



**T**ony Sanderson is the General Manager of the Catholic Development Fund (CDF) for the Diocese of Wollongong. Tony's relationship with Mater Dei is not just about business as he is a long time member of the Mater Dei Race Day committee.

**Q** How did you first become involved with Mater Dei?

**A** My first visit to Mater Dei in 1999 was on CDF development business. This first connection with Debbie Gates as Mater Dei's Director of Development has gained in strength ever since.

# SUPPORTER Q&A WITH TONY SANDERSON

**Q** What have you learnt since you began your connection with Mater Dei?

**A** Children are gifted to us to care for no matter what the cost. Each is uniquely blessed with the ability to make you laugh and cry. There is a reason the driveway out of Mater Dei is so long - it gives you time to stop laughing or crying, sometimes both at once, before you drive home to your own family.

**Q** The CDF has stayed loyal to the cause for some time. Why?

**A** 'Inclusion for all'. CDF as an agency of the Diocese sees the educational void Mater Dei fills for these special students. Our charter is to 'provide sustainable financial resources for our diocese' which Mater Dei is very much a part of.

**Q** Do you have a favourite story to tell about Mater Dei?

**A** I most certainly do. While accompanying ex-CEO/Principal Frank Pitt on a school tour, I was trapped into participating in a senior music class. Dragged to the front of the class I was handed the music to Christine Anu's 'My Island Home'. Not living up to the expectation of a certain young lady, I was politely given the lyrics to the song and told, "go home and learn them, because next time you visit I expect you to know them!" You guessed it, upon returning some time later, I found myself again before the senior music class performing a duet!

**Q** Have you performed in front of an audience before?

**A** Yes, I love musical theatre, an interest I share with my wife Rowena, children and extended family. In 2010 I had the chance to perform with my two sons in a local production of the musical 'Hot Shoe Shuffle'. Tapping with the boys after my 20 year absence from the stage was a real buzz.

**Q** If you could invite any special guests to dinner, who would they be?

**A** It would be to a family barbeque - Pope Francis, Barbra Streisand, Mark Knopfler and Lea Michele for my daughter.