

Partnership turns teachers into students

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A partnership between the Archdiocese of Honiara and Diocese of Sale (Australia), has given Catholic teachers in Honiara and Auki the opportunity to fast-track their studies in order to gain a higher education.



Named “*Sodality Conference 2008*”, the intense three day workshop was held on 20-23 September at Don Bosco Technical School in Henderson. About 100 teachers from 25 schools in the Archdiocese of Honiara and Diocese of Auki attended. The workshop was facilitated by six highly qualified and motivated teachers from three schools from the Diocese of Sale in Country Victoria, Australia.

The facilitators included Dr. Caroline Smith, from Australian Catholic University (ACU), Andrea Berryman and Liz Simon from Trinity Primary School and Ian Butler, Jan Rankins and Malcolm Joseph from St Francis Xavier College.

Dr. Caroline Smith (ACU), said that “*...by learning together, sharing experiences and exploring the complexities of student and teacher well-being, leadership and good classroom practice, we all believe that the whole community will benefit.*”

Themed “*Supporting School Communities*”, the hands-on workshop covered an array of topics including Science, English, Mathematics, Leadership, Wellbeing and Religion. This wonderful partnership enables those involved the opportunity to obtain a credit for an undergraduate or postgraduate unit in education at Australian Catholic University. To be eligible for the credit, students must successfully fulfil a thorough two part assessment. This involves the submission of a journal, professional readings and article analysis, within the required word limit.

Jane Sau, an attendee of the workshop who is a Science teacher at St Joseph’s Tenaru, thoroughly enjoyed the sessions particularly due to the teaching style and provision of Microscience kits. Sourced from South Africa, Jane says the kits “*...made it so practical, simple and interesting to learn more about water testing, photosynthesis, soil science chromatography, osmosis and food testing.*”

As the workshop came to an end, Caroline Smith shared that “*...the Solomon Islanders...have given us the priceless gift of seeing how we are at once different and the same. Our cultural backgrounds may shape us in different ways, but our common humanity and vocation as teachers means we have riches to share, learn and bring to each other. This is the true meaning of partnership.*”

With the partnership being in its fifth year, we pray that the bond continues and strengthens for many years to come and we thank the facilitators and organisers for all their extraordinary efforts.