

SECURITAS

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No.47 2007



Fostering a vocations culture

The Sisters behind Catholic Vocations Ministry

EDUCATION – SchoolCare Insurance **RISK MANAGEMENT** – Talking workplace relations

HEALTH – Articulating Catholic identity **COMMUNITY** – When a Parish Priest moves

SUPERANNUATION – Introducing pensions **OUR PEOPLE** – Peter Rush **SPECIAL PEOPLE** – Catholic Vocations Ministry

VIEWPOINT

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Hello and welcome to the latest issue of Securitas.

I am pleased to advise you that the company has, once again, achieved a significant operating surplus for the year ended 30 June 2007. The details of our \$85.8 million result are in the accompanying Annual Review 2007. From the surplus achieved, we will return \$37.7 million to Church through dividends, grants and client distributions, which will be paid during December 2007.

As I mentioned in the last issue of Securitas, Catholic Church Insurances is the Official Insurance Partner of World Youth Day 2008 (WYD08). An important part of our role as the Official Insurance Partner is to advise on the insurance requirements for the various events around Australia leading up to and including World Youth Day 2008 week. It has been through this involvement that I have had the opportunity to see behind the scenes. To move, feed and house hundreds of thousands of people is an enormous undertaking and the WYD08 Organising Committee and the dioceses and religious institutes holding events are meeting each of these challenges with incredible skill and ingenuity.

From our perspective, working on the provision of the many insurance covers required is proving to be quite a challenge. The scope and scale of the events are unlike anything else the Church has undertaken, but I believe that finding and providing solutions is part of our role in the Church community and I am pleased that we can offer our support.

The financial assistance Catholic Church Insurances has distributed to Church entities through our World Youth Day grants will assist many to celebrate the WYD08 experience. So far we have contributed approximately \$7.5 million to WYD08 and will continue to provide financial support where needed.

In other news, several internal computer system installations and updates are underway and on track for completion over the next year. Particularly exciting is iClient, our new Client Relationship Management system, which will streamline how we manage our relationships with and deliver documentation to Church clients. We believe the new system will offer everyone great benefits in the longer term.

Also of interest is the update to our superannuation system. New, user-friendly options are being introduced, including the recent offering to members for secure, remote access to their details 24 hours a day, seven days a week via the NCSF website at www.ncsf.com.au. This is a first for National Catholic Superannuation Fund and Catholic Church Insurances is pleased to be able to deliver the kind of functionality the Trustees and members have been asking for.

For now, I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Peter Rush

General Manager
Catholic Church Insurances

Cover: Sr Mary Ryan hands the CVMA keys to new Executive Officer Sr Veronica McCluskie. For full article turn to page 12.

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WHAT'S NEW?



Nunzio Papotto, Catholic Church Insurances Account Executive, presents Perth Primary School Principal and Catholic Church Insurances client, Brendan Spillane, with a \$100 cheque and certificate for his hole-in-one.

Hole-in-one

"I hadn't even intended to play the competition," says Brendan, "but one of my past pupils and our current Junior Club Champion, Duncan Williams, was there and keen so we signed up".

"When we came to the par three 11th it was set up at about 147m and I hit my seven-iron. It came off the clubface flush and high, drew slightly at its height, hit the green about half a metre from the flag and disappeared into the hole.

A big high-five with Duncan and a happy 147m walk to the green later and I was picking it out of the hole. Through force of habit, I'd even taken my putter onto the green! It was only when I got my trophy I realised I'd holed out on 17 July 2007 with a seven-iron – it was that kind of day! Duncan is under-age so I bought him a sleeve of good balls instead of a drink to celebrate!"

Congratulations Brendan!

Hire vehicle extension

After receiving a number of inquiries regarding insuring against the cost of hiring a substitute vehicle while an insured vehicle is being repaired following an accident, we have made changes to our policy.

Effective from 1 September 2007 we are pleased to offer an optional 14 days Hire Vehicle Cost Extension for sedans, station wagons and utilities (not used for goods carrying purposes) that are comprehensively insured with us.

If this extension is selected and a claim is admitted under the policy Catholic Church Insurances will pay all reasonable costs of hiring a similar substitute vehicle while the damaged vehicle is being repaired or replaced.

