Dear Parents

It is with pleasure that I present this report for 2010. 2010 has been another very successful year at Mater Dei and I believe we can be very proud of our achievements. With enrolments continuing to grow, in 2011 we can expect close to 3400 children, the future for Mater Dei looks very positive.

I would like to review the year in terms of our Strategic Renewal Plan that was launched in 2007 to guide us through a 5 year period to the end of 2011. In 2011 we will be looking to develop a new strategic plan that will take us from 2012 through to 2016.

Broadly speaking the plan falls into 4 broad strategic priorities for school development through 2007-2011

1. Faith, Community and Participation

Mater Dei is a parish Catholic school where the faith and spirituality of each person in our community is recognized, nurtured and developed. Prayer, liturgy and celebrations are key elements of our spirituality.

We have recognised the demonstration of gospel values through a variety of mediums. Along with the excellent Religious Education program offered across all year levels in accordance with the Religious Education Guidelines achievements this year have included school assemblies, class and whole school liturgies, class awards, Caritas awards, Mater Dei Champions, support of the parish sacramental program, visits to the local Respite centre, Yr 7 Leadership program and our Pastoral Care program which has helped us to promote a sense of belonging to our school community.

The active presence of our Mini-Vinnies committee is another aspect of our school we can be very proud of. Driven by the children of the school, Mini Vinnies has supported a wide range of just causes this year including Caritas, Project Compassion, African refugee students within the Brisbane Archdiocese, our sister parish in Atabae (East Timor), Catholic Mission, the St Vincent de Paul Winter & Christmas appeals, the Hear and Say Centre for hearing impaired and Diabetes Queensland.

Our validation this year of the Prayer & Worship component of the internal review process brought us a very positive outcome.

I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution by our APRE Tanya McNeill and also thank Fr Neil for his ongoing support of Mater Dei.

2. Teaching and Learning

Mater Dei is a community of lifelong learners committed to quality teaching and learning for all. Curriculum programs respect individual learning differences and focus on developmentally appropriate outcomes for all students.

Once again Mater Dei children have continued to make excellent progress this year. Much of this can be attributed to the wonderfully dedicated, motivated and hardworking staff we are blessed to have at Mater Dei. Some initiatives that have contributed to this success have included the actions of our Curriculum committee to coordinate professional learning and planning. This year has seen an emphasis on the Jolly Phonics program which has brought pleasing results. Our continued implementation of the First Steps Maths framework across the whole school and the successful completion of our Maths Pilot Project has brought a range of pluses to the school's program. Teachers are now able to record data that informs planning and teaching across year levels and enables us to better meet the needs of individual students. This year we have endeavoured to provide support for integrated planning of curriculum that provides for holistic learning that covers the academic, social, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of a student’s development within the context of Brisbane Catholic Education’s Learning Framework.

We have supported this through the allocation of staffing for our CST & SRF funds to support professional development in planning, reporting and monitoring. We have also increased our staffing allocation to provide support to our Support Teacher Inclusive Education. An emphasis with this extra...
staffing has been to provide extra support to the upper years of our school. This will be further expanded in 2011.

A highlight to enhance teaching and learning at Mater Dei has been the construction of our new library, the MacKillop Centre, and our 4 new classrooms that are the Sebastian building. Further installation of Interactive Whiteboards across all classrooms, the upgrading of classroom computers and the development of two computer labs has greatly enhanced learning opportunities in conjunction with IT. With the support of the P&F, the Federal Government and strong parental support of our building fund & IT Levy we have been able introduce this new technology to our school sooner than expected.

As part of BCE’s Internal Review process Mater Dei has been validated across a number of components that reflect our performance in the area of Student Learning Outcomes. These have included Learning and Teaching, Planning & Reporting, Students with disabilities, Staff Engagement and Evaluation and Forward Planning. In consultation with our Area Supervisor and parents earlier in the year and the combined effort of all teaching staff who all worked on committees to review these components, I am very pleased to report that Mater Dei achieved excellent results in this process of validation and renewal.

