Conference

It is just over a month since delegates to our annual ASA conference converged on Perth. On this occasion the theme set for deliberation was Mining The Soul, which was most appropriate for a conference being held in the nation’s mining capital. We were welcomed by Mr Barry Maguire, a member of the Noongar people, who are the traditional owners of the land in the south-west of Western Australia and Guildford Grammar School’s Indigenous Dance Group, Boodjar Bidi Dance Troupe, and then by the Archbishop of Perth, The Most Reverend Roger Herft AM, and The Primate of the Anglican Church in Australia, The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier.
Throughout the conference we were challenged by Dr Paula Goode’s theological research and ideas; we were inspired by Dr Bruce Robinson’s work with UWA’s ‘Fathering Project’; we were ‘bowled over’ (excuse the pun) by former test cricketer Justin Langer’s enthusiasm and passion for cricket, religion and life; and we were invigorated by the mentoring work of Akram Azimi and Jarrad McKenna. In addition, we heard about some outstanding Indigenous, Service Learning and Religious Studies programs that are taking place in our schools and we listened to the views of an impressive group of Year 12 students who spoke candidly about their faith and how it has shaped their lives. Furthermore, we participated in two beautiful services at St George’s Cathedral and two magnificent social functions; one at Government House and the other at the State Reception Centre in Kings Park. Highlights of these events were the performance of the Combined Choir from WA Anglican schools at the Conference Service and former Dean of Perth, Dr John Shepherd’s most amusing speech about the resilience of school principals at the Conference Dinner.

I would like to again thank the members of the organising committee for their work in preparing for and executing the conference. Led by Mr Garth Wynne, the committee worked tirelessly for 18 months to bring both the pre-conference events and the conference itself to fruition. The bar has been set at a very high level for the organisers of ASA’s 2015 Conference, to be held at the Realm Hotel in Canberra from 6-8 August. Expression of Interest forms have been distributed to schools and we encourage people to register their interest in attending next year’s conference. (Expression of Interest forms are also available on ASA’s website: www.anglicanschoolsaustralia.edu.au/)

Ongoing ASA Projects

The Management Committee has identified a number of ongoing projects in support of school chaplains that it will focus its energies on for the rest of the year. These include the development of online resources, which we hope will be added to in time, and preparations for a national Chaplains’ Representative Group. Additionally, ASA has entered into a partnership with the Cardff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies and the Anglican Diocese of Hong Kong for involving Anglican school chaplains in the Cardff MTh in Chaplaincy Studies program. ASA will ensure that at least four students enrol in the course in 2015. Western Australia’s Anglican Schools Commission will half-fund two chaplains from their schools as a minimum and encourages schools or other School Commissions to assist with funding for their chaplains.

To assist principals and boards with the ever-increasing problem of selecting and recruiting suitable chaplains to work in our schools, ASA’s Executive Officer, The Reverend Peter Laurence, has again travelled to the UK to recruit Anglican chaplains and religious studies teachers.

Over the duration of the current Strategic Plan, there are a number of initiatives we would also like to work on and they include:

- The development of a regular ASA journal;
- The implementation of other special projects (similar to Dr Jennifer Barr’s Indigenous Education Research Project, in 2009);
- Further advocacy work as required.

All of these current and proposed initiatives come at a cost so it was particularly pleasing that the proposed fee increases through to 2020, were overwhelmingly endorsed and supported at our Annual General Meeting in Perth. It is hoped that ASA will be fully self-sufficient by 2020, and that from then on membership fee increases will return to the levels we have been familiar with in recent years.

Newsletter

Not surprisingly this issue of ASA News features a number of articles inspired by the conference. As well, we again highlight a new school – this time it is The Googong Anglican School in the new township of Googong, five kilometres south of Queanbeyan. The work of the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation and the Anglican Schools Commission (Inc) (WA) is also recognised. Both organisations have recently acquired schools from other Anglican bodies in recognition of their capacity to sustain the future growth and development of the schools. In addition, we include an article on the development of the Biblical Studies framework by Sydney’s Anglican Education Commission. We also feature St Columba’s Iona Pilgrimage and social service work at St Andrew’s. Both of these schools are situated in Adelaide. Last, but definitely not least, we have introduced a review section to the newsletter. In this edition Joe Hewett and Rick Tudor review Dr Timothy Langer’s latest book, Ten Conversations You Must Have With Your Son. I commend these articles to you.

Fiona Godfrey

Click here to download a copy of the President’s Report tabled at the AGM.

Editor’s Note

Anglican Schools Australia invites principals, chaplains, teachers as well as chairs, governors and friends of Anglican schools to submit articles for publication in ASA News. We are particularly interested in publishing articles about school Religious Studies, Service Learning and Indigenous programs. Articles of approximately 1000 words in length together with a selection of high quality digital images are to be emailed to whillman@asc.wa.edu.au. Submissions are published at the discretion of the editor.
SCHOOL APPOINTMENTS

PRINCIPALS

2014
Dr Michael Davies, Trinity Grammar School, Kew, Victoria
Mr Ross Featherston, Brighton Grammar School, Brighton, Victoria

2015
Mr Nick Johnstone, Geraldton Grammar School, Geraldton, Western Australia

The Reverend Gillian Moses, St Aidan’s Community School, Aveley, Western Australia
The Reverend Thom Bull, Swan Valley Anglican Grammar School, Ivanhoe, Victoria
The Reverend Alison Andrew-Smith, Ivanhoe Grammar School, Perth, Western Australia

CHAPLAINS

2014
The Reverend Alison Andrew-Smith, Ivanhoe Grammar School, Ivanhoe, Victoria
The Reverend Thom Bull, Swan Valley Anglican Community School, Aveley, Western Australia

The Reverend Gillian Moses, St Aidan’s Anglican Girls’ School, Corinda, Queensland.

RESIGNATION

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Mr Barry Roots, Penrith Anglican College, Kingswood, News South Wales.

DIOCESAN NEWS

CONSECRATION OF NEW BISHOP

Perth’s St George’s Cathedral was filled to capacity for the consecration of The Reverend Jeremy James as Bishop for the Eastern Region in the Diocese of Perth on the feast of the Transfiguration, 6 August. At least 17 bishops, including the new Primate of the Anglican Church in Australia, the Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Philip Freier, were in attendance.

The new bishop will take up a pastoral role administering to the people in the rural and remote parts of the diocese as well as in several of the deaneries around Perth.