The annual cost of this extension is \$35.00 plus GST and stamp duty.

If you would like to know more, please contact us on 1300 655 001.



2007 Footy Tipping Club

Catholic Church Insurances Footy Tipping Competition for 2007 has drawn to a close!

It ended up being a tight dash to the finish line between Lee Pope and John Lemm. The two South Australians battled it out, with only one point separating them over the last five rounds.

In the end, Lee, who works for the Australian Technical College – Spencer Gulf & Outback in South Australia, pipped John at the post and came out the winner for 2008, picking a total of 123 winners with a cumulative margin of 622! Congratulations Lee on winning \$1000.

Second place went to John Lemm our State Manager in South Australia, with 122 winners and a cumulative margin of 774. John wins \$500.

In third place, winning \$250, is Joe Bucci from our Victorian office.

Finally, the good old wooden spoon went to Ross Phillips from Avila College Victoria for his gallant efforts!

Catholic Church Insurances would like to congratulate all our winners and look forward to you all joining us in 2008 for another exciting year of tipping!

The journey of the World Youth Day Cross



Like the Olympic Torch, the WYD Cross and Icon makes an incredible journey across the continents and through hundreds of communities to reach its destination in Sydney and mark the beginning of World Youth Day 2008 (WYD08).

The Cross and Icon was handed to Australian representatives in Rome on Palm Sunday 2006. From there, it began its pilgrimage through Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania, carried by commercial airline, light aircraft, dog sled, pick-up truck, tractor, sail boat and fishing boat, arriving in Sydney on 1 July where it was handed to the young people of Australia.

Over the next 12 months, the Cross and Icon will travel to each of Australia's 28 dioceses and visit at least 400 communities. Highlights will include: travelling on the Ghan, National Schoolies mission on the Gold Coast, Mount Kosciuszko, Federal Parliament, Uluru, Palm Island, Margaret River, the Spirit of Tasmania, Port Arthur to name just a few.

Catholic Church Insurances is the Official Insurance Partner of WYD08 and is assisting Church entities with their insurance and related needs for WYD08 activities.

SchoolCare Insurance

Are you responsible for the care of students at your school?
Protect your students with SchoolCare Insurance

No matter how well you supervise your students there will always be unexpected accidents. Schools, by the very nature of their activities, have inherent dangers. In the playground, school rooms, sports grounds and during activities outside of school premises there are risks which can be managed but will never be totally eliminated.

Proper duty of care policies and procedures is the basis by which the care and safety of students is managed, as is the diligent supervision by teachers, however is that enough to protect your school when the inevitable happens.

The statistics on schoolyard accidents which we have collected show that primary school students are more than 60 per cent more likely to have an accident than secondary school students – but both groups all have accidents. Chipped teeth, strained limbs and broken bones are common results of involvement in sports activities.

The duty of care of a school to its students is greater than the duty of care of a parent. It is expected that the environment can be controlled through skilled teachers and compliance with policy and procedures so the expectations of parents are high.

Should a child be hurt through any neglect by the school there will be insurance cover to protect the school afforded by your public liability insurance. However if it is simply an accident there is no cover available under that policy.

This is where SchoolCare, student's accident and disability insurance comes to the fore. SchoolCare provides cover for accidents to students whilst they are attending school and during school organised activities, even if they are outside normal school hours.

Benefits of SchoolCare

The SchoolCare policy has three key benefits:

1. Up to \$5,000 inclusive per accident in non-Medicare medical costs from registered medical practitioners eg: physiotherapist, chiropractor, dentist.
2. Fixed amounts for defined events eg: a fracture.
3. A number of other benefits such as:
 - Emergency transport
 - Home tuition
 - School fee relief
 - Hospital inconvenience allowance
 - Nursing allowance
 - Professional counselling fees.

There are two policy covers available: Standard Cover and Basic Cover. Both offer School Activities only or 24-hours a day protection options. SchoolCare can be obtained on a single school basis or a group covering more than one school e.g. all schools in a Diocese.

SchoolCare is a proven protection

Catholic Church Insurances currently provides SchoolCare insurance cover for more than half a million Catholic school students and is a proven support when it is needed.

