and numeracy.

Year 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Punctuation and Grammar</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Year 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Punctuation and Grammar</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mater Dei Catholic Primary School has participated in BST Literacy and Numeracy since 1998 and in BST Writing since 2001. The school monitors Trend Data each year and uses that information to inform its learning and teaching practices for the upcoming year. This year the students completed the NAPLAN tests in early May.

School Policies
Our school is committed to the development of the whole person: body, spirit, heart and mind.

Through the development of appropriate welfare, discipline, complaints and grievance policies we aim to establish a community of care through:
- welcoming and including students and their families
- respecting the dignity and uniqueness of each student
- providing a safe, secure & stimulating environment conducive to learning
- ensuring fairness & justice within appropriate discipline structures
- promoting self-esteem and critical thinking in students
- processes that allow parents to express their concerns or grievances
Our School continues to develop and review policies on each of the curriculum areas as well as policies on enrolment, programming, assessment, homework, student welfare, technology and many other areas. Copies of these policies are kept in the School Office and parents are welcome to view them.

A copy of the Diocesan Policy on Enrolment, Discipline, Complaints and Grievance Resolution can be found on the following link to the Catholic Schools Office.

Enrolment Policy
Mater Dei School has developed its enrolment policy in alignment with the Diocesan Enrolment Guidelines. It is clearly outlined in our school prospectus, enrolment brochure and website.

Diocesan Enrolment policy can be accessed through the Catholic Schools Office.

Student Enrolment Profile:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Indig'</th>
<th>LOTE*</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>159</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Language background Other Than English

Structure of Classes
Classes are divided into the seven different grades, with Kindergarten to Year 4 being double-streamed and Years 5-6 single stream. The maximum class size at the school is 30 students.

Staffing
Our school staff consists of a Principal, twelve permanent full-time teachers, 5 part-time teachers, two teachers assistants and five support staff. All of these personnel have the appropriate qualifications and clearance screening required to fulfil their duties in our school.

Teacher Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching qualifications from a recognised higher education institution</th>
<th>Qualifications from a recognised Higher education institution but no formal teaching qualifications</th>
<th>Have relevant successful teaching experience and appropriate knowledge but no formal teacher qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professional Learning
Kathy Hopkinson led our staff in the training of the First Steps Writing Program. This was our major PD focus for the year and included two professional development days, staff meetings and consultation sessions.

The purchase of six Smart Boards meant that all staff undertook some training and sharing sessions. These will be continued again next year.

Year One, Year Three & Year 4 teachers from our school were involved in SENA Numeracy and Measurement Professional Development throughout the year which focused on providing the training and time for thorough assessment of children and the planning of specific learning and teaching activities to meet their needs.

Other professional development included Religious Education Syllabus & assessment of work, CPR, Child Protection update, Anaphylaxis Update, Harassment in the Workplace and the SENA Numeracy Program.

Community Satisfaction
The following information has been provided to the school. It has been a valuable gauge for determining the level of satisfaction our community has with Mater Dei.

As part of our school’s Annual Report, a cross section of our school community is being asked to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement with the following statement.
**Staff**

I am usually happy at Mater Dei Catholic Primary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</table>

**Parents**

I am usually happy at Mater Dei Catholic Primary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Students**

I am usually happy at Mater Dei Catholic Primary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher attendance and Retention**

The federal Schools Assistance Act 2005 requires that each school report on the average attendance rate of staff members in a given school. The end figure is determined by calculations including certain periods of absence due to sickness, personal carers leave, leave without pay, special leave and accident/workers compensation leave. An attendance rate of 96.05% was achieved in 2008 by staff at Mater Dei Primary School.

**Financial Statement Summary**

This data shown below is a summary of Diocese of Wagga School System income and expense and includes income and expense from all system schools.

**About the Report**

This report has been compiled with the assistance of appropriate school and Diocesan personnel and encompasses educational and associated activities of our school community in 2008.

It is a compulsory requirement of all government and non-government schools. Copies of this report are to be accessible to all school parents, the Catholic School's Office...
in Wagga and appropriate government bodies.

Regards,
Danny Malone
Principal.