Dean of Perth Retires

The Dean of Perth, The Very Reverend Dr John Shepherd, retired from the position at the beginning of August. For almost a quarter of a century Dr Shepherd has been an outstanding supporter of Anglican schools in Western Australia. He developed an Education Centre at the Cathedral, hosted many services for schools and was a Board Member at Hale School for a number of years. Known for his wit and tremendous sense of humour, John Shepherd was in great demand as a guest speaker at our schools and conferences. In retirement he is looking forward to reading, pursuing his passion for 16th and 17th century music, “brushing up” on his Latin and delivering a few after dinner speeches. We wish him well.

A search is currently underway for the next Dean of Perth, in the interim, David Richardson, former Dean of Adelaide and of Melbourne, has been appointed to the position for a six-month term.

New Executive Director for Queensland’s ASC

Mrs Sherril Molloy was appointed Executive Director of the Anglican Schools Commission (ASC), Queensland, in July. Up until then she was a practising lawyer who had recently completed her term on Diocesan Council and the Legal Committee. Sherril was a Diocesan representative to General Synod and the Legal Committee. Sherril was a practising lawyer who had recently completed her term on Diocesan Council.

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Archbishop of Melbourne Elected Primate of the Anglican Church

The Archbishop of Melbourne, The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier, was elected for a six-year term as Primate of the Anglican Church in Australia by a special synod of laymen, clergy and bishops from across Australia at a meeting in Adelaide in June. He was inaugurated as Australia’s 15th Anglican Primate at a service in St Paul’s Cathedral in August that was attended by the Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby, together with about 1500 bishops, clergy and lay people from Australia and overseas. Dr Freier takes up the position at a time when scrutiny of the nation’s churches has never been greater.

Ranied by an Anglican father and a Roman Catholic mother in a working class suburb in Brisbane, Philip Freier says his first love was science not spirituality. He studied applied sciences at university before training as a teacher and requesting to be sent to a remote part of the country that’s now under pressure. Rural populations are declining, ministries are harder to maintain. We need more young who are ready to go into some of these difficult places – the kind of places I was working, in fact.”

Archbishop Freier also hopes to continue the work of his predecessor, The Most Reverend Dr Phillip Aspinall, Archbishop of Brisbane, in “stamping out sexual predation and helping abuse victims heal”. Deeply influenced by the Aboriginal Anglican community that surrounded him, Dr Freier underwent what he terms “a conversion of identity” in Far North Queensland. Ordained a deacon in 1983, he was made a priest in 1984 and elected a bishop for the Northern Territory in 1999.

Having spent two decades working in the outback Archbishop Freier believes closing the country-city gap will be among the most important challenges he faces during his time as Primate. He says that though, “The Anglican Church has had a very impressive national reach ... in many parts of the country that’s now under pressure. Rural populations are declining, ministries are harder to maintain. We need more young who are ready to go into some of these difficult places – the kind of places I was working, in fact.”

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Raised by an Anglican father and a Roman Catholic mother in a working class suburb in Brisbane, Philip Freier says his first love was science not spirituality. He studied applied sciences at university before training as a teacher and requesting to be sent to an indigenous community. Later he would gain a PhD in history.

Deeply influenced by the Aboriginal Anglican community that surrounded him, Dr Freier underwent what he terms “a conversion of identity” in Far North Queensland. Ordained a deacon in 1983, he was made a priest in 1984 and elected a bishop for the Northern Territory in 1999.

Sources:

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Thom Bull, Mrs Sherril Molloy, Dr John Shepherd, Dr Philip Freier
Construction of The Anglican School Googong (TASG), has begun in the new township of Googong, five kilometres south of Queanbeyan - just over the border from Canberra. Foundation Principal, Ian Hewitt, commenced work in June and is thoroughly enjoying the excitement and experience of establishing a new school in a new community. Currently there are about 15 families living in Googong but it is expected to have a population of 16,000 people within 20 years.

Situated on a 5.4 hectare green field site, the co-educational school, which will eventually cater for students in ELC (Pre-School) to Year 12, overlooks the township and nearby hills. Established as an initiative of the Diocesan Schools Council in the Canberra Goulburn Diocese, the School will open with students in ELC to Year 2 in 2015. It is envisioned that the School will eventually have a student population of 1100, with the first Year 12 cohort graduating in 2023.

Sustainability is a key component of the School’s design. Stage 1, which is due for completion at the end of 2014, comprises the Early Learning Centre (ELC) and K-3 classroom building, a kitchen garden, outdoor learning areas, a playground, oval and a car park.

NEW SCHOOL
The Anglican School Googong Is Under Construction

Ian Hewitt says, “the School has set itself aspirations as a place where the students and staff will:
• Know and discover - to find and explore the wonder in the world around them.
• Understand and dream – to dare to make a difference for themselves, their community and their planet.
• Grow in faith – to use God’s gifts to be the best they can be.”

According to Ian the aim is to create, “A rich and invigorating learning environment for learners of all ages”. He notes that strong connections to the local Queanbeyan and indigenous communities are already being established.

The Queanbeyan District Anglican church has already begun working closely with the School and the Googong community to spread the Gospel. As part of this process Waters’ Edge @ Googong has been established as an Anglican community that is seeking to connect, provide companionship and share Christ with the people of Googong (http://watersedgegoogong.org/). Similarly, the School is establishing its own connections within Queenbeyan and Googong via facebook and twitter so that people in the area can experience Christian community through their connections with TASG.

Ian Hewitt encourages ASA members to follow the development of the new school on Facebook and Twitter.

facebook.com/GoogongSchool
twitter.com/GoogongSchool
Max Caddy, Corporate Secretary at the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation (SASC), writes about the growth and projected growth of SASC schools. In particular, he comments on the Corporation’s latest acquisitions - Macquarie Anglican Grammar School and Orange Anglican Grammar School, both of which are in regional New South Wales.

Both of Australia’s largest groups of Anglican schools – the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation (SASC) and the Anglican Schools Commission (ASC) – are keen to continue the establishment and growth of Anglican schools. Indeed, the growth of Anglican schooling is an important element in the mission of the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney, and the Anglican Church Diocese of Perth. Anglican schools provide an opportunity not otherwise available to bring the gospel to many thousands of young people.

During recent years, growth of Anglican schooling - in terms of the numbers of young people exposed to the gospel – has taken place largely through the establishment of ‘new’ schools, together with the ‘organic’ growth that has occurred as these schools continue to increase in student numbers to reach optimum enrolment levels.

However, the most recent schools to become part of the SASC group – Macquarie Anglican Grammar School, and Orange Anglican Grammar School (both in regional NSW) – have been acquired from other Anglican bodies, in recognition of the particular capacity of larger groups – such as ASC and SASC – to sustain the future growth and development of schools. With the support of SASC, such schools now have a firm financial base from which to continue to cater to the needs of their local communities and extend their gospel work.

