

## **sSaint Joseph's Parish School Murgon**

### ***Annual Report 2009***

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The town of Murgon is situated in the South Burnett region approximately three hours drive from Brisbane. There is a long history of pastoral development (cattle and cotton) of the area and until its closure early in 2007 the Meatworks was the largest employer in the town. Tourism and Wineries are also important industries in the region.

There is a rich Indigenous presence in the area, and Indigenous culture is a feature of the Saint Joseph's community. There are a number of special programmes in the school to highlight and promote Indigenous Culture. A recently constructed Hall of Fame honours the legacy of prominent members of the local Indigenous community. The first four inductees are Joseph Button, Jeffrey Dynevor, Leah Purcell, and Cecil Fisher. A number of families from Cherbourg (7 Kilometres away) send their children to Saint Joseph's School.

#### **Enrolments**

The current enrolment is 175 children from Prep to Year Seven. There is a steady intake into Prep – 20 in 2009 and 18 for 2010. The enrolment of 53 Indigenous children is the largest enrolment of Indigenous children in any Catholic school in the Brisbane Archdiocese.

#### **Curriculum**

The curriculum follows the Outcomes Approach to education mandated by the State Government. Reporting to parents and the community is also in accord with directions from both Federal and State Governments. The special emphasis this year has been the First Steps Programme in Reading. Indigenous Culture was introduced into Years 4 – 7 as part of Cultural Literacy, and this will continue in 2010.

#### **Religious Life of the School**

Faith development is at the heart of all we do here at Saint Joseph's. Prayer and Religious Instruction based on the guidelines from Brisbane Catholic Education are a daily feature in all classes. The Parish Priest, Father Dan Redhead visits the classes on a regular basis and also attends to the pastoral and Sacramental needs of the staff and children. Members of staff are involved with the Sacramental Preparation Programmes for Reconciliation, Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Special Feasts of the church are celebrated liturgically and in other

ways, and the school buildings are names to reflect the various religious traditions in the school. Special celebrations were also held to mark National Sorry Day and NAIDOC Week. The blessing and inauguration of the Indigenous Hall of Fame in November was a particularly significant celebration attended by members of the families of the four inductees. ANZAC Day was also celebrated at school and with the local community.

### **Staff Development**

Staff are constantly seeking to further their knowledge and skills through in-service both locally and regionally. The Professional Development Days at the commencement of the 2009 school year included an overnight stay at the Bunya Mountains and a combined day with Saint Pat's Nanango, Saint Joseph's Gayndah, and Saint Mary's Kingaroy led by Father Richard Lennon SJ entitled "Lights, Camera, Action". This day looked at the influence of the media on young people and on education generally. The other days attended to general administration matters and reflected on the Charisms at Saint Joseph's and the religious Life of the School Document. Other full Staff Development Days included work on the First Steps Programme and Spirituality. CTJ was combined with St Joseph's Gayndah, and St Pat's Nanango, and was held at Gayndah this year. Four staff participated in the three day *Sharing Our Call* Programme on Marist Spirituality, and another staff member participated in the Aspiring marist leaders Programme. Spirituality Twilights were held in Lent and Advent, and also on the Marist Spirituality Document – *Water from the Rock*. This was facilitated by Br Graham Neist. On the weekend of September 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> nine staff members took part in a retreat day at the La Valla Centre Rosalie facilitated by Sister Pat fmm.

### **Extra Curricular Activities**

The following extra curricular activities are available for the children:

- Netball and Rugby League Teams
- District representation in Swimming, Cross Country, Athletics, Netball and Rugby League
- Choir
- Excursions, including the A Flat Camp for Year 6
- Girl's Club (Craft)
- Boy's Club (focus on self esteem and good choices)
- Active After School Programme

### **Community Involvement**

The school is involved with the community when appropriate. The choir sings at nursing homes, Anzac Day, the Murgon Show etc. The school participates in the local Anzac Commemoration, and this year received third prize for the Murgon Show Schools' Display.

**Parents** are always welcome and encouraged to assist in the school. They do this through a variety of ways including:

Parents & Friends Activities  
 Tuckshop  
 Classroom and Library Support  
 Sports days and Activities  
 Excursions  
 Liturgies

All parent and community volunteers were in-serviced with regard to the volunteer code of conduct and other government requirements.

### **Funding and Special Projects**

Again this year we have benefited from Federal and State Government funding, and this has allowed a number of special programmes to run in the school to support children thought to be 'at risk'. These programmes addressed skills in literacy and numeracy as their main focus.

An amount of \$10 000 was also received for **drought relief**. This money supported children attending excursions, and also the school swimming programme.

We were able to introduce a simple **Breakfast Programme** through funding received from **FRRR** (Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal). A drink of Milo and sandwich are provided each school morning for any children who wish. There is a regular clientele of 20 + children.

Through the **National Partnerships Programme** we are assured of funding over a four year period to improve the literacy and numeracy standards of the children, especially those from the Indigenous community. We have used this funding to employ a Counsellor to work with targeted children who are the victims of trauma or whose family circumstances are not conducive to educational success. This Counsellor works with individuals, small groups, and also staff and parents. She initiated the Boy's Club in response to the ongoing difficulties with petrol and glue sniffing.

### **Building the Education Revolution**

Like all Australian schools Saint Joseph's is part of the Federal Government's stimulus package and has received funding through the **National School Pride (NSP) Programme**, and also through the **Primary Schools for the Twenty First Century Programme (P21)**.

\$125 000 was received from NSP for maintenance and small projects. This money was used to extend the covered area at the end of the Parish Hall, and to renovate the Rosary Building. The verandah was enclosed and the windows and blackboards replaced. Work was completed on January 14<sup>th</sup> 2010.

\$2 000 000 was received from the P21 Programme for the construction of a Library/Multi media Centre. This will include a COLA, and Computer Room as well as the general library area and a multi media room. Additional meeting rooms and toilets and some covered walkways are also part of this project. Construction is due to commence in February 2010 and to be completed by September 2010.