Best wishes to all engaged in professional dialogue today. The opportunity provided to gather to engage with the curriculum, enhance assessment practices, validate judgements about student learning and reflect on the impact of teaching, is a valuable one. I hope the day is professionally rewarding.

Congratulations to Dr Lyn Nothdurft, affectionately known to her St Patrick’s College Gympie students as ‘The Doc,’ and to Jane Greffe from Marymount College Burleigh, who are finalists in the 2017 Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) Awards. Lyn has devoted nearly five decades of her life to educating the children of Kingaroy and Gympie. Her exceptional dedication saw Lyn win the Brisbane Catholic Education Outstanding Contribution to Teaching and Learning Award for 2017. Jane was also an award recipient in the Brisbane Catholic Education awards and won the 2016 Home Economics Institute of Australia Teacher Excellence Award. Best wishes to both Lyn and Jane for the QCT awards, the winners of which will be announced on 27 October, when Queensland celebrates World Teachers’ Day.

Congratulations are also extended to Dr Ken Avenell, now Senior Manager: Professional Learning & Leadership Development, in the Toowoomba Catholic Education Office, who was awarded the Hedley Beare Award at last week’s ACEL Conference. The award was in recognition of Ken’s lengthy commitment to educational leadership and his prolific writing on the subject for many years. Many of our leaders and aspiring leaders have benefited from Ken’s expertise in this area.

Our students too have experienced success recently. Congratulations to the amazing young people of St Francis College Crestmead who performed at the recent iReprezent Cultural Festival gaining first place. The students were outstanding in representing the Aboriginal, Tongan, Cook Island, African, and Samoan cultures through traditional dance. The performance can be viewed online.

The Youth Affairs Network of Qld (YANQ) has recently released a report of the research undertaken by Griffith University and the University of Qld and supported by Brisbane Catholic Education through funding and membership of the reference group. The report, Engaging students in engaging schools: Lessons from Queensland’s alternative education sector. I commend the report to you as it includes recommendations for mainstream schools. The full report can be accessed online.

Next week we shall once again honour those in our community who have given forty and fifty years’ service to Catholic education at a special ceremony. This year one hundred and forty staff members have clocked up 20, 30, 40 or 50 years’ service. I think you will agree that’s quite an achievement!

Our Small Research Grants program is now open and staff are welcome to apply. This is a great program that offers up to $10,000 per project to help researchers explore practical solutions to educational needs. To read more about the program and the current areas of research Brisbane Catholic Education is looking to support, visit our research site. Investing in research is one important way that we continue to live our mission to teach, challenge and transform.

Please remember in prayer this week all who are grieving the loss of loved ones. We remember particularly the community of Southern Cross Catholic College Woody Point campus on the loss of their colleague Cathy Lawrence. May she rest in peace.

Best wishes for the fortnight ahead
Pam