The introduction of the My School website this year has added fuel to the fire in terms of the the use of data from NAPLAN tests. There has been considerable discussion of NAPLAN and the testing process in national and state media reporting. The content of NAPLAN tests is meant to be representative of the National Statements of Learning. NAPLAN tests are designed to assess the skills of Australian students in literacy and numeracy with the specific purposes being the collection of data from the population of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students and the assessment of students against national minimum standards. The absence of a national curriculum continues to place children Australia wide on a very tilted playing field. The current focus of curriculum planning at Mater Dei is on ongoing folios of student work, performances, and production of artefacts that contribute to more contextualised judgments about learners’ progress along the learning continua. NAPLAN tests cannot replicate or replace the rich data such products of learning provide. They will add some “point in time data” to the bigger picture of student achievement. The main concern of educators has been the use of published NAPLAN data to create inappropriate comparisons of schools and media league tables. That being said Mater Dei can again be very proud of the excellent results achieved by our students. The next version of My School will be launched in the coming weeks and will further distort information in regards to the funding of schools in Australia. I do not expect parents and families to ignore the information provided by My School but to keep it in perspective of what all schools Australia wide really have to offer.

Having just finished reading drafts of all of Mater Dei Students Semester 2 report cards which are based on progress in learning achievement across the whole school year, I would like to congratulate all students on their achievements in 2010 and also thank all of our parents for the wonderful support they provide the children of Mater Dei.

3. Partnerships and Relationships

Mater Dei is committed to maintaining and further building on our respected and valued position within the community.

Much has been achieved this year to enhance our position within the community and build on our sense of community.

We have continued to implement reporting procedures to keep all stakeholders informed that have incorporated, written reports, folios and parent teacher interviews.
The continuation this year of our pastoral groups program throughout the school has helped develop a sense of belonging across all year levels. This has been done incorporating the house system in an attempt to further develop school spirit.

On a school community level a number of successful events have helped to both maintain and enhance Mater Dei. These have included the Mater Dei Art & Trivia night, Music in The Moonlight, Mater Dei Race Day, Children’s Yr 6 &7 dance, and this Friday’s upcoming Children’s Dance. We have also continued to support parish activities such as the sacramental program and children’s masses and endeavoured to grow our links with organisations such as the local Respite Centre, St Vincent de Paul, Caritas, Project Compassion, African refugee students in BCE schools and support our sister parish in East Timor.

4. Management and Organisation

Mater Dei maintains integrity, respect, responsibility, accountability and excellence through sustainable school management policies and practices.

I believe, with the support of the school board, in 2010 we have been able to provide for high quality inclusive Catholic education at Mater Dei. This of course has been achieved thanks to a positive partnership with parents and staff in the life of the school. Effective collaboration between our Parish Priest, Parish staff, Mater Dei and SPC staff has greatly contributed to cooperative management this year.

We have managed to maintain an active Parents & Friends Association that has supported the ongoing needs of the school community.

We have also endeavoured to ensure the provision of leadership opportunities for students within the school. Our Yr 7 students have performed wonderfully as leaders this year. They can be very proud of their contribution to Mater Dei in 2010.

2010 has been a massive year for Mater Dei in terms of finance and resourcing. The Building the Education Revolution program has seen almost $3 million dollars invested in to upgrading school facilities this year. The results being the delivery of two brand new buildings that have provided us with 4 new classrooms, a huge new library and media room, a new tuckshop, new kitchen and a new hall all fitted out with state of the art equipment.

A further $50 000 as a result of a solar grant has seen the installation of solar panels to the roof of the admin building. It has been a testing year in terms of keeping the school functioning amid the turmoil that building brings but I believe the results have made all the pain worthwhile. Mater Dei’s facilities are now at least 10 years ahead of where our Masterplan ever expected us to be. All students at Mater Dei enjoy modern outstanding opportunities and are able to do this in air conditioned comfort. I think we can all be very proud of what we are able to offer our students.

