



## President's Comment 5

4th March 2010

Dear Colleagues

Technology has provided us all with a range of communication tools that were unheard of in our teenage years, our early teaching careers and even the start of our principalship (for some!). New methods of communicating – text messaging, social networking sites on the internet such as facebook and bebo, and other sites, eg, you-tube – all have their uses but certainly they provide challenges in a school context.

The media are ready to pounce on issues they regard as newsworthy (read 'sensational') and I have often been asked to comment on school or teacher or student bullying related matters that have arisen via electronic means. There are a few points I think we need to consider on this complex issue:

- If staff or students are being 'attacked' on public websites by known people and your school is implicated (even if this occurs outside of school and school hours) then it would be prudent to take appropriate disciplinary action. We need to consider the requirement to be a good employer and to provide a safe emotional and physical environment for students and employees. Our legal advice supports this view.
- Have a board policy (yes, another one!) that states that disciplinary action can be taken against students or staff who use electronic media inappropriately and the school is implicated.
- Inform staff regularly about how their careers can be compromised if they have inappropriate messages or images attributed to them on the internet – think in terms of 'conduct unbecoming a teacher'.
- Does your school have a set of protocols for inter-staff messages via email, eg no bold letters (shouting), care about pushing 'reply to all', etc?

Undoubtedly there is a lot of good practice out there already on these issues and if you have developed suitable policies or procedures or general statements and are prepared to share them with colleagues, please forward them to Ros at the SPANZ office and we will make them available to members via our website.

Thanks to David Hodge at Rangitoto College who has initiated this and submitted an example of a sensible, concise policy on this issue.

Peter Gall  
President

### *Previous Comment*

#### **Comment 4 - 25.02.10**

Congratulating Patrick Walsh & Paul Daley elected unopposed to the positions of President and Vice President respectively.

#### **From the SPANZ Office**

Postal voting for the election of SPANZ Executive closes Tuesday 16th March 2010.

Symposium early bird registrations close 5th March 2010. Please fax your registration forms to 09 571 2244.

#### **Contact Us**

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