

# Grapevine

## NEW APP TO MAKE CONFESSION EASIER

'New horizons are now open that...stir our wonder at the possibilities offered by...new media.... I would like...to invite Christians, confidently and with an informed and responsible creativity, to join the network of relationships which the digital era has made possible.' So said Pope Benedict XVI in his World Communications Address last year. Taking his word to heart, Little iApps, based in Indiana in the United States, has launched *Confession*. According to the Little iApps website, '*Confession: A Roman Catholic App*, is Little iApps very first application...developed for Catholics who frequent the sacrament and those who wish to return.' Patrick Leinen from Little iApps said Bishop Kevin Rhoades, of the Diocese of Fort Wayne in Indiana, officially authorised the app for Catholics to use. US media outlets reported that the app could replace confession. Not so, according to the website. 'This app invites Catholics to prayerfully prepare for and participate in the Rite of Penance.' You still have to be absolved by a priest in the confessional.

## READ ALL ABOUT IT, WITH DAD



According to Katherine Wilson and Margot Prior, in 'Father involvement: the importance of paternal solo care' in the journal, *Early Child Development and Care*, fathers who spend significant time with their children feel their youngsters' wellbeing is improved and their own sense of worth rises. That's encouraging research for the Cudgong Learning Community, which this year is

providing 7,500 new books for primary school students and their fathers, through the Mudgee Dads Take Home Reading Project. The project encourages fathers and other male role models to become actively involved in their child's education by reading books with them every week. Gulgong Public School Principal and Mudgee Dads Take Home Reading Project Manager Alan Walker has witnessed the program's success at his school north of Mudgee since it was launched locally in 2009. 'Establishing a regular pattern of quality time a child spends with their dad has positive effects on the student's education, relationships and emotional development,' Walker says. Reports from many schools indicate reading levels are improving across the board. For example, last year every Kindergarten to Year 2 student at Hargraves Public School achieved above the regional benchmark, and Cudgong Valley Public School's Kindergarten reading results improved 20 per cent. A number of schools reported an increase in parent volunteers as well. Nineteen primary schools and 331 Year 2 students in the Mudgee area will participate in the project this year.

*Pictured, Gulgong Public School Assistant Principal Steven Haney and student Zane Chaffer at Dads Reading Day last November.*

## REFERENCES

Wilson, K. & Prior, M. (2009). *Father involvement: the importance of paternal solo care. Early Child Development and Care. 180(10): 1,391-1,405.*

## BAD NEWS FOR KIP MCGRATH

Kip McGrath Education Centres (KMEC) appointed liquidators to its subsidiary company Kip McGrath Institute of Business Australia (MIBA) in December after the Queensland Office of Higher Education decided not to recommend re-registration to the Queensland Minister for Education, Training and the Arts. Given that the supplementary education provider has spent

around \$6 million in the last three years on the purchase and restructure of MIBA, the decision would have come as something of a blow. KMEC is now seeking to raise US\$9 million after shareholders turned their noses up at a rights issue to raise \$3 million. KMEC had hoped to use \$475,000 of that \$3 million for repayment of convertible notes in MIBA. The rights issue raised only \$132,000.

## MANDATORY OR DISCRETIONARY?

The Law Reform Commission of Western Australia released its *Community Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 Discussion Paper* in February, recommending that low-risk and low-level juvenile sex offenders not be automatically subject to registration but be subject to the discretion of the sentencing court, taking into account the circumstances of the offence and the offender. The recommendation was made in the same month that the Bunbury Children's Court convicted three 16-year-old boys of underage sex offences. The 16-year olds pleaded guilty to consensual sexual acts with a girl older than 13 but younger than 16 years, which they filmed on a mobile phone and sent to others. The teenagers received intensive supervision orders and were automatically placed on the WA sex offender register and required to report their personal details to the police in line with current WA law. In the foreword to the discussion paper, Law Reform Commission Chair Mary Anne Kenny writes, 'The Commission has found a number of case examples that demonstrate serious concerns about the fairness of mandatory registration, particularly in the case of children.' The Commission's terms of reference required it to examine the application of the WA *Community Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004*, prompted by concerns that the WA sex offender registration scheme was unnecessarily capturing juvenile and other low-risk or low-level offenders.

*The Grapevine is written by Steve Holden, Editor of Teacher.*