As I write these reflections we have just hosted our first National Catholic Education Convention. Over 900 delegates from across the nation gathered in Adelaide to explore the theme of Inspiration and Identity: Catholic Education in Australian Society. The keynote speakers and concurrent session leaders were among the finest available locally, nationally and from across the world and we were inspired by what unfolded during the Convention and appreciated the opportunity to welcome our visitors.

The 2011 Catholic Schools Music Festival yet again showcased the wonderful talent of students from across South Australia. For me this event is a very public statement of what unfolds in unsung ways in classrooms and performance spaces in schools across the State. The creativity and growth of our students is celebrated in a very public way during the Music Festival and we are edified as a community of schools by what we see and hear during this annual event. I must say I enjoyed my night backstage as much as the one in front of the curtain – the commitment of staff and the engagement and creativity of students was palpable.

As everyone would be aware, the Archdiocese of Adelaide has had a difficult time in the media. We have seen a senator name a priest of the Archdiocese in parliament in relation to allegations which date back some 40 years. Additionally the sexual abuse of disabled students two decades ago was explored in a TV program canvassing the experience of young people with a disability in the justice system. Each of us will have our own views on how these matters have been dealt with in the public forum but there is perhaps one point on which we all might agree: we are rightly held to the highest standards of accountability for our responses to breaches of professional standards and our response may be scrutinised many years after the events have occurred. Whilst a breach of professional standards is always a matter of regret, I believe we have cause to feel proud of the current responses we make when issues are raised with us. There is however never room for complacency and I encourage members of school communities to raise any issue of concern so that the issue might be dealt with appropriately.

Finally, the Consultation phase of the Review of Services is nearing completion and I look forward to reporting in the next edition of CESA Community News on some of the themes that have emerged.

Dr Paul Sharkey
Director of Catholic Education SA
Awards

ARCHBISHOP’S AWARDS 2011
Every year Archbishop Wilson recognises two senior secondary students from each school in the Archdiocese of Adelaide with an Award for Excellence. Archbishop Wilson acknowledges the nominated young people who are nearing completion of their school life. He celebrates the sense of hope they have for the future and the persistence they have shown in being successful within the many different learning pathways offered at Catholic schools. He particularly commends the personal qualities and spiritual gifts that these young people bring to the life and service of their school and local community. The annual awards complement other school awards presented to students for community service, academic, artistic, vocational and sporting endeavours.

ST PATRICK’S APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR
Alex Nikielski from St Patrick’s Technical College, Elizabeth West has been named as the SA School-based Apprentice of the Year, part of the 2011 SA Training Awards. He is representing SA at the National Training Awards in Brisbane in November.

SA CATHOLIC JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR
Four students from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Enfield were commended in the SA Young Catholic Journalist Award. Runner-up Ann wrote a poignant and descriptive narrative about her mother’s boat journey from Vietnam to Australia. It cleverly described her mother’s sense of hope throughout the travels despite all the tragedies she had to face along the way.

NATIONAL PHOTO COMPETITION: KILDARE COLLEGE, HOLDEN HILL
Some of the girls at Kildare College have had great success in a national photographic competition. Inspired by Art teacher Jessica Ryan, students in Years 9 and 10 entered photographs in the Moran Contemporary Photographic Prize, a national competition facilitated by the State Library of NSW and the Moran Arts Foundation. Our congratulations go to Rachael who was one of sixteen Year 9-10 Secondary School finalists from a total of over 122,000 entries!

Celebrate

75TH ANNIVERSARY: OUR LADY OF THE RIVER, BERRI
Old scholars from as far back as the 1930s helped Our Lady of the River school at Berri celebrate its 75th anniversary. The recently-opened OLOR Hall played host to a vibrant assembly featuring dances, music and costumes from previous decades. Many former students and staff visited their old classrooms during Open Day followed by a dinner celebration at the Berri Hotel. Mass at 9am completed the celebrations followed by morning tea.

125TH ANNIVERSARY: CABRA DOMINICAN COLLEGE CUMBERLAND PARK
On Friday evening, 16 September, at the Adelaide Town Hall, 600 members of the past and present Cabra community celebrated the 125th anniversary of Cabra Dominican College with a specially themed black and white event honouring the College’s Dominican tradition.
PRESENTATION TO JAY WEATHERILL: NAZARETH COLLEGE, FINDON

Nazareth Catholic College Year 12 student Sara presented a research project into education leadership to the then Education Minister, Jay Weatherill. Sara identified that the ability to create a community, and build and value relationships, were essential for 21st secondary educational leadership. The Minister responded to Sara’s presentation: “it was an inspiring and intelligent presentation, demonstrating powerful insight into important elements of leadership. Any change causes some degree of stress, and this needs to be effectively and responsibly managed by various levels of leadership.”

