PARENT FORUM
PRESENTATION

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DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS
5 JUNE 2007
• Some background...

• Catholic Education in the Diocese of Wollongong
• 29 Parish Primary Schools

• 7 Secondary Schools

• Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Southern Highlands, Macarthur

• 7 Congregational Schools

• Catholic Education Office - delegated authority of the Bishop of Wollongong
• Total student enrolment of 16,000

• Total teaching staff of over 1,000

• Total support staff of over 300

• “The fastest growing Catholic Diocese in NSW”
Why Parents choose Catholic Schools?
- a study by the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission (2006)

1. Desire for a safe, secure environment
2. Standard of teaching
3. Behaviour management standards
4. Range of subjects available
5. Quality of School Leadership

6. Reputation of the school in the wider community

7. Academic performance
8. The Catholic/Spiritual dimension of the school
Three key questions:

1. Is the nurturing of the spiritual dimension of our children’s lives still at the forefront of our thinking as parents?

2. Are Catholic schools simply developing a reputation as excellent “private” schools, as distinct from being excellent “Catholic” schools?

3. Do we, as parents, take the Catholicity of our schools as a “given”, assuming it will “happen”?
“Catholic schools have the fundamental task of helping students to create meaning in their lives. Essentially, meaning, identity and spirituality are all interrelated and that is why our schools have a critical role in providing a framework for their students to make sense of the world and their place in it. They also have a critical role in developing in their students a practical and focused commitment to working to improve their society and the world.”

Patrick J. Lynch
The world for our young people

- Globally connected

- Competing ideologies, values and cultures, all beckoning for their attention
As at 1 January 2006

- Population of 20,220,000
- Each year 80,000 migrants arrive while 40,000 Australians depart
- Median age is 37
- Male child life expectancy of 77, female child of 82
- 7.25 million households, 70% contain no children under 15
- By 2021, 42% of households will have no children
- Divorce rate for first marriage is 34.2%
• 88% of homes have a VCR, 61% have at least one mobile phone, 53% have a computer, 41% are internet connected, 28% have pay TV

• Gambling industry is worth $133 billion per year, $41.4 million lost through sports betting

• “Sex” industry rapidly grows

• The average wedding cost, $34,000

• 128,300 Australians died last year, 28% of cancer, 21% of heart disease, 2% committed suicide (with males four times more likely)

• $291 million spent on anti-depressants
The Media World!

- 61% of all Australian homes have at least two TV’s
- 103 million movie tickets sold in one year
- 13 to 30 years are the major movie goers
- 7 to 13 year olds watch 2 ½ to 3 hours of TV per day
- Same group uses internet for 4 hours per day
- “I pods” are biggest selling items for 13 to 30 year olds (“instrument of isolation”)
Spheres of greatest influences

- Home
- Media
- School
“At the heart of the mission of the Catholic school is the desire to nurture within each student, a deep and personal relationship with their God that will guide and inspire their lives in their everyday world and bring a hope filled awareness of their future”
Goals for Catholic Education in the Diocese of Wollongong

1. Authentic Catholic Schools serving an authentic Catholic Church

2. Learning and teaching of the highest quality - the digital age

3. A community of “standards” - raising the bar and closing the gap

4. Genuine partnerships - parish, parents, broader community
5. Highly professional, relationship-based, Catholic Education Office

6. Provide adequately for the “growth” within the Diocese

7. Respond to the “political” agenda surrounding education
“Catholic Education is not about one venture, but rather a journey in faith, cradle to grave, for all Catholics who seek identity, knowledge, spirituality and witness in a world that so sorely needs it.

Catholic Education is not a spectator sport, but rather commands active participation.”

Sister M Tynann
Archdiocese of Chicago