Strategies for further growth of SASC include expanding the enrolment base of existing SASC schools; continuing to bring into SASC appropriate existing schools and then to assist with their growth; and, commencing new educational institutions where practicable. In respect of the latter, plans are being developed for the establishment of new schools in Sydney’s Marsden Park in 2016, and also at Leppington soon after. SASC is also eager to continue to grow its Australian School-based Apprenticeship offering, through the launch of Trades Norwest Anglican Senior College.

Increasingly, Anglican schools within the SASC group also operate preparatory classes, or pre-Kindergarten. While at some schools this is not a new venture, other schools have found that creating such opportunities for early childhood learning has helped to secure regular school enrolments, as well as providing Christian care for younger children.

Regardless of how growth may occur, it will take place only under God’s providence. Each school aims to provide a high quality Christian education in a caring environment. Fees are set at levels which aim to make them affordable to the majority of local parents. SASC schools enrol all children, whether from Christian families or not; provided that parents acknowledge that their children will be taught the Christian faith and challenged with the claims of the gospel.

In looking to advance SASC’s vision, Serving Christ by equipping students for His world, its governors and executive are mindful of the prayerful support of individuals and of the Synod, and the committed service of the Corporation’s teaching and other staff.

We look forward, under God’s guidance, to further growth.
ASC Welcomes Three Schools Into The Fold

The Anglican Schools Commission (Inc) (ASC) recently announced it had acquired a further two schools in the eastern states and one in Western Australia. From the beginning of 2015 Trinity Anglican College, with campuses in Albury (New South Wales) and Wodonga (Victoria); Anglican College Cobram (Victoria); and Perth Anglican Grammar School (formerly Murdoch College in Western Australia) will operate as ASC schools. They will join a group of eleven other ASC co-educational low fee Anglican schools in Western Australia and Victoria that provide a quality Kindergarten/Preparatory to Year 12 education within a caring Christian environment.

These are exciting developments for the schools and the ASC. With the acquisition of these schools the ASC will have approximately 13,000 students and 1,500 staff in fourteen schools, making it one of the larger non-government schooling systems in Australia.

Last year the Bishop of Wangaratta, The Right Reverend John Parkes AM, approached the ASC requesting that it consider becoming the education service provider for all Anglican schools in the Diocese. The Bishop had witnessed Cathedral College, Wangaratta go from ‘strength to strength’ under the direction of the ASC. Cathedral College became an ASC school in 2011. He was keen for both Trinity Anglican College and Anglican College Cobram to benefit from membership of this strong system of Anglican schools. The Bishop was also aware of the limited resources the small country diocese had at its disposal to support the schools.

After undertaking comprehensive due diligence, and with the support of the Archbishop of Perth, The Most Reverence Roger Herft AM, the ASC agreed to the Bishop’s request. This decision was endorsed by the Perth Diocesan Trustees, partners in the ASC.

Bishop Parkes believes transferring ownership of the schools to the ASC has “secured the future of the Wangaratta Diocese and its schools”. He recently remarked: “For us the future is now an open horizon of possibility. Our full participation in the ASC system provides opportunities for us both to receive from, and actively contribute to its skills and resources. We thank God for the blessings this full relationship offers.”

Over the last few months, the Board of Murdoch College in Perth has also been engaged in negotiations with the ASC with a view to the Commission acquiring the College. Established in 2000 as a small independent school in the grounds of Murdoch University, the College was no longer viable in its current form or at its university location.

After appropriate due diligence, the ASC Board agreed to acquire Murdoch College, rebrand it as Perth Anglican Grammar School from the beginning of next year and relocate the school to 50 William Street, opposite Central Park in Perth’s CBD during 2015. Architects have been engaged to transform the complete six floors of a city office block into state-of-the-art teaching, learning and recreational spaces for students in Years 7-12.

Mrs Rensché Diggeden, Principal of Murdoch College, is buoyed by the ASC’s decision to acquire the College, thereby ensuring its long-term future. She considers the move to the city’s CBD will provide outstanding opportunities for the rebranded school’s growth and development. She said, “The city location offers rich, relevant curriculum experiences right on our doorstep and will enable access to a diverse range of cultural, sporting and educational facilities.” The new $50 million City of Perth Library is only a short walk from the campus and the King Street Art Centre, WA State Theatre, Art Gallery of Western Australia and Perth Concert Hall are situated nearby. Significantly the School is only a short walk from St George’s Cathedral and the newly refurbished Burt Hall.
Mrs Diggeden said: “The opportunities to enhance our program are just amazing. We’ve been talking to businesses and looking at some really professional work placements for our students. The rich, relevant, authentic programs that we can offer are just unequalled by this location.”

Board Chair of Trinity Anglican College, Professor Julia Coyle, said: “The move aligns the College with an entity whose primary role is to develop new and support existing Anglican schools. It will further strengthen Trinity College’s position as the fastest growing independent school on the Border and will enable it to fast track its capital and assets development program.”

The College’s Principal, Mr Steven O’Connor, believes joining the ASC is “a significant decision in the history of Trinity Anglican College and one which will enhance the future growth and prosperity of the College”. He said being part of the Commission would enable Trinity to accelerate its capital development program, increase its involvement in cultural festivals and events and provide more opportunities for teachers and administration staff to develop their skills. He considers the College ethos, culture and daily operations will be strengthened by this initiative.

The College is growing at about 10 per cent a year and with a population of approximately 1000 students the next building on the drawing board is a new senior school building. Mr O’Connor commented, “We had planned to build the first stage next year and the second in two or three years’ time. Now as an ASC school, we plan to build both stages together.”

Steven O’Connor went on to say, “Trinity ... is excited at the prospect of being part of a well-established group of like schools and looks forward to enjoying the benefits of membership of the ASC.” He is pleased that becoming an ASC school will encourage “opportunities for productive, professional collaboration between the schools”.

Mr Stephen Gale, Principal of Anglican College Cobram, said the school is looking forward to becoming part of Western Australia’s “widely respected and successful ASC”. He believes it is an “exhilarating time for the College, broader communities of Cobram and surrounding districts.

He commented: “Our school excitedly looks to a future with the ASC, and to the wealth of experience and financial stability that will come with this relationship. Our plans to grow and develop the school to its full potential are greatly enhanced by this development.”

