



# enews



## From Our CEO

I've been to a few events in recent months and it's been fantastic at these times to share with schools the distinctive nature of Christian education and what makes a CEN school tick. One of the things I have had on my heart to share is the work of John Van Dyk, a leader in Christian education who was influential in my formative years as a young teacher. John Van Dyk spoke of the three options for Christian schools. They could be Tacky, Dualistic, or Authentic.

Tacky Christian schools, as an example, add biblical quotations out of context to their curriculum. For example, students may be learning about the Gold Rush and the Bible text applied to that, might be Matthew 2 *"Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh"*. It's out of context, it goes nowhere, and it feels pretty tacky. Tacky is also perhaps reading the same prayer every day, without meaning or definition. Or, it might be having lots of scriptures quoted around the school on plaques that gather dust but are not explored and unravelled.

Schools that fall into the trap of being dualistic, as I'm sure we work to being aware of, might value the importance of starting the day in prayer and opening the Bible for a 10 minute devotion, but then the Bible is left on the shelf and the "real" learning begins, unless it's picked up again for a Bible lesson.

John Van Dyk suggests, that:

*Teaching is guiding via unfolding towards enabling... he says "I tend to think that this formula points to the universal character of all teaching, Christian or secular. Secular teaching, too, guides, unfolds and enables... The crucial difference... lies in the answers to these questions:*

- 1. Towards which destination is the teacher guiding the student? Merely towards self-reliance, social adjustment and solid citizenship? Or to the person God intended them to be; doing the good works he has planned for them to do?*
- 2. And what is the teacher unfolding? Merely a world of nature controlled by natural law? Or a creation revealing God's presence, power and love?*
- 3. And to what end are they enabling? To be successful participants in the Western way of material consumerism? Or to be agents of Christ's reconciliation.*

An authentic Christian school is going to allow scripture to impact all of school life, from policies to printmaking, from PE to parent nights.

It's a school that is going to want their students to be a:

- God worshiper
- Idolatry discerner
- Earth Keeper
- Beauty Creator
- Justice seeker
- Creation enjoyer
- Servant Worker
- Community Builder
- Image Reflector

Let's strive for authenticity in all that we do, as we seek to be transformed by God in all things.

Cheers,  
Michelle Dempsey

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## Farewell Event for Bill Rusin

It was lovely to be a part of a special night of celebration for the faithful service of Bill Rusin at Covenant Christian School. On the night, lots of Bill's friends were present, especially those that were a part of Tyndale Christian School in the 80's and 90's. It was great to see this group of people together, celebrating their legacy in Christian education. To God be the glory!



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## From the National Institute Principal

We are most thankful to God as 2019 draws to a close. During the year there have been some significant changes in leadership and staffing of the Institute. Through all of these changes, the Lord has guided and sustained us. In particular, we are grateful for the tireless work of Dr. Beth Beech on behalf of the Institute over the past years. May the Lord guide Beth in the next phase of her life. Dr. Chris Prior will assume the role of the Institute Principal in 2020. We greatly look forward to the special skills and abilities Chris will bring to this role. As I write, Institute student numbers are healthy with over 40 enrolled in Semester 3 bringing students enrolments for 2019 to well over 160. It has been a wonderful privilege to serve as Principal of the Institute for the past 12 months and I look forward to continuing to work with the Institute in other ways in 2020 and the years to come. My thanks to all Institute students and staff for their fellowship in teaching and learning throughout the past year.

Dr Rod Thompson

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## From the National Institute Deputy Principal

This year I have been challenged (positively) by many aspects of the Gospel, including the Lord's Prayer. In Matthew's Gospel we are encouraged not to be like the hypocrites when we pray. The prayer begins with the beautiful words, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9b). The word "hallow" means to sanctify, to make holy, to set apart. So what is the challenge? The challenge has been not to simply speak these words as I recite the Lord's Prayer in church or as I read the Bible. Rather, it has included the need to treat God as Holy across my whole life. In a world where so many messages revolve around listening to our own hearts, pleasing ourselves, and seeking instant gratification, it can be easy to be self-focused, and self-reliant. Yet there is a call on our lives to bring our hopes, our priorities, and our actions across all aspects of life into a closer alignment with our Holy God. One of the joys of my heart has been working with others who bring wisdom and examples of how to honour God through their lives, through their actions, through their struggles with how to be faithful to the Gospel through Christian schooling. Like Rod, my thanks go to all of those who have continued to support and engage with the National Institute as fellow learners throughout this past year.

