

Canadian Educators Visit Australia

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From L to R: Roger Lawler, Michele Arbour, Annette Marentette, Patrick Mulvihill, Don Rait and Paul Healy

In July, the Diocese of Broken Bay was host to six Catholic principals and educators visiting Sydney from the province of Ontario as part of an arrangement with the Australian Catholic University. During their two-day visit to Broken Bay, the Canadian educators met with personnel from the Catholic Schools Office, engaged with school leaders, staff and students at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary, Waitara and St. Leo's Catholic College, Wahroonga, and even found time to meet up with some furry Australian animals at the Koala Park, Pennant Hills.

Our Canadian colleagues came to Australia with several research questions that they were anxious to explore with their Australian counterparts in Catholic Education. In particular, they were keen to find out how Catholic Education in NSW (New South Wales) is approaching the issue of succession planning for Catholic school leaders, and how we are addressing the challenges of sustaining and celebrating Catholic leadership and Catholic education into the future.

The conversation was lively, with much sharing of experiences and stories from Catholic Education across our two countries. We gained a *big picture* view of Catholic Education in Ontario from Don Rait, president of the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario, Roger Lawler, newly appointed president of the English Catholic Council of Directors of Education in Ontario, and Michele Arbour, superintendent of Educational Services on a district school board in Ontario.

For the primary principals in the group, Annette Marentette, Patrick Mulvihill and Paul Healy, the highlight was meeting the OLOR children in the playground during their lunch hour where they felt immediately at home! Helen Colman, educational officer, Professional Learning Catholic Schools Office, who organized the visit, noted that everyone felt richer for having shared their mutual goals, hopes and challenges as Catholic educators of children and young people in the 21st Century.

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