Stephen Gale also said that Anglican College Cobram is looking forward to working closely with the ASC’s other schools in the Diocese: Cathedral College in Wangaratta and Trinity Anglican College in Albury-Wodonga. He believes that the three schools have “much to gain from being part of the broader ASC”.

The ASC’s CEO, The Reverend Peter Laurence, “is thrilled to be welcoming Trinity Anglican College, Anglican College Cobram and Perth Anglican Grammar School into the ASC family”. He said the ASC has been working with the School Councils at each of the schools to ensure they will be well-resourced to deliver the best possible education for their students, as they grow in enrolments, infrastructure and curriculum offerings in the coming years.

THIS PAGE TOP: Anglican College Cobram joins the ASC.
From left: Mr Trevor Noonan, Chairman of Council; The Reverend Peter Laurence, CEO, Anglican Schools Commission; The Right Reverend John Parks AM, Bishop of Wangaratta; Mrs Irene Clarke, CFO, Anglican Schools Commission; Mr Stephen Gale, Principal, Anglican College Cobram.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Mrs Rensché Diggeden outside the six-storey office building which is being refurbished as Perth Anglican Grammar School.
Photograph courtesy The West Australian Newspapers. Photographer: Steve Ferrier.
With a mean time out of our busy lives to reflect on ‘things that matter’ at the heart of our spiritual being. Sometimes we need to do this in relative isolation and quiet, by way of a retreat. Other times, we need to do it by dialogue ‘in community’.

This year’s Anglican Schools Australia Conference, hosted in Perth, provided such an occasion to discuss matters of the soul ‘in community’. Over 200 Anglican school principals, chaplains and board governors from across the country as well as the Diocese of Perth’s partner Diocese of Eldoret in Kenya came together for three days under the theme ‘Mining the Soul’.

The biblical context was set by Dr Paula Gooder, one of the Anglican Communion’s greatest ‘human assets’ and a self-proclaimed lover of the Bible, with a passion to inspire such love of the scriptures in others.

Anglican schools should be places where any and every member of their community can have their soul nourished. In a forum where students from across our WA Anglican schools spoke honestly of their life journey, some said outright that their school helped them connect with the spiritual side of themselves and helped them develop a ‘sense of self’. They also shared their experiences of when others’ actions had helped create soul in them, or when they had opportunities to nourish soul in others. Some spoke of the deep impact that school pilgrimages such as Reachout Manila has on their spiritual life and journey. “In the Philippines, the moment I smelt, felt and heard for the first time, I realized that my safe, privileged world would never be the same again.”

The student voices also spoke of times when it is hard to live the Christian life at school, even an Anglican school. Whilst our schools aim to be places where faith is nurtured, they are ‘real communities’. Our schools are reflections of wider society, with many young people there attempting to live out their beliefs as they work out their beliefs. The 2013 Young Australian of the Year Akram Azimi spoke of the racism to which he had been subjected at school, and how such bullying works against the soul. There is no place for racism, or any other form of bullying, in schools or wider society.

Anglican schools talk regularly of seeking to keep in balance the issues of body, mind and spirit. As one principal said to me, “We are here because we are genuinely attempting to nurture the body, mind and spirit of the young people in our care.” I have no doubt that every Anglican school has this as their mission, whether stated or implicit.

Young people are well served by experiencing some of the realities of life beyond school, yet within a safe and nurturing environment that allows them to safely explore matters of life, values and faith. The voice of former Australian cricket legend Justin Langer spoke of his success on the cricket pitch, yet his heart was longing for more … “I was living the dream but there was something missing … God gives me the strength to achieve anything.” Justin boldly shared his journey of faith.

Anglican schools face the same challenge as the broader church: how to present the Christian message in a new and living way that connects with people. Coming together to share the challenges and be inspired by youth and adult alike rejuvenates the body, mind and spirit to keep going with this vital ministry in schools. Jarrod McKenna, one of the conference speakers, summed up the role that each of us has as we share our faith daily: “Our task is to hand back Jesus to the world in all his captivating beauty and brilliance.” That says it all.

For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who want to lose their life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 16:25)

AS A’s Travel Partners

In 2013 Anglican Schools Australia (ASA) entered into an agreement with QANTAS as our preferred airline. At the same time ASA appointed Campus Travel (part of the Flight Centre Group), Australia’s only travel management company solely dedicated to the academic sector, as our preferred travel provider.

Airfare discounts, traditionally available to government and large corporate customers, are now available to all ASA member schools when you book through Campus Travel. Discounts apply to the lowest Red e-deal as well as to full-priced Business Class or First Class air travel. Australia-wide and world-wide on QF marketed flights. This includes the Emirates partnership as well as the one-world network.

Campus Travel prides itself on its ability to deliver cost savings, streamline the booking process and offer flexible solutions for study tours, sporting groups, language tours, music groups and student exchange programs. Jamison Warren, Director of Sales at Campus Travel, highlights the company’s emergency assistance program, which operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year from anywhere in the world as being a key benefit for schools.

Click here to download further information.
Mining The Soul: A Personal Reflection

Father Tony Poole

It is surprising what happens when one decides to sit at a table with people one does not know. Such was my experience at the ASA Conference Dinner at the State Reception Centre in Kings Park, and this article is a consequence of my actions. I thank the staff of Western Australia’s Anglican Schools Commission for their conviviality and the invitation to write about the 2014 ASA Conference.

Engaging with the Theme

The theme of the Conference was ‘Mining the Soul’. It was possible to engage with this theme from a bipartite perspective. Firstly, from a Western Australian point of view it was appropriate given the state’s recent mining boom. Secondly, from the perspective of ASA—a body of educators drawn from diverse institutions and situations—we considered this theme not only as attendees but as educators drawn from diverse institutions and situations.

The outcome was seventeen very different conversations running in parallel. Topics included:

- Silence, Stillness and the Connected Teenager
- The Value of Assessment Tasks in Christian Education
- School Chaplaincy v the Diocese … Who Wins?
- Student-Run Chapel Services
- Articles for the Weekly Newsletter
- Spiritual Self Care
- Children in Detention
- Open Space Technology
- Biblical Literacy
- Silence, Stillness and the Connected Teenager

It was refreshing to be given the opportunity and permission to engage as we saw fit. ASA has published a Book of Proceedings on the Open Space Forum that details all contributions to the conversations. It is a substantial resource with suggestions for future conversations.

Digging Deep

Paula Gooder’s biblical reflections in her Keynote Address, Body, Soul, Mind and Spirt: The Soul and its Importance in the New Testament, and closing summation provided the sandwich that held the conference program together. Dr Goorder consistently reminded us of the linguistic frameworks that we bring to our task, and the hidden assumptions that often predetermine our interpretations of ideas and events.