2010 has seen the introduction of School Crossing Supervisors that has enhanced safety around Mater Dei before and after school. Thank you to Julie and Mary who have done such a great job this year.

None of this would be possible without the financial support of the parent body and in particular the P&F. I am very grateful for the commitment people make to the payment of all fees and levies, which help service our loans and pay the bills for these projects.

As part of BCE’s Internal Review process Mater Dei has been validated across a number of components that reflect our performance in the area of Management and Organisation. These have included Resourcing and The Physical Learning Environment. Again in consultation with our Area Supervisor and parents earlier in the year and the combined effort of all teaching staff who all worked on committees to
review these components, I am very pleased to report that Mater Dei achieved excellent results in this process of validation and renewal.

**Farewells & Thank you**

I would like to offer my thanks to those who have made huge contributions and played such an important role at Mater Dei this year. I also want to take the opportunity to say farewell to those who will be leaving us at the end of this year.

2010 saw the third Mater Dei Race Day. Under the enthusiastic leadership of Peter Anderson, a very successful day was enjoyed by all at the race track. The Art and Trivia night was again very successful. Once again the children's collages, produced under the guidance of Ev Chapman, were very popular and again raised valued funds for the school. I thank Jo O'Neill and Cathy Kruij who along with a band of helpers captured this initiative to the great success it was.

The 20th Anniversary of Music in the Moonlight was once again a great evening. Special thanks to all of the members of the organising committee who put in a huge effort to ensure the success of the evening. I would like to pay particular tribute to Mish Burkett whose contribution to the organisation of this event over the last few years has been outstanding and much of Music's success is a result of her extremely generous contribution. Mish is stepping down from Music this year and she has left an excellent structure in place for future committees.

Dance & Instrumental classes have continued to grow this year and make an enormous contribution to the culture of Mater Dei. I am very grateful to Kate Barichello who this year stepped into the role of dance coordinator and along with Trevor Green and his dance staff have done a superb job. Thanks also to Theresa Raleigh who has again done a great job as coordinator of the instrumental program. The children are very fortunate to have these opportunities.

For a big part of the year we have been without our tuckshop due to the building program. However since re-opening, the tuckshop has gone from strength to strength. A revamped menu offering healthy food choices has been extremely popular. I would like to thank Bethany Sharman and Fiona Martin, who along with many volunteers have been able to provide wonderful lunch options to the children of Mater Dei. At last week’s P&F meeting discussion took place in regards to the appointment of a paid tuckshop convenor to take on what has proved an enormous job for a volunteer on a week in, week out basis. The expansion to 2 days a week is also being explored for 2011.

Another great initiative that has continued this year is the publication of Mater Dei’s school directory once again driven by the Ellerby family. I would like to thank Anastasia and Mathieu for all of their hard work, dedication and generosity that brought this publication to fruition once again. I am very pleased to report that a committee has already been formed for next year’s edition of the directory and production is well underway.

I would again like to recognise the wonderful work the staff (teachers, teacher-aids, ancillary) do in educating and caring for the children at Mater Dei. The professionalism and the commitment of the Mater Dei staff are outstanding. Mater Dei is blessed with a brilliant staff.

At the end of this year we farewell Annette Niven who has done a wonderful job one day a week in Yr 3 working with Mary Hare. I am sure we will see much more of Annette next year providing relief to various classrooms. Angela Platt will be returning 1 day per week next year to replace Mary whose secondment to partake in a deanery project continues next year.

We also farewell Andrea Dowling who, after having 2 years maternity leave, has tendered her resignation as her family are moving to Melbourne. Andrea is an excellent teacher and will be very much missed at Mater Dei. This is an exciting time for Andrea’s family and while we will miss her at Mater Dei we wish the Dowling family all the best for the move. I am very pleased to announce that Julie Towler has been
appointed with Part Time Continuing status to replace Andrea. Julie’s part time hours have been complemented to give her full time status again next year.

