



## Catholic Education, South Australia 2007

### Organisational Background

Catholic Education in South Australia operates within the Archdiocese of Adelaide and the Diocese of Port Pirie to meet the needs of families who choose an education based on Christian principles in the Catholic tradition.

Founded in the tradition, and strengthened by their ethos Catholic schools in South Australia are committed to providing excellent education for students from a broad cross-section of communities.

The Catholic Education Offices serve Catholic Schools and communities through collaborative leadership and co-operative effort.

Integral to this service is building communities for participating in a changing world and creating effective learning environments by providing support for their growth.

### Organisation Information

INDUSTRY SECTOR	=	Education	
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	=	206 (including 35 ESL teachers based in schools)	
% OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES	=	77%	
% of FEMALES IN MANAGEMENT	=	Senior Managers	64%
		Executives	40%

View Catholic Education South Australia website:  
[http://www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/sites/CatholicEducationOfficesSA/.....](http://www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/sites/CatholicEducationOfficesSA/)

### **Q What particular issue is your initiative or program attempting to address?**

#### **Administrative Support Staff Professional Development.**

In 2001 some administrative support staff were concerned about future career paths. While the organization is limited in the diversity of career paths that can be provided, there existed scope for the organization to provide increased information about study opportunities and training options in relation to current career paths.

### **Q What program or initiative did you implement to address the issue? Please describe what the program or initiative involved.**

By December of 2001 an on site course based on a needs analysis was created and the Director approved nine hours in work time for each administrative support staff member to participate in this study course if they wished. Topics included self-esteem; communication; further study; goal setting; and writing applications for financial support for study and professional development. All Administrative Support Staff were given a budget of \$1500 per annum for study.



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### **Q How did you gain buy-in for this initiative from:**

#### **1. CEO and Executive**

The Director and Leadership Team supported this initiative and ensured that staff members involved were released from duties in work time to attend if they wished to participate. The course was voluntary.

#### **2. Staff**

A sub-committee met regularly to plan for and organise the study course. Membership of the sub-committee included two members of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Committee and two Administrative Support Staff. Regular reports are made at the monthly meetings of the EOWW Committee.

### **Q What were the challenges in getting this project from the concept phase to implementation phase and how did you address them?**

The greatest challenge was in creating dates that were most convenient for full time and part time employees to attend.

Nearly half of the women employed as clerical, secretarial, accounts and payroll assistants attended the study course.

Some people because of part time work could not attend on the advertised days so efforts were made to change some of the dates to ensure that more people could attend.

Sometimes urgent work prevented staff members from attending. Others chose not to attend.

Since the study course began many changes have been made to accommodate the needs of staff members.

These include a goal setting session with an outside consultant; a pilot project to register for personal professional development in the area of health and wellbeing or a course provided off campus that provided knowledge and skills for future pathway or career opportunities. This pilot project was resourced by the workplace. Subsequently, a staff member trained through this pilot project is offering a fitness course on site.

### **Q What were the outcomes for your business and for the women in the organisation?**

Over the past 5 years during the implementation phase there have been topics such as how to access study funding from the study incentive program; Communication; TAFE courses; The Application of the Enneagram in the Workplace and many more. Several staff attended an Executive Assistant/PA Summit in Melbourne in 2006 and another four are attending in 2007.

Several women have completed TAFE courses and some have changed their work roles within the organization. Some staff members are now qualified in accountancy; HR and Counselling.

Most recently the Leadership Team has given approval for an Administrative Team Workshop facilitated by MJL People Dynamics in work time. Costs will be met by the organization. A skeleton staff will be made available to deal with reception duties and incoming calls in other key areas of the organization. Following consultation with key stakeholders casual and part time staff not wishing to attend the workshop will be utilised in this capacity.



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### **Q     *How will you build on this project to achieve further outcomes for women?***

We will continue this project and cater for new staff. We are currently in the throes off renaming the work roles of Administrative Support staff and considering a mentoring system for all staff members who wish to participate.

A sub-committee consisting of members of the Administrative Support group and a member of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Committee will continue to implement the project over the coming years and review its progress.

A needs analysis will be undertaken as required so that further outcomes for women will be pursued.

Study time will continue to be made available in work hours.

### ***Organisation Media Contacts:***

Helen O'Brien/Julie Kostiw

### ***Person/s available for media contact/interview:***

#### ***Helen O'Brien –Assistant Director:***

Helen O'Brien is an Assistant Director at the Catholic Education Office with responsibility for the Learning and Student Wellbeing Team. The team provides leadership and service to leaders and school communities related to learning, teaching, curriculum and student services. She is a member of the Leadership Team and a member of the EOWW Committee. Helen is committed to the wellbeing of all members of the staff at the Catholic Education Office.

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#### ***Julie Kostiw – Office Manager/Personnel Administrator:***

Julie commenced employment with the Catholic Education office in February 1998.

During 2005, Julie applied for and was appointed to the newly created position of Office Manager based with the Personnel Team. As a key support person for administrative staff, Julie oversees and coordinates training and professional development for all Catholic Education Office Administrative staff. Julie is also a key stakeholder in the EOWW administrative sub-committee.

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