The heart of all sessions was the idea that entwines us. Dr Bruce Robinson a lung specialist and a Professor of Medicine at UWA gave rise to the idea of a ‘dad date’ as a way for men and their children to mine the relationships that lead to a healthy life and positive wellbeing. Justin Langer AM, former leading Australian test cricketer, gave new meaning to the interpretation of concentration on the cricket ground and indicated that there are new places for the cross to be found. We were enthralled by his wit and honesty.

In parts of the Conference we were taken to the depths of the transformative power of the love of God: this was particularly so as we listened to the emerging journey of ‘two miners’ Akram Azimi, Young Australian of the Year, 2013, and Jarrad McKenna, a social change trainer and activist who is the National Advisor on Faith and Activism for World Vision. To this was added the voice of Year 12 students from across the breadth of Western Australian Anglican schools. The voices of the students echoed the words of others: be honest, be confident and do not accept the cultural stereotypes proffered as normative for our enterprise, and by the way try to make chapel interesting.

These voices spoke of the challenges to be a Christian in our schools and the cost of discipleship in society, but also the richness of God’s love and grace. The way in which the students articulated their responses and perceptions was itself testimony to the education they have received.

There is much more that could be said, and much that I have glossed over. The organising committee is to be congratulated on a robust and substantial program, a well-chosen venue with easy access to a variety of venues and a coordinated movement of participants.

Our Challenge

In conclusion the worship was authentic to the life of the Diocese of Perth and a privilege to experience. We came to Perth as individuals with different learning styles and personalities, and having done some mining, identified gems that we can take with a new spirit to the lives of those we teach – the bullied kids, the low performers and even the sports jocks”.

Chapel Service at Brighton Grammar School

This page: Chapel Service of Brighton Grammar School
best cricket when he was absolutely focused, totally in the zone, ‘in flow’ as positive psychology terms it.

When I heard him speak a few weeks ago at the ASA Conference he was fantastic. I actually went to hear him with fairly low expectations. I was interested to meet him, because I admired the way he played cricket, but I didn’t have high expectations about his speaking ability. I was wrong! He is a very good public speaker.

In the early part of his career he was in and out of the Australian Test Team a bit. In 1999 he was really struggling and feeling quite down about the whole thing. He went to see the chaplain attached to the WACA in Perth. He saw the chaplain the day before he was due to go off and play Pakistan in Hobart. At the time Pakistan had the fastest bowlers in the world: Waqar Younis, Shoaib Akhtar, and Wasim Akram. Justin said that he still rates Wasim Akram, the left-handed fast bowler, as the toughest fast-bowler he’s ever faced. (The toughest bowler to face he named as the Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralitharan).

The chaplain tried to encourage him a bit, but Justin was still feeling quite down. The next day, as he was waiting at the Perth airport to fly to Hobart, the chaplain turned up, with his children, and a little New Testament. ‘I’ve marked a few verses which you might find helpful,’ the chaplain said. Justin picked out ‘God gives me the strength to achieve anything.’ (Philippians 4:13)

The result was a match-winning 238-run partnership with Adam Gilchrist to rescue Australia from 126/5 chasing a victory target of 369. The commentators said, ‘He is really concentrating. Look at his powers of concentration.’ But in fact Justin was simply reciting to himself, over and over, ‘God gives me the strength to achieve anything.’

Another verse, which he often used as a verse for meditation, was 2 Timothy 1:7 ‘God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.’

Meditating on an inspirational verse won’t automatically bring us all success. Just because I believe in God doesn’t mean I could go out tomorrow and play cricket for Australia, or even for the Old Scholars’ C-grade, but in the middle of tough times I feel God’s strength and know that he will give me the strength I need. I thank Justin Langer for reminding me of this.
Without God, our lives just don’t make sense

André Strydom

André Strydom is a Year 12 student at Peter Moyes Anglican Community School in Minderie, Western Australia. He is also the School’s Chapel Prefect. André was a member of the student panel led by The Reverend Canon Richard Pengelley, Assistant Chaplain and Director of Service Learning at Christ Church Grammar School, at Anglican Schools Australia’s (ASA) Conference in Perth. The panel of Year 12 students was brought together to discuss the role of spirituality in their lives and schools. Most of Western Australia’s Anglican schools were represented.

Students spoke about themselves, their goals and their dreams and about how their schools had assisted their spiritual development. They spoke openly about how their schools had supported their faith development, as well as of the difficulties that they had each faced. André represented his school with distinction. Indeed Dr Paula Gooder, the Conference’s Keynote Speaker, cited one of his comments in her closing address. “A spiritual experience is when God reaches down and touches you. … Without God our lives just don’t make sense.”

In this article penned especially for ASA News, André writes about an intense spiritual experience that changed his life. He also suggests ways in which schools might give students the opportunity to have spiritual experiences so that they may see God. We need, “to show students what Christianity is really about, what’s really important to us and why we believe in it.”

I grew up in South Africa among a sea of Christians, during which time I had an intense spiritual experience that has ever since defined my faith. Later we moved to Australia and I was appalled by the sheer lack of spirituality present anywhere, and I soon discovered I was one of very few practising Christians in the school.

This does not mean Australia is any worse than South Africa as far as religion goes. I believe the key difference is that Australians are openly atheists whereas South Africans will call themselves Christians, yet not have a drop of Christianity in their lives. I was guilty of this for a long time. I would go to church, zone out for an hour and then go home and call myself a Christian, without it having any influence on my life whatsoever.

This all changed one night when we were singing Christmas songs at church. I was dragged along because my parents went, and so there I was standing in a dark church holding a candle along with hundreds of other Christians and singing hymns. This was all during the time when the story of the world ending in 2012 was everywhere and I was genuinely afraid. As we sang my mind wandered and became fixated on the world ending and that was when I realised that if the world ended in 2012, I would have absolutely nothing to show for my life. I realised that nothing I had done or would ever do could really ever mean anything. And so I wondered why I would even bother, what was the point of life anyway? I didn’t want to just grow old and die, there had to be more to life than that.

By this point I was crying in hopelessness, but just as I reached the absolute bottom, we started to sing the ‘Onse Vader’, an Afrikaans song adaption of the ‘Our Father’ prayer. I realised that God is a consistency, a single fixed reference point. I realised that our lives just don’t make sense without God, we need God to have a purpose in life.