Dr Chris Prior

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## New State Executive Officer (Victoria)

Victorian schools were notified last week of the appointment of their new SEO, Karen Hooper, who will be commencing in 2020. Karen is a great addition to the team.

[Click here](#) for the formal announcement of her role.

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## National Office Staffing

There have been some ongoing changes to the team structure at CEN and in particular, at the National Office, the following changes have been made, and most will be effective as of January.

The role of Administration Support for Professional Learning has been made redundant. Alison Horwood has successfully managed and faithfully served in that role for many years. We are very sad that she will be finishing up at the end of this year.

Julie Badman is stepping down from the Office Manager role at the end of this year, but will continue working for the Hub, support to NSW and will be in a general Administration Support role for CEN. Her time allocation is unchanged. Julie continues to be a wonderful asset to the team.

Dr Fiona Partridge will be working for the National Institute 1 day per week in addition to her SEO role for SA schools.

Kathy Pereira has been appointed to the role of Office Community Leader for 2020.

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## From the Governance Coordinator

Thank you to all the board members from our CEN schools. Our schools simply cannot exist without your amazing, voluntary service, and we are committed to supporting boards in ensuring good governance of your schools.

We had a great time of sharing and learning together at our recent “Tone from the Top” Governance Conference in Melbourne. With more than 40 board members in attendance, this annual conference provided an opportunity for learning from experts in different areas of governance, as well as sharing with other people on CEN school boards. Sessions included;

- “Leading with Wisdom” and “Leading with Love”,
- financial governance and risk management,
- the importance of the Principal/Board relationship with practical tips for ensuring this is effective,
- an update on political advocacy matters,
- and knowing and telling your story effectively.

Make sure you save the date for the 2020 Godly Governance Conference: 19th – 21st November in Melbourne.

CEN has developed a number of professional learning courses for school boards. These online courses are designed to be easy to follow and provide a rich series of shorter modules that help board members be equipped for this important task. At the moment, we are updating our course material so that by mid-December, all the courses will now be available to CEN board members. Please contact me (CEN Governance Coordinator) for further information.

CEN NSW school boards please note: CEN is a NESA approved provider of board training to meet mandatory hours.

Finally, there is no substitute for face-to-face training and support. We are always keen to share with school boards and to offer face-to-face training workshops or retreats. Please contact me to enquire about booking governance training for your board.

Kathy Pereira

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## Nurture Conference



[Click here](#) for more information and to register.

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## Professional Learning

Many schools have embraced CEN Professional learning workshops for their teams during the January pupil free training days. A list of many of the events follows. There might be a school near you that you could join in with for a day of Christ-centred professional learning:

- Authentic Christian Education, NT Christian Schools, 16 January
- Curriculum Design and the Big Picture, NT Christian Schools, 17 January
- Authentic Christian Education, Nepean Christian School, 20 January
- Classrooms and Formational Learning, Belmont Christian College, 21 January

- School in the Belly of the Culture, Rehoboth Christian College, 22 January
- Bible in the Belly of the School, Carinya Christian School, 22 January
- Classrooms and Formational Learning, Covenant Christian School (NSW), 22 January
- Authentic Christian Education, Christian Schools Tasmania, 23 January
- Bible in the Belly of the College, Annandale Christian College, 24 January
- Bible in the Belly of the School, Maranatha Christian School, 28 January
- Bible in the Belly of the School, Emmaus Christian School, 30 January
- Bible in the Belly of the School, Tyndale Christian School, 30 January
- Classrooms as Grace-shaped Communities, Leighland Christian School, 30 January
- Classrooms as Grace-shaped Communities, Deniliquin Christian School, 31 January

If you would like more information or are interested in attending a workshop, please contact [professionallearning@cen.edu.au](mailto:professionallearning@cen.edu.au)

## Executives Conference



### **declutter**

/di:'klʌtə/

verb

1. *remove unnecessary items from (an untidy or overcrowded place).*

Life can be messy, leadership can be crowded and our current cultural context is tangled with uncertainty, confusion and pressure. We can begin to feel overwhelmed with all that is around us and all that is demanded of us. How does the Christian school leader respond to this?