We also temporarily farewell Terry Wally whose secondment to Holy Cross Wooloowin has been extended to the end of the 2011 school year. We expect Terry to return to Mater Dei in 2012. I am very pleased to announce that Katrina Hammond will be joining us full time next year to fill Terry’s position on staff.

We also reluctantly say good bye to Libby Hogan who has chosen to step down from her Prep Aide position at the end of this year. Libby has played a crucial role in the development of our Prep program and has been with us since Prep began at Mater Dei four years ago. In a word, Libby’s contribution at Mater Dei has been brilliant. Libby will be greatly missed and very hard to replace. Her caring, generous and loving manner towards the children in Prep is something I, and I’m sure all at Mater Dei, are most grateful for. We have been very lucky to have you working in our school community Libby and I thank you for all you have done. I am currently working with Prep teachers to short list and interview to fill Libby’s position. The successful applicant has very big shoes to fill. I will endeavour to inform the school community as soon as an appointment becomes official.

Also at the end of this year we farewell Errol Sant. Errol has been Groundsman at Mater Dei for the last 7 years. Errol’s contribution has been much appreciated and probably much underrated by the general community. I am sure most are unaware of the many and varied tasks Errol takes on each week, some of these tasks at times rather unpleasant. Thank you Errol for the unassuming manner in which you have completed these tasks for the benefit of our school community. I am pleased to report that Errol is moving on to a similar position at a Nursing home on a fulltime basis which is excellent news for Errol. We have only ever been able to offer Errol part time hours. On behalf of all at Mater Dei, thank you Errol, and best wishes for your new job. I am pleased to announce that yesterday John Empson was appointed to fill this role in 2011. John has worked previously in a similar role in the UK and I am very pleased that we have been able to appoint him to our staff next year. John will be at Mater Dei for a few days next week to spend time with Errol and orientate himself to this role.

In closing I would like to make particular mention of Theresa Fry, our finance secretary. Theresa’s role at Mater Dei is enormous and she does a fantastic job. I am particularly grateful for the support Theresa provides me in my role as principal. Theresa is often my sounding board and I can assure you she has saved all of Mater Dei from the pain of suffering some of the bizarre ideas that get into my head from time to time. On behalf of all, thank you Theresa.

Being a Catholic School the faith life of the school is extremely important. In 2010 we have continued to receive wonderful guidance from our Parish Priest, Father Neil Byrne. I think Father Neil’s working relationship with both schools in the parish has moved even further ahead in leaps and bounds this year and our communities are all the better for his wise involvement in nurturing our faith lives.

Finally to Damian Towler as president, Kate Egerton as Vice President, the P & F Committee, Bruce McPhee as Chair of the School Board and School Board members I offer my sincere thanks for your work and support this year.

Damian, Kate and Bruce, on behalf of the staff, I give thanks for your leadership within the P & F and School Board and commitment to the school. To all executive members of the P&F committee and School Board, again, I give thanks for your dedication and enthusiasm toward the many projects that have taken place this year. For those who are stepping down from Board and P&F positions this year I sincerely thank you for your valued contributions.

I look forward to next year and am most appreciative of the widespread support that you have all afforded Mater Dei in 2010. As I’m sure many of you are aware I have been granted some Professional Renewal Leave next year following my performance review in 2010. I have combined this with a few weeks of Long Service Leave and will be travelling to Ireland to do some study of the work of the Charity Sisters, to
Rome to do some study and reflection in the Vatican and to New York to participate in a multifaith course. Along with these activities I will also be enjoying some holiday time. This experience will have me away from school for most of March, all of April and a few days in May. I am not yet able to confirm who will be acting in my role during this time but will endeavour to let you know as soon as this is finalised.

That completes my report. To all, a happy and Holy Christmas and best wishes for a great New Year and a safe start to 2011.

Peter Delaney  
Principal  
Mater Dei School