That’s how I became a real Christian, through the realisation that life is nothing without God. Recently, I was on a student panel at the ASA ‘Mining The Soul’ conference. One thing I was asked was how the Anglican schools could give students the opportunity to have spiritual experiences, to either find or strengthen their faith. The main issue with this is that it is incredibly hard to give an atheist a spiritual experience, impossible even, because their core belief opposes the very idea of it. I say impossible because I don’t think we can give anyone spiritual experiences. The way I see it, a spiritual experience requires God to come down and touch someone, to show them something that no missionary could ever explain with a million words. This is not to say missionaries are pointless, far from it, I believe missionaries set up the environment necessary for these people to find God, and God works through them to reach these people.

So if we are to give students the opportunity to have spiritual experiences, and possibly see God, it would be about setting up the environment that allows it to happen, not about physically inducing the experience. In my experience most students think of Christianity as either a joke or something that repeatedly gets forced upon them at school, neither of these are good environments or mindsets for students to have if we want them to see God. So I believe the key to reaching the atheists in schools is to remove some of the stigma from Christianity. To make them see it really is something amazing, not just a bunch of rules we choose to follow.

The main idea most atheist students seem to have is that Christianity is a collection of rights and wrongs. Do the right thing and you go to Heaven, do the wrong thing and you don’t. I think we need to show them that there is more to it than that, that it’s not about being perfect but instead all about love. Loving God with all your heart, and loving your neighbour as yourself. It’s all about grace and mercy given to us by God through Jesus and all we have to do is accept it. Perhaps if we could change that stigma to show students what Christianity is really about - what’s really important to us and why we believe in it. In my case it’s because I can’t find any other purpose in life, without God my life just doesn’t make sense. I don’t know if this same reasoning will work for anyone else, but to me it is the core of my faith. Perhaps if we could lead the students in a similar direction, making them ponder the purpose of life and why their lives matter if all they are going to do is grow up, grow old and die - harsh I know, but it’s the reality of a life without God. Perhaps then they will notice the massive gap in their lives that they’ve never seen before, and perhaps that will then give God the opportunity to reach out to them.

I say perhaps a lot because, in the end, I really just don’t know. I’m just another student in an Anglican school and I really don’t know how to reach out to a chapel full of students and help them see God for the first time, but I wish I could because I want to show them the beauty of Christianity.
Imagine my delight when upon accepting a position with the Anglican Education Commission in the Diocese of Sydney I discovered that the AEC was in the process of developing a Biblical Studies framework for Anglican schools.

Since 2012 the AEC staff have been consulting with school chaplains, teachers of biblical studies, principals and other interested parties on what should be included in a framework for Biblical Studies in Anglican Schools. The lead writer in the project was Mrs Ruby Holland. An experienced educator, a former Anglican school principal and a current lecturer at Wesley Institute, Ruby drew extensively on current research and rich collaboration with biblical studies practitioners to produce a rich and well-rounded framework.

A consultation Draft of the framework was presented at The King’s School, Parramatta in 2013 where 37 teachers and chaplains from over 20 schools participated.

In her introductory address, Ruby posed five important 21st Century Questions:

- What is the purpose of Christian education?
- What is the role of the Bible in the school?
- What is the nature and meaning of evangelism, conversion and formation?
- How do we live as disciples in the school and in the broader community?
- How do we best engage our students?

She elaborated on the seven objectives of the framework and explained their connectivity to the rest of the curriculum. She argued that Biblical Studies should be regarded as a foundational element of the overall curriculum in an Anglican school. Its purpose is educative. This is well exemplified in the Rationale of the Framework.

“The Biblical Studies classroom provides a hospitable space in which all students are cared for, where Christian living is modeled and where students are encouraged to make meaning through the lens of a Christian worldview. It seeks to give coherence to what is learnt in other disciplines by acting as the central integrating subject. It is the place to ponder the nature and purpose of other subjects and to model this exploration of meaning for teachers of all subjects. It attempts to place within the broad creation, fall, redemption and consummation motif all of human history and endeavor.”

It is in this way that the AEC hopes that Biblical Studies will be transformed from being a marginalized or at worst irrelevant subject to one that gives coherence to all that students learn.

The framework is offered as a suggestion for schools, and continues to be a work in progress. In regard to building a resource library, Sydney and regional Anglican schools are being encouraged to contribute units of work to accompany each section of the framework.

I am delighted that compared to my first experience in 2001, teachers of Biblical Studies and chaplains will no longer have to struggle to create a curriculum from scratch or review one without any guide or form of reference from their Anglican community and diocese. I am also delighted that teachers of Biblical Studies have a developing framework that recognizes biblical studies as a core integrative subject—one that makes sense of all other subjects, where the Son of God is honoured as the central and underlying truth who holds all things together.

Colossians 1:16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.2

1  AEC Biblical Studies framework October 2013 page 6-7
The Reverend Scott Rowland

The Reverend Scott Rowland, Chaplain at St Mark’s Anglican Community School, Hillarys, Western Australia, writes about the School’s Chaplaincy Intern program, introduced in 2011. The interns help the School’s Chaplaincy Team engage with students, most of whom according to Scott, “have a relatively ambivalent attitude towards Christianity”.

Each year St Mark’s Anglican Community School’s Chaplaincy Team encourages graduating students to return to the School for a gap year working as a Chaplaincy Intern. The intern’s role is to work with students in a way that “adults” cannot - communicating with them as peers, who share a common culture and understanding.

Five years ago we offered Joshua Andrews, a Year 12 student, the opportunity of returning to St Mark’s to do a GAP year as a Chaplaincy Intern with the Chaplaincy Team. Personally very warm and approachable, Josh, a keen Christian, was a regular attendee at our lunchtime Connect Bible Study Group. He is also a gifted musician. Josh accepted our offer and we designed a timetable that allowed him the time to “hang out” with students helping in our Year 10 Outdoor Education classes, team teach alongside our Primary Chaplaincy Worker, run a Chapel Band for the Middle School and run a lunchtime Connect Bible Study Group. Josh met with the Senior Chaplain once a week for training, discussion, debrief and Bible reading and prayer. He took Chapel once a term for the whole school and grew in his ability to explain his Christian faith and give an answer for the hope he professes. Josh is now in his final year of training to be a PE/Maths teacher.

Our second and third Chaplaincy interns were Old Scholars, Bianca Jayawardene and Erin Mosdell. Bianca is now a part-time chaplain in a neighbouring faith-based school and Erin is studying at university with the possibility of entering teaching.

This year St Mark’s has not one but three interns sharing their faith with the students. Victoria Jayawardene and Riley Law-Davies are Old Scholars and Shera Moya has joined us from Tanzania. Shera is proving to be a particularly helpful resource for a group of students who are preparing to travel to Tanzania as part of a school trip. Shera brings an international flavour and gives us a unique insight into their faith with the students.