MARKET DAY: ST CATHERINE’S SCHOOL STIRLING

St Catherine’s School at Stirling has celebrated its first ‘Market Day’, harvesting produce from its herb and vegetable gardens to sell to the school community.

The students are a part of the environment youth action group called the ‘Forever Green Group’. They meet once a week to discuss and raise issues around environment and sustainability and take on school leadership roles in managing waste, gardens and energy. Students from years 3, 5, 6 and 7 helped to set up and manage the stall on the day, raising $130 for the School’s environment program.

ASIA LITERACY PROGRAM: MARY MACKILLOP COLLEGE KENSINGTON

Mary Mackillop College has won a grant to work on a project focusing on Asia Literacy. The project will aim to increase awareness of Asia Literacy across the whole school community and map Asian content into the curriculum.

The College is enriched by a diversity of cultural knowledge and experience with thirty percent of students being from 63 different cultural backgrounds and wants all students to understand, communicate and acknowledge the cultural and linguistic diversity that exists within the school, Australian and international community.

WORLD YOUTH DAY MADRID 2011 “INTEGRATING LIFE AND FAITH”

Over one million Catholic young people, from around the world gathered to celebrate World Youth Day in Madrid. Groups from Adelaide and Pt Pirie made the pilgrimage, to share in this uniquely spiritual experience. The impact this had was quite profound.

One of the group said: “A real, peaceful and genuine experience of the universal church - I don’t feel so alone.” Another pilgrim spoke about what youth are able to contribute: “this experience challenges me to integrate my life and faith, and be an active person of faith, there is so much young people have to offer this world we live in.”
SEVENTH NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATION CONVENTION

More than 900 people representing every Australian state and territory packed the Adelaide Convention Centre for the Seventh National Catholic Education Convention held from September 21-23. They were privileged to be led in prayer by young people from Catholic schools from both the Archdiocese of Adelaide and Diocese of Pt Pirie who, thanks to technology, were joined by students from around Australia. They reflected on the Convention theme, *Inspiration and Identity*, through prayer, song, scripture, dance and silence. For many, these liturgies were a highlight of the Convention.

The six keynote speakers and concurrent strand presenters provided a good mix of challenge, confirmation and consolation. Among the delegates were numbers of parents of Catholic school children, members of school boards and parent organisations. Many of them particularly enjoyed the sessions that addressed issues of school and community, exploring ways in which parents can (and do) help shape the Catholic identity of our schools as learning communities. Delegates agreed that the Convention was a great success and has provided them with much to ponder in the time ahead.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS MUSIC FESTIVAL 2011

The 2011 Catholic Schools Music Festival was held from Monday 26 September to Thursday 29 September in the Adelaide Festival Theatre. Sixty-six schools were represented in the massed Festival Choir this year and they were joined by nearly forty support acts from Catholic primary and secondary schools from both the Adelaide Archdiocese and the Diocese of Pt Pirie.

On the Tuesday evening, Dr Paul Sharkey hosted His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce, Governor of South Australia and Mrs Scarce, who thoroughly enjoyed the evening. The official party who received the Governor and Mrs Scarce included Damien from Mercedes College, Kelly from Cardijn College, Angus from St Mary MacKillop School, Wallaroo and Indiana from St Catherine's School, Stirling.

Music Director, Denise Rothall said of the participants in the Festival: “the students should be proud of themselves for such an enormous achievement”.

The wealth of talented young people who shared their many gifts, inspired and rewarded audiences over four nights of polished entertainment.

TOGETHER AT ONE ALTAR

The National Catholic Education Commission has funded an e-Resource called *Together At One Altar* designed for students from R-12. It focuses on the meaning and richness of the Eucharistic celebration and the Christian call to mission. The resource has four pathways: *Explore, Craft, Receive and Live* each containing a range of learning objects, discussion questions and web links. *Together At One Altar* is an interactive and engaging resource for religious education and faith formation. The resource can be found at: http://www.togetheratonealtar.catholic.edu.au/