Over the past six years in excess of \$8 million dollars has been paid out in claims. Claims which otherwise may have developed into public liability claims with the additional burdens of legal costs and court awards. Since SchoolCare's introduction in 1998 more than \$10 million dollars has been paid in claims.

Just imagine the relief for a parent when you make the call to tell them that their child has been hurt and advise them that your school has a SchoolCare student's accident policy which may assist to pay non-Medicare medical costs.

Easy claims process

And we have made making a claim as easy as we can. Claim forms are provided to every school, as well as being available from our website. We provide a kit to each school which details what you need to do and contains details of your policy for ease of reference.

We have a dedicated SchoolCare Claims Helpline, 1300 138 498, to assist you and your parents with any questions which may arise.

Taking out a policy for your school?

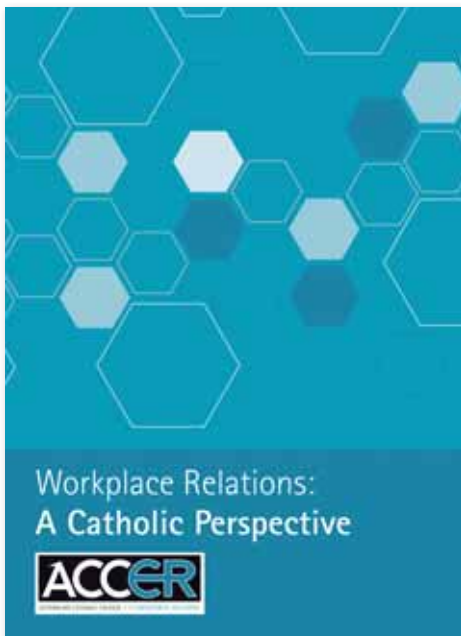
SchoolCare students accident and disability insurance is available to all Catholic schools. If your school is not currently covered under a SchoolCare policy and you would like to know more about the cover please contact your Account Executive on 1800 011 028 or Catholic Church Insurances on 1300 655 001. Or you can visit our website at www.ccinsurances.com.au to view the School Resources available.

There are discounted rates for group policies – so check with your Catholic Education Office to see if they have considered a group SchoolCare policy arrangement.



Talking workplace relations

The Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations (ACCER) has released a new book called *Workplace Relations: A Catholic Perspective*.



The book was developed in response to a 2005 Statement by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference on aspects of the then proposed Work Choices legislation.

In their Statement, the Bishops expressed concern that Work Choices did not provide a proper balance between the rights of workers and employers in several respects.

They said that changes were “necessary to alleviate some of the undesirable consequences of the legislation, especially in regard to its potential impact on the poor, on the vulnerable and on families”. No such changes were made.

The particular matters raised by the Bishops were minimum wages, minimum conditions of employment and bargaining, unfair dismissals and the role of unions.

Workplace Relations: A Catholic Perspective focuses on the position of low paid and vulnerable workers under Work Choices and outlines the principles that should guide workplace legislation for workers generally. These concerns and principles

are derived from Catholic social teaching; but they also reflect universal human concerns and reasoned responses to them.

The book has two main purposes.

1. To explain Catholic social teaching on work and employment related issues.
2. On the basis of that teaching, make a contribution to the national debate about employment law and workplace relations.

Catholic social teaching on work and related issues are reviewed under five broad headings:

1. Catholic social teaching on work and the dignity of the worker.
2. The rights of the worker.
3. The principles of Catholic social teaching.
4. The principles of Catholic social teaching on economic markets and the role of governments, especially as they relate to workplace relations.
5. The obligation of Catholics to participate in the making of a more just society.

The review of Catholic social teaching on work and workers’ rights identifies four rights, which broadly coincide with the four matters identified in the Bishops’ Statement and are covered in detail. They are:

- The right to a just wage.
- The right to protection against unfair agreements.
- The right to participate in unions.
- The right to job security.

Although the substance of the book is about the Catholic contribution to the national debate, the principles and objectives that the Catholic Church seeks to promote are also the principles and objectives of many other groups in our society.