Like their predecessors, this year’s interns have really enjoyed their time at St Mark’s. Victoria said: “I have had many opportunities to speak in Chapel and run classes in the primary school (Kindergarten to Year 7). This year has taught me so much about the skill that is needed to work with children and connect with them. It’s been great being able to teach children about God and what’s in the Bible. Being able to connect with students during camps, classes and Bible Studies has been a highlight.”

Similarly, Riley has welcomed the opportunity to speak about the Bible in primary and secondary school Chapel services, to assist with the teaching of Christian Education to primary students and to meet with senior school students on a weekly basis to talk about life and the gospel. He has also helped out with the School’s Church@School music team and co-run two lunchtime Bible Study groups; one for Year 6 students and one for Year 7s.

He said: “It has been a blessing to serve in a place where everyone is so easy to talk to and to get along with, and because of this, one of my favourite things about working at St Mark’s has been building personal relationships with students and staff. The main thing I have learnt is that the gospel, no matter how it is framed, or from which angle it is viewed, will receive various responses. I’ve also learnt that schools are places where ministry is just begging to happen.”

Having Victoria and Riley return to the School as interns is testament to life at St Mark’s, while Shera brings an international flavour and gives us a unique insight into our upcoming work in Iringa, Tanzania. They are each to be congratulated for their willingness to make Jesus known across the school. This is what we are hoping for from Findlay McKay, who is our intern for next year. We are hoping that Findlay will be better at engaging with students than we could ever be. It brings so much credibility to our message to students having one of their own speaking to them about Jesus.

Catholic traditions. They also visited the Tower of London, London Bridge, the British Museum, the London Eye, Stonehenge and Edinburgh Castle. Students had numerous opportunities to explore their connection with God through participation in prayer, worship and ritual.

What follows are extracts from Wayne Gladigau’s, 2014 Iona Pilgrimage: A journey of the mind heart and our spiritual selves, which was published in The Coracle, St Columba College Newsletter, Friday 8 August 2014. Wayne Gladigau is Deputy Principal and Pilgrimage Coordinator at St Columba College.
A pilgrimage is a journey of spiritual significance and most often involves travel to a location important to a person’s beliefs, faith or for their search for God in their life. Pilgrimages have played an important part in most cultures and world religions for thousands of years. For Christians, pilgrimages are commonly to places associated with the life of Jesus or great saints, to places mentioned in the Bible, or to Rome, where the early Church was established. Undertaking a pilgrimage involves participants experiencing events or celebrations that are of a spiritual nature, often in significant places of worship. A pilgrimage is thus very different to a holiday or tour as it is much more than an interested visit. A pilgrim visiting a cathedral that is both centuries old and of magnificent architectural significance will enjoy the building for its grandeur but will also seek to find the presence of God within the space and reflect upon how it affects them personally.

In London and Canterbury the pilgrims visited several incredibly spectacular cathedrals. The sites where these day churches stand have been places of Christian worship and pilgrimage for more than a thousand years. The students learned that during this period Christianity in England experienced considerable turmoil and at times brutal change, culminating in the emergence of the new Anglican tradition from the Catholic Church established in Rome. Our visit to each Cathedral was more than a passage through history as we were fortunate to join in liturgy together. Invited into a small chapel above the quire of Canterbury Cathedral, we were lead in a moving prayer service by Canon Clare of the Cathedra. At St Paul’s in London we joined with people from all over the world in a celebration of the Eucharist.

In Edinburgh, before heading to the western coast of Scotland and to the small Isle of Iona, we were privileged to have Archbishop Driver celebrate Eucharist within the Abbey. Surrounded by relics and representations of Columba’s life in an Abbey constructed on the hallowed ground where he built the first simple, wooden Abbey more than 1400 years ago, and sharing the Eucharist with each other was a truly remarkable blessing.

Pilgrims’ Views

“Hearing the stories of martyrs, heroes and villains from the past caused us to reflect on questions such as: Where is my life going? and What great things can we achieve? We reflected on the fact that we have been living quite simple and sheltered lives; we could be achieving so much more. At times it’s hard to think: What can I as an individual do? but if we look at examples from the past - Columba, John Fisher, Thomas More and Thomas Becket - we can see that even the smallest difference, or small act of kindness, can be enough to aid others who are oppressed.”

Chantal Bait and Kiara Pellicone, Year 10

“I was told by one of my Mum’s work patients to collect some colourful stones from St Columbia Bay as they were very special. In the weeks leading up to the Pilgrimage my Mum and I wrote a list of the names of people for whom to collect stones, and in the bottom of my backpack I placed a special red velvet pouch in which to store them. … At Iona I didn’t quite know what I was looking for as the beaches we explored had plenty of small pebbles but I did not feel as if they were as special as they were supposed to be.

On our last day on Iona we followed in the footsteps of St Columba and trekked to St Columba Bay. I knew in an instant what my mother had spoken about. The entire beach was covered in beautiful coloured pebbles that looked magnificent when they were wet. We collected some of the loveliest pebbles to take home to our loved ones. Those of us who were lucky found slithers of marble stone, known as ‘Columba’s Tears’, in amongst the pebbles. The legend states that if you carry a piece of Iona greenstone with you, you will never drown. Once home I bought some special jewellery bags and placed a couple of stones into each bag to give to those closest to me with the idea of bringing home a part of my significant journey to watch over them.”

Katie Trezona, Year 10

Principal’s Comment

Reading about the Tower of London is one thing – visiting and experiencing it is quite another. Teaching about St Columba and Iona is one thing – feeling the peace, tranquility and remoteness of the island is quite another! Hopefully our pilgrims will be even more curious and will be exploring the world that exists beyond the day-to-day and reflect on what this means for their future. Madeleine Brennan, Executive Principal of St Columba.
Willing Hands Make Hearty Soup

Students at St Andrew’s School, Walkerville, are helping to make sure Adelaide’s needy never go hungry.

Throughout the winter months, students from Years 3 to 7 have been trading their Wednesday lunchtime to cut, cook and package soup for the Salvation Army Gawler Place soup kitchen. Year 7 students organise the kitchen and the roster.

Students donate, chop and cook vegetables to make a hearty broth. Their efforts help the Salvation Army provide meals for about 200 people every Friday and Monday night.

St Andrews Principal, Deb Dalwood, said the soup making service taught students about helping the needy as well as important life skills.

‘We are looking for children to be active global citizens. In Adelaide we have people in need. This brings it home to the students they can do things in their own city that help and support others,’ she said.

