

Bendigo Korus Connect Chaplaincy Support Group

Edition #2

2023

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from Chairperson, Craig

Last weekend's Age newspaper included an article that reported on absenteeism in Victoria's public schools. The average annual absences in 2022 for year 7-10 students was 29.2 days, which was up from 22.7 days in 2021. Numbers for year 5-6 and 11-12 students were lower, but average absences still exceeded 20 days per year. Averages being what they are, it is likely that the numbers are biased by a relatively small number of students who are absent much of the time.

While some of the absences reflected the uptick in illness post-COVID, the article noted growing concerns at 'school refusal' among Australian students. Data on school refusal is limited and the reasons why students are not attending school are poorly understood and no doubt many and varied. The article suggested that early intervention was needed to re-engage students before their absences had extended into months and they became completely disconnected from school. Sounds like a rationale for school chaplaincy!

School refusal isn't new; I can remember one of our chaplains sharing a story (pre-COVID) of the daily challenge he took on to help one of his school's students overcome their anxiety and attend class. It was one not so small example of the care provided by our chaplains and the value they are able to provide by responding to needs as they arise.

Growing school refusal is just one expression of the malaise that afflicts so many young people in our community and which threatens to rob them of their education and the life opportunities it affords. We are blessed to be able to support an outstanding group of chaplains, whose role involves caring for and supporting young people as they work through their challenges and engage or re-engage with life.

Just as the students in our schools need our chaplains' support, so to our chaplains need your support. As the end of the year approaches, please pray for them, that they would have the faith, empathy and energy they need for each day that remains in the school year. Their work is complex and challenging and not something they can sustain under their own strength for long. However, your prayers and our God's grace make a difference.

Thank you for caring about chaplaincy in Bendigo schools. Your prayers, giving and interest are greatly appreciated. Best wishes for the fast-approaching Christmas and new year.

This newsletter was photocopied at Creek Street Christian College at no cost to the Committee. We are most appreciative of this contribution.



An Australian Government Initiative

All schools, except Weeroona College Bendigo have been partially funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations under the National Schools Wellbeing Program (NSWP). The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.



In August a most enjoyable sing-along afternoon was held at St Peter's Anglican Church hosted by St Peter's Mothers' Union and Our Place Minstrels who provided the musical entertainment.

Would you like to invite a chaplain to speak at your church, group or club?

Support Group member Jenny Rainsford interviewed Katie Pagliaro who is chaplain at Eaglehawk North PS. Katie spoke about her experience and vision as a school chaplain.

A donation of \$990 was made to Bendigo Korus Connect Chaplaincy Support Group .



Please contact Secretary, Rosalie, via the email address on this newsletter.

Our chaplains are passionate about their role in the schools. They are willing to take advantage of the opportunity to encourage you to support chaplaincy in schools.

In September our chaplain at Eaglehawk PS and Axedale PS, Ali Gillett, spoke at Hymns Alive.

Ali's message was enthusiastically received as she shared her personal story of how she was led to chaplaincy and her passion for her role in the schools.



Then in November Rose Lynch, who is chaplain at Kangaroo Flat PS, spoke at Hymns Alive. Rose impressed listeners with her love for what she does in the school, her deep respect for the students and school community, and her enthusiasm for the importance of chaplaincy in schools.

**The following article has been supplied by Adrian Irwin
who is the Senior Regional Community Manager with
Korus Connect for the North Western Region**

An update on funding for School Chaplaincy as at October 25

As I write this we are in an interesting place regarding the future of school chaplaincy not only locally in the Bendigo region but also Statewide. However, we have been here before. As with any government funding there is a cycle of this having to be re-committed to and updated guidelines issued, which did occur under the Federal Labor government at the beginning of 2023. The major change that occurred in the program funding was a re-badging of the National Schools Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) to the National Students Wellbeing Program (NSWP) and the option for schools to choose either a Chaplain or a Student Wellbeing Officer. In May of this year all schools in Victoria were invited to apply for this funding for 2024-2027 and were told they would know the outcome of their application by the end of Term 3 or mid September 2023. As at 25 October we are still waiting to hear. Understandably, this places some anxiety on all stakeholders as uncertainty grows for 2024.

While we certainly have an eye on the short term, we continue in faith to look to the future. Korus Connect is part of the National School Chaplaincy Association (NSCA) which is continually advocating for chaplaincy funding at a Federal level and is already advocating for the future of funding beyond 2027. With supporting studies such as the independent McCrindle Research conducted annually across the country; a 2022 University of Western Australia research project and the Federal government commissioned Dandalo report; all this data and research contributes to future decision making in the area of chaplaincy funding. The NSCA seeks to ensure this important data finds its way to the desks of those who make such decisions. Importantly all three of these independent research activities and others, demonstrate the effectiveness of chaplaincy in schools and the value that schools who receive the funding place on it.

Your valuable contribution as someone who supports chaplaincy in schools can be firstly and foremostly praying for school chaplains; their school communities; school chaplaincy providers; groups and organisations that advocate for its continuation and those who have the decision making capabilities.

Chaplain:	at these schools
Rose Lynch	Kangaroo Flat PS
Ricky Cawley	White Hills PS
Cara Barnes	Eaglehawk Secondary College
Chris Powers	Lockwood South PS, Big Hill PS
Merilyn Tatt	Maiden Gully PS
Alison Gillett	Axedale PS, Eaglehawk PS
Chris Powers	Weeroona College Bendigo
Katie Pagliaro	Eaglehawk North PS

Our current committee	
Craig Clifton	Chairman
Ray Harvey	Treasurer
Rosalie Harvey	Secretary/Newsletter
Jenny Rainsford	Member
Mary Preston	Member
Laurie Preston	Member

Donations

We sincerely thank those supporters who have donated this year. We do rely heavily on the financial support of our supporters to be able to meet the financial commitment we make to schools who are not able to fully fund their chaplain.

Please use the payment slip below when making your donation by cheque. An addressed return envelope has been included with printed copies for your convenience. Alternatively, use the banking details provided to make a direct payment to our account.

Please consider giving your financial support!

When donating via Direct Payment, please ensure your name is given as the reference so that a receipt can be forwarded to you.

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BSB 633000

Account number 178886610

Reference your name

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