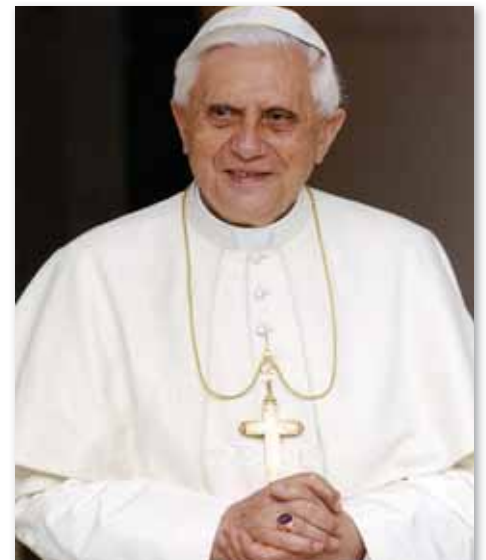
In your workplace

ACCER hope that the book will encourage the discussion of Catholic social teaching in Parishes, schools and Catholic workplaces. To assist with this four meeting plans on aspects of Catholic social teaching have been included.

The plans have been drafted for use by Parish, school and workplace groups in a variety of circumstances across the country. They provide a framework for learning more about Catholic social teaching on work, social and economic issues and social justice and may be of particular interest to *Securitas* readers.

ACCER hope that the meetings will result in action, at least in the promotion and dissemination of the teaching covered by the four meetings, and in the generation of interest in other areas of Catholic social teaching.

The principal resource for the meetings is *Workplace Relations: A Catholic Perspective*. Printed copies are available via www.accer.asn.au. In order to maximise the availability of the material, a copy of the book may also be downloaded free of charge.



Pope Benedict XVI

Who is ACCER?

The Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations (ACCER) is an agency of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. The Council advises the Bishops Commission for Administration and Information in the:

- Promotion of the life and mission of the Catholic Church in Australia in the area of work and the employment relationship.
- Development of national policies and guidelines that relate to work and the employment relationship in areas of Catholic employment.
- Advocacy in support of work and the employment relationship in Australian society, in co-operation with the Bishops Commission for Justice and Service, based on Catholic Social Teaching.

For more information visit: www.accer.asn.au, send an email to oer@catholic.org.au or call 03 9663 1775. Copies of the book are available via the order form on the website.



The pursuit of social justice requires a clear understanding of the nature of the engagement of Catholics in society, as explained in a recent statement by Pope Benedict XVI to the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean:

“This political task is not the immediate competence of the Church. Respect for a healthy secularity – including the pluralism of political opinions—is essential in the Christian tradition. If the Church were to start transforming herself into a directly political subject, she would do less, not more, for the poor and for justice, because she would lose her independence and her moral authority, identifying herself with a single political path and with debatable partisan positions. The Church is the advocate of justice and of the poor, precisely because she does not identify with politicians nor with partisan interests. Only by remaining independent can she teach the great criteria and inalienable values, guide consciences and offer a life choice that goes beyond the political sphere. To form consciences, to be the advocate of justice and truth, to educate in individual and political virtues: that is the fundamental vocation of the Church in this area. And lay Catholics must be aware of their responsibilities in public life; they must be present in the formation of the necessary consensus and in opposition to injustice.”

Pope Benedict XVI, 13 May 2007

Articulating Catholic Identity – A matter of survival



A major challenge facing today's Catholic health and aged care organisations is to articulate what is meant by 'being Catholic' – a challenge on which renowned international author Fr Gerald Arbuckle sm believes the very survival of the Catholic health and aged care sector depends.

"Without a clear identity we have no future," Fr Arbuckle said during his keynote address at this year's Catholic Health Australia (CHA) national conference. "Failure to clarify our identity ... will inevitably lead to the institutional death of our once much valued and flourishing ministries."

Fr Arbuckle argued traditional methods for articulating Catholic identity will no longer work.

"How often do we hear the cry, 'If only the Sisters were back. All would be well!'" Theologically and sociologically this is impossible ... we need a new approach."

The approach he recommends in today's 'turbulent' world of post modernism is drawn directly from the person of Jesus

Christ and his methods of instructing people more than 2000 years ago – parables or storytelling.

"In paradoxical reaction to the individualism, loneliness and rootlessness of post-modernity, people are discovering the experience of storytelling as a source of meaning and significance," Fr Arbuckle said.

For the Catholic health and aged care sector the 'story' that lies at the heart of Catholic identity, according to Fr Arbuckle, is the parable of the Good Samaritan.