At the 2020 Executive Leadership Conference, you are invited to gather with colleagues and friends to learn and grow together. The Lord calls us to “all of life” service that expands from our homes to our offices and everywhere in between.

What are the things and areas that need a “declutter” in your life that will bring you to more faithful service to Jesus?

What are the things in your school community that draw your school away, from your vision and mission?

What are the seemingly benign things that make leadership all the more difficult?

*So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.*  
(Romans 12 from *The Message*)

As we join together with Jesus at the centre of all we do, we are blessed to have the following speakers share with us.

- Henry Contant – Fellow of the Van Lunen Center (USA) & former ED of Society of Christian Schools British Columbia
- Mark Sneddon – ED of the Institute for Civil Society
- Christopher Lewis – Chair of YMCA Australia
- Other speakers are still being finalised...

We are pleased at this conference to be running specific, focussed sessions for school Business Managers.

We look forward to seeing you in Perth in 2020.

[Click here](#) to register.

## Study Tour



Details of the 2020 Study Tour were sent out to principals last week.  
[Click here](#) to download the information pack.

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## Coram Deo



Places are still available.

[Click here](#) for details.

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## Whistleblower Policy

A reminder that Whistleblower policies need to be in place by 1st January. The CEN National Board is currently investigating a way to have a decentralized mechanism for Whistleblowers to report to, for our community of schools. We will keep you posted.

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## Research into Christian School Effectiveness

As reported in the last eNews, CEN has partnered with other Christian school groups in Australia to support research conducted by Cardus (based on previous research conducted in Canada). This will result in specific feedback and data around the effectiveness of Christian Schools across Australia.

Following is an update of this research project:

### **Cardus Education Survey Australia Project; Data Collection Underway.**

The Cardus Education Survey (CES) Australia is now 'live' and in data collection phase and the response rate to date has been extremely positive according to the company selected to conduct the survey in Australia -Orima Research. The survey seeks to investigate the impact of all forms of schooling on the common good and has been undertaken since 2011 in the USA and Canada. The CES provides a credible, statistically significant and reliable quantitative survey instrument that seeks to measure the beliefs, thoughts and perspectives of a randomized nationally representative sample of 25-39 year old school graduates from all schools in the nation. The survey is seeking a sample size range of 8000 (with a guaranteed respondent sample of 4000) that will be nearly three times larger than similar CES samples from the US/ Canadian survey and will also use dual panelling collection processes – including online surveys (n = 7000) AND Computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) (n= 1000) which are considered the "GOLD" standard for robustness and reliability of findings. There will also be an oversampling of Christian school graduates (n=450) to provide statistically significant data sets across all fields within the Australian education sector.

The CES Australia Lead researcher and Cardus Senior Fellow, Associate Professor Albert Cheng, who is an expert in the CES and its' analysis, commented that the "data collection has been seamless and extremely well managed, and is going spectacularly well for a project of this scale and size". Cardus Executive Vice President Ray Pennings is also pleased with the progress to date and contends that the "CES Australia measurements will contribute to important discussions about improving education for the public good both in Australia, as well as in the rest of the world".

The project is being funded and coordinated by a consortium project team of 6 Christian School Associations: Adventist Schools Australia (ASA), Associated Christian Schools (ACS), Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACS), Christian Education National (CEN), Christian Schools Australia (CSA) and Swan Christian Education Association (SCEA).

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## Christian Super Update

If you are a member of Christian Super, please note that members are encouraged to vote for new, nominated board members.

All Christian Super fund members will receive an email next week with ballot and voting details. Voting is online via a secure portal, so it would be great to encourage members to vote.

[Click here](#) for further details.

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## Why Christian Schools? Website Upgrade

Many CEN schools have links to this wonderful resource from their website. There has been a freshening of this helpful resource. The web address is still the same so all links from school websites will still function.

[Click here](#) to view.

[Click here](#) to review the helpful resources available for promoting your school

Special thanks go to Covenant Christian School in Sydney who initially established this web resource and for their generous gift to CEN of the web address and content. This is not branded as a CEN resource.

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## Nungalingya Indigenous Cultural Experience



[Click here](#) for more information

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## Connect



Coming to you in 2020. Stay tuned for details.