



# OPENING THE DOORS FOUNDATION

Keeping Koorie Kids in an Education of their choice

May 2011

## Building the Foundations of Choice since 2001

Dear Friends,

Applications have now closed for the 2011 school year and we have been busy processing requests, getting students geared up for another year of learning. After 3 years, the contracted position of Project/Promotion Officer has ended and the office is back to 2 part time staff.

The ACM (Aboriginal Catholic Ministry) has kindly partnered the Foundation to manage the successful FIRE Carrier Project (Friends Igniting Reconciliation

Through Education), continuing to assist schools on their Reconciliation journey. This is a big task, and we thank the ACM for their continued support.

We welcome Sr Agnes Murphy as a regular volunteer in the office and extend our thanks to our loyal sub committee who have been supporting us for the past 10 years.

### Yes, this year marks our 10th Birthday!

Thank you to all our donors, supporters, students and friends. We look forward to seeing you at one of our events this year.

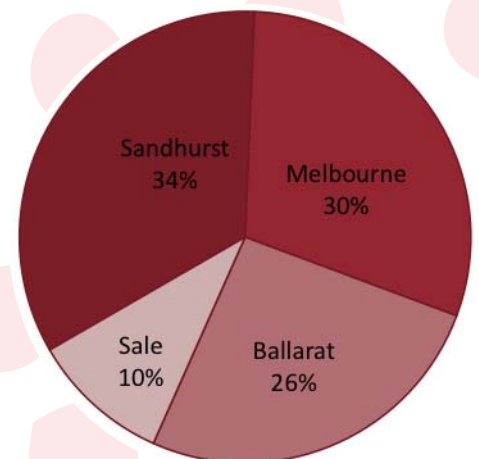
We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

*The Administration Office Team*

### How your donations have made a difference

This year, we have supported over 500 students in more than 100 Primary and Secondary schools throughout Victoria, disbursing more than \$280,000.

To give you an idea of where your donations are directed, approximately \$115,000 was spent on uniforms, around \$60,000 was allocated to excursions and camps and roughly \$45,000 purchased textbooks and calculators. Over the last 10 years, our donors have helped countless families to have a choice in the type of education their children have, empowering a new generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to have confidence to achieve their dreams.



Regional Distribution 2011



### A Sad Farewell to our first FIRE Carrier Ambassador

It saddens all at OTDF to hear of the sudden passing, on 28 December 2010 of Most Reverend Joe Grech, the Bishop of Sandhurst. Bishop Grech became our first FIRE Carrier Ambassador in March 2010, which marked the start of the Sandhurst Diocese work towards Reconciliation through the FIRE Carrier Project. We remember him for his enthusiasm and encouragement of those around him to participate in the journey of Reconciliation. Bishop Grech will be missed by all who met him.

Left: Bishop Joe Grech, Photo courtesy of Sandhurst CEO

## Uniforms build confidence

Over the years we have heard many stories of students spending time in detention, instead of participating in the classroom because they were wearing the wrong socks or were missing a piece of their school uniform. Recently we helped a student who was told not to come to school on

Monday unless they had the correct shirt.

Uniforms are expensive and make up the

majority of funds OTDF disburse each year. When a child is dressed in their uniform they are confident and able to participate fully in school. As one Principal wrote *"The financial support given to aid purchase of school uniforms helps the children settle into school life with confidence to be part of the student community"*. And from a mother *"Your help makes my child feel valued as a young Koori boy, as someone who is worthy of a good education"*. The key to a good education is looking and feeling like you belong, that is why funding for uniforms is so important.



## A message from the Trustees

In the ten years since OTDF's establishment, the story has been one of unprecedented growth in the number of Aboriginal students who have been recipients of grants. In 2001, 32 students received grants towards the funding of school uniforms, books school camps and other school-associated costs. This year, the Foundation has been able to assist over 500 students, a remarkable number. The cost of the funding of these Grants exceeds \$280,000, a far cry from the \$12,718 that was disbursed 10 years ago.

As evidenced this year, the demand for funding continues to grow. Sadly whilst the Foundation is able to provide some assistance to students, the amounts requested far exceed the Foundation's financial capacity. The challenge is to continually source new philanthropic funding. Whilst there are numerous organisations that provide generously to charitable causes, there is not a large number that fund Indigenous education. The Foundation is blessed with a small number of very generous supporters but there is a limit in their capacity to increase support in line with the growth of funding demand.

The greatest challenge facing the Foundation going forward is to source additional funding for Indigenous education. The Trustees gratefully acknowledge the generous financial donations that our supporters contribute each year.

*John Arthur — Chair of Trustees*

## Dates for your diary

**Thursday 4 August 2011** - OTDF's 10th Birthday Oration

Join acclaimed author of non-fiction, historical fiction, commercial women's fiction, poetry and social commentary **Dr Anita Heiss** at Genazzano College's new Madeleine Centre, Time: 6-8.30pm Cost: \$10.

**Saturday 17 September 2011** - St Dominic's Parish Camberwell Trivia Night

Test your knowledge and raise funds for OTDF at Loreto Mandeville Hall, Toorak. Cost: \$25.

**Check website or contact office closer to dates for booking details.**

## Your donations open the doors of choice

Donations are critical to our work, therefore, we are enclosing a donation slip with this Newsletter just in case you would like to take the opportunity to make a donation for the 2010/11 tax year! Donations can also be made online [www.openingthedoors.org.au](http://www.openingthedoors.org.au)

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

**Our students thank you!**