"The ultimate source of Catholic identity is this lesson of love ... love of God and neighbour is at the very heart of Catholic identity," he said.

"Whoever struggles to be transformed by this parable, and to implement its lessons, is expressing Catholic identity at a most profound level, even though they may not be formally attached to the Catholic Church."

Catholic Health Australia has long recognised the importance of meeting the challenge to articulate Catholic identity and is

addressing this in a number of ways, including by producing resources such as two booklets launched at the national conference: *Crafting Catholic Identity in Post Modern Australia* and *On Being Pastoral*.

Crafting Catholic Identity, written by Fr Arbuckle, provides a comprehensive overview of the many approaches to Catholic identity and offers a direction for organisations grappling with identification.

On Being Pastoral, by Patrick McArdle and Anne Tuohy from the Australian Catholic University School of Theology, addresses pastoral caring but is not principally written for members of pastoral care teams. Rather it focuses on all staff.

Within this great challenge to articulate Catholic identity Fr Arbuckle offers both advice and a message of hope.

"I am constantly meeting people of immense goodwill in our facilities, attracted by an earnest desire to be involved in facilities that stand for values. But they want to be informed and formed in the values of Catholic identity," he said.

"(For this to happen) we need appropriate, regular formation programs based on the inductive, reflective process of teaching in imitation of Christ the teacher. But I am very optimistic about the future ... I believe we have something here and can make a contribution not only here in Australia but beyond."

CHA is the largest non-government provider grouping of health, community and aged care services in Australia. Phone 02 6260 5980 or visit www.cha.org.au for more information or to order CHA booklets.

COMMUNITY

When a Parish Priest moves

Fr Peter Matheson recently took over a new Parish. In this special feature Fr Peter shares with us the challenges and choices involved in such a move.

Choosing to leave

For me, the first part of moving was to choose to leave the old Parish. After 13 years, this was not easy. Leaving a community that you have grown with, worked with, shared many joyful moments and grieved with too is difficult. We are appointed for six years and after 12 the accumulated wisdom suggests it is time to move, or be moved.

I knew a few months in advance that a particular Parish was to become vacant. The Parish Priest was a progressive Pastor who had led his Parish well for almost 20 years. He would retire in the New Year so the Parish was "advertised" some four months before this date. He convinced me to apply.

Before applying I looked for someone to apply for the Parish I would leave. I did not want to leave them "orphaned."

By happy chance this was "organised" despite some of my Priest friends talking about "done deals."

Saying good-bye

The second part of moving is to clean up, pack up and say good-bye. After 13 years I needed three months to clean up. Packing was left to the last couple of weeks, once Christmas was over and Parishioners began to drift away on holidays.

The many farewells were emotionally draining and I arrived in the new Parish extremely tired and hardly in a good condition to present a vibrant face. The new Parish was also in holiday mode and emotionally drained after farewelling their Pastor and his Pastoral associate. I hardly knew anyone, having only made about three prior visits, one to officially meet the school staff before they broke up for Christmas holidays.

Settling in

The third part of moving is to bite the bullet – to quickly unpack and to attempt to settle in (even though you keep wondering why you ever wanted to move). Before I could unpack I had to find a carpenter to build a bookcase along the height and length of one wall to house my books and get the internet connected.

Everything, naturally, was different: staff, Parishioners, Presbytery, Church, suburb, the ways things were done, the priorities and so on. For example, my former Presbytery encompassed the Parish office, as here, but here there seemed to be so many more people occupying more of the house for more of the day. The former lounge and dining room had been turned into meeting and consulting rooms, while the kitchen was for providing cups of tea rather than meals. The new church was also very different to the one we had refashioned in the beautiful Diamond Valley. I found a modern, low and indirectly lit building, allowing a heavy emphasis on digital technology (PowerPoint, etc) to influence the liturgy.

Moving forward

The fourth part of moving is to grow accustomed to the new. I know of some Parish communities wrecked by a Parish Priest moving in and immediately changing structures, personnel, procedures, etc.

It is not my Parish. It is the people's Parish. They have grown in it, shaped it, and formed it by their own lives and faith, some for the fifty years the Parish has been in existence. It is my task to live here with them, to get to know and love them slowly, and to work with them in finding ever new ways of living and celebrating our faith in an ever changing world. And eventually I might be able to do something with the kitchen and provide a different hospitality.



