

Victorian Catholic College a beacon in education

With high student retention rates and low absenteeism Caroline Chisholm Catholic College based in the western Melbourne suburb of Braybrook should serve as a shining example of what modern Catholic education is all about.

The college's principal and winner of the '2006 Herald Sun Teacher of the Year award for a Secondary Principal', Mr Michael Quin, said that the naming of the college after Caroline Chisholm, one of early Australia's great "champion of the people" reflects well on the institution.

"Caroline Chisholm Catholic College is a Catholic school providing secondary education for boys and girls in the western suburbs of Melbourne in the area known as the Sunshine Deanery," said Mr. Quin.

"We provide our 1500 students with a high quality Catholic secondary education in a safe and supportive environment."

According to Mr Quin the college established in 1997, has its origins in three colleges: Christ the King College which was registered in 1963, St. John's College and Chisholm College — each established to bring a Catholic education to the girls and/or boys of the Western suburbs of Melbourne.

Mr. Quin said that because of the region's socio economic profile the school fees are very modest averaging under \$2,500 per annum per student.

He stated that while the school excels in the area of visual arts, having won numerous awards, it is none the less a comprehensive school providing the opportunity for students to excel in subjects across the curriculum."

The school employs approximately 115 teaching and 50 support staff.

"With such a large school population the biggest challenge is to develop an excellent learning program for our students. That includes the rich curriculum and the co-curricula opportunities offered within a safe learning environment," he said.

Mr Quin says that the low annual absenteeism average rate of just seven days per student and a high retention student rate where 90 percent of all students who start in year seven go on to graduate in year twelve is evidence that students enjoy attending school.

This is an impressive record for a school that boasts a multicultural student population representing 51 different nationalities.

"To bring that group of students from such diverse backgrounds together where there is a real sense of community has been a big challenge. I think we have achieved an excellent outcome," stated Mr Quin.

Mr. Quin said the school's success stems from the input of all stakeholders.

"We work in close collaboration with our parent association, student representative council, the school administrators and a well



Principal Michael Quin and Luke Georgiou, ICT Services Coordinator, of Caroline Chisholm Catholic College

qualified teaching staff who together are able to articulate a very challenging vision for the future direction of the school.

"One of the biggest challenges faced by the school with reference to technology was to develop a coherent vision for efficiently spending the limited funds that we have."

According to Mr Quin this led to the establishment of a technology committee a little over a decade ago to develop the vision for providing an ICT service.

Overseeing the technology area is the responsibility of Luke Georgiou who is the school's ICT Services Coordinator.

"The Technology Committee agreed that we needed to move towards an electronic document management solution," said Mr Georgiou.

Recently the school invested in a Redmap document management software package supplied by Toshiba called RE-FIND to handle their document management in particular compliance with electronic archiving of emails.

"As we already had an excellent relationship with Toshiba since mid 2004 we invited them to look at our needs and came up with a

solution to help us move towards 'the paperless office'," he said.

The solution was to upgrade to a mix of six Toshiba e-STUDIO multi function devices (MFD's).

According to Mr Georgiou the Toshiba e-STUDIO MFD's are all networked with the administration and teaching staff's computers.

"We use all the eSTUDIO's functions such as black and white and colour copying, printing, faxing and emailing but a key factor in the acquisition decision was the e-STUDIO MFDs' high speed scanning of documents to OCR electronic files.

"The e-STUDIOS have on board sophisticated OCR software built by Redmap in conjunction with Toshiba known as ReRite," he said.

"ReRite was a strong feature offered by Toshiba as it integrates seamlessly with our current network and Redmap document management software RE-FIND."

Mr Georgiou said that this allowed staff to share information on the network and reduced the need to print documents.

"Toshiba's help and support has been fantastic in allowing us to achieve another technology milestone for the school," he said. ■

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