‘We want the children to be able to make a difference in others’ lives. This is one way they can do it.’

Parents could be excused for feeling a little overwhelmed at the plethora of books giving advice on parenting boys and young men in contemporary literary circles. Steve Biddulph, Celia Lashlie, Sue Palmer and Ian Grant amongst many others have all tackled the topic from slightly divergent approaches.

Most of these authors have also enjoyed success as expert speakers, advisors and expert panellists; it seems that we can’t get enough advice about parenting our young men.

Amongst this sea of well-received and, it must be said, generally well written and researched material stands Dr Tim Hawkes. Hawkes has penned a number of books all of which offer advice or viewpoints on the development of adolescent boys: Learning Leadership, fiction, raising boys. He is also quite a prominent figure speaking at many conferences, seminars and meetings, and those of us in the education caper (especially those teaching secondary boys) would no doubt be aware of his standing in those circles. He has also reached the
mainstream media as an expert in the field with appearances on Q&A and radio. That Hawkes is a busy man is beyond question as, amongst all this publishing and public appearance, Hawkes is the longstanding Headmaster of Sydney’s prestigious The King’s School where he guides the development of 1500 boys.

Hawkes’ latest offering is Ten Conversations You Must Have With Your Son, and the title is in no way nuanced or ironic. The book is exactly that: a list of ten topics that, in the author’s opinion, parents of teenage boys should be having with their sons. The book begins with 50-odd pages of general theory, personal anecdote, cross-referencing the work of others and home-spun wisdom all intended as a rationalisation for the why, how and what of the conversations. Then follows the eponymous conversations, each one becomes the central topic of its own chapter. This was the great curiosity of this book – what topics qualified as important enough to make the top ten? The answer is that the conversations were ones that, in Hawkes’ words “I wished I had shared with my sons – all 1531 of them.” The 1531 (a figure he refers to several times throughout the book) is a reference to the number of boys that attend The King’s School (1530) plus his own son (to whom the book is dedicated, along with his own son – a nice sense of poignancy). The conversations are not entirely what the reader might expect. The range from the very personal (You are loved), the very practical (Money), the slightly esoteric (Identity and Values), the modern (Living together) Hawkes’ pet subject (Leadership) and several in between. The conversations are certainly a very personal collection, but these are conversations that are “oriented to the needs of a boy in his teen years.”

A particularly engaging aspect of this book is the variety of illustrative stories which the author describes to give emphasis to the conversation topics. Describing the climbing of the Hillary Step on the first successful ascent of Everest provides a vivid anchor point to messages relating to ‘cooping’. Telling the Landy-Clarke story in which Landy helped the ‘tripped Clarke’ stand up makes a powerful comment about ‘values’. Some might consider it hubristic to write a book on such a sensitive topic, advising parents in such a forthright manner on a topic as personal as depression. The author at one stage explains that his credentials in writing on the topic come from “my failure as a father, my betrayal as a headmaster and my inadequacy as a son” (on face value to take parenting advice from this person might seem to be akin to receiving legal advice from a convicted felon!). In writing this Hawkes is being overly modest; his real credentials are the 25 years of being a headmaster of boys and of fathering his own son. This modesty is an example of the disarming nature of Hawkes’ writing and one of the reasons why this book works. The writing is effectively down-to-earth and conversational: through his writing, one can almost hear Hawkes speaking patiently and sensitively to students in his conversations explaining all aspects of a situation in such a way that his final decision is agreed to by all parties. The book presents a balanced take on the potentially complex relationships that exist between sons and their parents. There is some clear empathising with parents who may be feeling frustration with their male offspring whilst also shedding some light on the sometimes mysterious and surprising world of teenage boys: it is a line that Hawkes treads with skill and sensitivity.

If a criticism were to be levelled at this otherwise well-written text it would be to do with how the book is pitched. The book is over 300 pages long, it references the work of famous academics and researchers (Maslow, Gardner and Erikson) and it incorporates sophisticated language and ideas. In other words, this book is not for all parents, it is aimed at parents who are educated, professional, in tune with their son’s needs type of parents, who send their children to The King’s School (or one of the many independent schools in this country). Yet interspersed amongst this high-brow discussion and intellectual background, we are presented with the author’s fondness of neat acronyms (GRIP, REFER, GATE, etc) and facile ideas for role-play and activities. Parents who choose to read the 300-odd pages of this book probably don’t need a headmaster (TOPIC) to think of a dinner party conversation topic. It is almost as if this book isn’t quite sure what it is trying to be: it is a bit too long to be an accessible reference book for parents but doesn’t quite have the weight to be an academic text. The end result is that the book falls somewhere in the middle of the spectrum of academic formality.

Two other areas which could have been given a little more ‘air-play’ relate to the topics of depression and safe parties. Depression has been shown to affect one in five men between the ages of 15 and 24. This can lead to lasting physical and emotional scars. There need to be pre-emptive and clear conversations about the desired tone and conduct of such teenage gatherings. A one-off, brief formal reference to this matter is not sufficient. A series of ‘chat’s most probably should reference such topics as, invitations, venues, expected behaviours, alcohol, drugs and legal considerations.

In several places within the ten major narratives, Hawkes points to communication through letters. Such a mode of communication may only ‘work’ for some youngsters. The merits of using a letter as a major conduit of expressing love are questionable. We are all aware of the power of modelling. Young people are significantly influenced by actions and words conveyed genuinely and consistently. In his book, Hawkes possibly underplays the importance of modelling, particularly when it focuses on appropriate actions and language from parents. This could well be given more prominence in the chapters focusing on values, leadership, achievement and coping. On the topic of alcohol, modelling appropriate use and enjoyment of alcohol by parents, can set positive behavioural patterns within members of the next generation.

Above all else, and this book is making comment about the state of our modern world and its priorities. As time-poor parents work harder and longer hours to provide the best material goods or opportunities for their children to attend the best schools, opportunities to travel for sport or cultural tours, the real function of parents, that of actually parenting, is left to someone else to attend to. This essential task is often delegated to school teachers, principals, sport coaches and other peripheral figures in boys’ lives. And this is exactly the point Dr Hawkes’ book: the 10 conversations are nominally about topics that are important, but the real value of this book is that it encourages parents to actually engage with their children on the appropriate level. Hawkes is saying that spending time having any conversation is important because ultimately “we need to say more to our sons, and our sons need to speak more to their parents.”

In conclusion, Dr Hawkes should be congratulated on this book. It provides important flags for fathers as they work with their sons to raise young men who will be healthy and contributing citizens of our community.