Fr Peter with from left to right: Ursula Hoey, Maria McKinnon and Frances North in the Parish grounds.

SUPERANNUATION

Introducing pensions

What is an Allocated Pension Income Stream?

An Allocated Pension gives you the flexibility to choose your own annual income. Members place lump sum superannuation amounts in their Allocated Pension accounts and select their investment option. Earnings accrue tax-free and are added to their accounts.

Members decide how much they want to receive as a regular pension payment (within legislated minimum annual limits). The pension amounts, net of tax, are transferred from their NCSF Allocated Pension accounts to their nominated bank accounts.

Allocated pension payments continue to be paid until the balance of their accounts reach zero or upon death.

What is a Transition to Retirement Income Stream?

Members aged 55-64 who have not retired from the workforce are able to access their superannuation through a non-commutable income stream.

A Transition Pension has all the same features of an allocated pension except that commutations (lump sum withdrawals) cannot be made until they retire permanently from the workforce or reach age 65.

Members transfer their superannuation accounts to their Transition Pension account and retain their investment options. Earnings accrue tax-free and are added to their accounts. An administration fee is deducted.

As Transition Pension can be transferred back to their superannuation accounts, NCSF must maintain, as part of the pension account records, details of the preservation status of various benefit components.

A Transition Pension will allow members who are still employed to increase their cash flow, facilitating salary sacrifice superannuation contributions or other investment decisions.

Anyone can join.

Friends and family can now join the NCSF for their superannuation or pension needs and enjoy the great benefits and features offered by the Fund.

If you would like to know more, call the Member Services Hotline on 1300 655 002, send your questions by fax to 03 9934 3465 or email ncsf@ccinsurances.com.au.

Celebrating 20 years of service

Over the past twenty years NCSF has accumulated member assets exceeding \$740 million for over 35,000 members and more than 2600 employers. The Fund has grown into a reliable and successful superannuation fund yet it is still able to retain its localised member focused.

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, we are very grateful for the chance to continue being a part of your lives. Whether it is through superannuation, pensions or both, it is the privilege of serving members and our participating employers that gives us great sense of pride and enjoyment.

	Allocated Pension Income Stream	Transition to Retirement Income Pension
Is there an entry fee?	No	No
What is the minimum initial deposit?	\$20,000	\$20,000
Will I be able to change my income each year?	Yes. Within Government legislated limit.	Yes. Within Government legislated limits.
How often will I receive payments into my bank account?	Payments can be monthly, quarterly, half yearly or annually.	Payments can be monthly, quarterly, half yearly or annually.
Can I choose how to invest my funds?	Yes. You are provided with a choice of eight investment options.	Yes. You are provided with a choice of eight investment options.
Will I be able to make lump sum withdrawals?	Yes. All you need to do is put your request in writing and the payment will be credited into your bank account.	No. Only when you have permanently retired from the workforce.
Is the Fund operated on a not for profit basis?	Yes	Yes

Important Note: The features of each option are the same except that you cannot withdraw lump sum payments from a Transition to Retirement Income Stream.

OUR PEOPLE



Peter's beautiful garden.



Peter's wife Mary and their dog Bailey's in the garden.



Peter Rush

General Manager

Peter's relationship with Catholic Church Insurances began almost 25 years ago when he worked for one of the company's major business partners, Munich Reinsurance. In January 1998, he joined Catholic Church Insurances and, when the General Manager of the time departed a year later, Peter "threw his hat into the ring" and was appointed to the role.

"I like to think of Catholic Church Insurances as an integral part of the Church in Australia, which happens to look after its insurance and other financial needs, rather than primarily an insurance company whose client happens to be the Catholic Church" Peter

"Our vision of 'Serving Church' is carefully considered and creates real obligations on all staff to work to this end."

says. "Our vision of 'Serving Church' is carefully considered and creates real obligations on all staff to work to this end."

This emphasis on being part of the community is what Peter believes underpins Catholic Church Insurances' success.

It is perhaps most visible in

the \$45 million plus that the company has returned to its Church shareholders and policyholders in the past 12 months, but its it also a fundamental part of how the company goes about even the most routine elements of its day-to-day business, including dealing with claims.

"Just about every claim will have some degree of grey area," says Peter. "If you are an insurance company primarily then you treat that area with a view to maximising your profit. If you are a part of the Church you look at how you can use it to assist the Church community. If that happens to cost a bit more money, then so be it, as long as it is fair to the rest of your clients and your shareholders."

When it comes to the Catholic Church Insurances team, Peter is full of praise and is grateful that the company is still of such a size that he can relate to people on a day-to-day basis.

"The company is blessed to have such dedicated and hard-working people," he says. "Often, I refer to the team as a family and, like most families, it is not without its ups and downs. But in the main, our staff enjoy their work, technically they are extremely competent and they bring with them daily, the sort of values which other managers only dream of".

With four adult children, two still living at home, family life, with all of its challenges, is very important to Peter. He and his wife Mary are keen gardeners and have been building a garden of more than an acre for the past four years. "I don't know if we will ever finish it!" Peter laments. When he can find the time, he also likes to hit the open road and head to country Victoria on his motorbike.

SPECIAL PEOPLE

Finding fullness of life

How many of us feel that we have answered our true calling? That we have chosen a lifestyle or career path that brings out our best self? In every corner of life and in every profession people question their choices and can be heard uttering the infamous words: if only I could have my time over....



Sr Mary Ryan hands the CVMA keys to new Executive Officer Sr Veronica McCluskie.

“If this message takes hold I believe there will be a whole different generation of Catholic adults one day. Adults who have made a proactive, informed choice about the vocation that they believe is right for them instead of just drifting into a lifestyle that may not lead them to discover their truest self, or realise their fullest potential,” Sr Mary Ryan.

Catholic Vocations Ministry Australia (CVMA) was founded in 1995 to broaden the understanding of vocations and encourage Catholics, young and old, to make an informed choice about their future.

Two Sisters have played important roles at CVMA. Josephite Sister, Mary Ryan, a foundation member and CVMA's first Executive Officer and Sr Veronica McCluskie, a Good Samaritan Sister, long-term member of CVMA's National Executive and the current Executive Officer. Both are passionate about vocational education and have spent much of their working lives dedicated to this issue.

“CVMA is committed to fostering a ‘vocations culture’ across Australia. Hopefully, this will enable people to make informed decisions about their future. We believe that so many never reach their full potential because they have never discovered the vocation that is right for them. They are round pegs in square holes,” says Sr Mary. “They have never found their niche.”

“There are many different options available under the umbrella of vocation,” she adds. “Marriage is a vocation, singleness is a vocation and so are priesthood and religious life as a sister, brother or priest. Reflecting the theology of the Second Vatican Council, CVMA promotes all vocations as equal, while proactively promoting religious life and priesthood as really viable, life-giving possibilities for some people.”

Sr Mary says she often likens the process of finding one's vocation to a major purchase like a new car. “You don't just buy the first one you see. You do your research,” she says. “Our life is the most precious gift we have and a lot of folk do not make an

informed choice about how we are going to invest it. If I can help even one person find their true vocation, I am a happy person.”

Now, fresh from an overseas sabbatical, Sr Mary is continuing her work in the area of vocations with the Sisters of St Joseph in Victoria. She is particularly excited about heading up a Melbourne World Youth Day pilgrimage group, which will be called ‘Mary MacKillop Melbourne’.

Sr Mary has handed the reins at CVMA, or the keys as you see in our photograph, to Sr Veronica McCluskie.

Sr Veronica's work in the area of vocations started in 1991 on Kiribati in the Central Pacific when young women stated to show an interest in Good Samaritan life. Eventually she became the director of initial formation in Kiribati. When she returned to Australia she took on the role of Director of Vocations Ministry for the Good Samaritan Sisters.

Sr Veronica has been involved with CVMA since her return to Australia and, as Executive Officer, will continue the important work of linking people in the field with the resources necessary to develop a vocations culture. World Youth Day and its associated gatherings and activities also sit high on her agenda as a major event for vocations awareness.

We will to follow up with Sr Veronica and CVMA in a future issue of Securitas. If you would like to know more about CVMA visit www.catholicovocations.org.au, send an email to office@catholicovocations.org.au or call 02 9630 5620.