I would like to start by thanking, on behalf of the School community, all our volunteers – from the Parents and Friends Association and the Old Michaelian Committee, to the many parents who act as Class Reps and in many other ways to support St Michael’s. As I said at the Volunteers Thank You Celebration in late November, it is our volunteers that really help make St Michael’s the school and the community that it is.

On your behalf, I wish to thank my fellow Board members for all they have done during 2015. It is an onerous obligation they accept, and the School concludes 2015 in a sound financial and governance position due to their commitment and expertise. In particular, I thank the Chairs of two key committees of the Board, Mr Andrew Eddy and Mr Jim Harrington, whose combined expertise and diligence has been critical to the successful development of The Commons.

Finally, and I think most importantly, I thank all our staff. I have highlighted on many occasions that our staff is the School's greatest asset; that they are the reason St Michael's remains the school of choice for so many families.

This year, the School’s leadership and operating model has been restructured to truly reflect a K–12 school, to gain the benefit for our students and staff of an approach to teaching, learning and caring that embraces the latest research in education and student development. There is no doubt that the new operating model will benefit our students and provide increased opportunities for our staff.

Having said that, it has required a material change in the current staff operating structure and in a range of leadership positions. Change is always difficult and the people most impacted have been our staff. While the Head of the School and the School Leadership Team have led and managed this change well, the willingness of the staff to embrace this material change should be recognised, and I thank them for their support in accelerating St Michael’s into a new, superior approach to teaching, learning and caring from K–12.

Of course a leading edge approach to K–12 teaching, learning and caring requires a true K–12 facility; a facility which provides leading edge capability in a range of disciplines and critically, a facility not only to be used by all students from K–12, but also one which will support interaction across all year levels; and finally a facility which will act as the glue for the School community. This is what The Commons will deliver to St Michael’s.

The Commons will be completed and ready for our students and the wider School community from the commencement of the 2016 academic year. The Commons has been eight years in the making; it was eight years ago that the Head of the School brought the concept of this facility, then called The Hub, to the Board. Since then, the School Leadership Team and the Board has refined, analysed, assessed, challenged and finally committed to The Commons.

To commit to The Commons, a $20 million expenditure for the School, the largest financial investment ever made by St Michael’s, the Board required confidence in the School’s future. Confidence in our future requires a deep understanding of the School’s foundation and values, strong educational and financial performance in its recent past, and focused but inspirational leadership.

Since 2000, St Michael’s has been led by Mr Simon Gipson. Under Simon, the School has prospered, growing its enrolment base to a sustainable level, investing in leading staff development programs, transforming its facilities, and remaining true to its foundation by the Community of the Sisters of the Church.

We talk of St Michael’s heroes, those passionate and committed individuals who have built and nurtured St Michael’s. Simon is, undoubtedly, a true St Michael’s hero. And so, when The Commons is formally opened on 22 April 2016, on behalf of the Board, I am very pleased to announce that it will be named ‘The Gipson Commons’. In naming The Gipson Commons, the Board also wished to recognise the significant contribution to the success of St Michael’s over the past 16 years by Mrs Sue Gipson.

* Taken from Mr Paul Orton’s Speech Night address on 9 December 2015.
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

By Paul Orton – continued

After nine years on the Board, I am stepping down at the start of 2016, and I am pleased to inform you that the Board has elected Mrs Fiona Mead as the next Chair of the Board. Fiona has extensive experience in governance and leadership, and is passionate about St Michael’s and the ongoing success of the School. I am very grateful to Fiona for accepting the position of Chair.

As I leave the Board, I again wish to thank all my fellow Board members, present and past, for their commitment to the School. In particular, I give thanks to Professor Gabriele Lakomski, who has been Deputy Chair of the Board during my time as Chair. Gabi, you have provided insightful guidance and advice and, dare I say, have been a wonderful foil as Deputy Chair.

To the School Leadership Team, it has been a privilege to work with you. I have learnt a great deal from each of you. May I also say publicly to the Head, Simon, it has been a joy working with you – sometimes stressful, sometimes challenging, but always exciting, rewarding and mutually respectful.

I would also like to take this opportunity to make some comments, not as the Chair of the Board, but as a parent of the School, albeit a past parent.

St Michael’s is a special school. I have said on many occasions that it is an academic school. But I think for many parents, this is a given. St Michael’s is a special school for all its non-academic attributes.

Our three sons embraced the wide range of activities available at St Michael’s – on the sporting field, on the stage, in the outdoors, amongst the many, many activities.

I recall one afternoon watching our second son play in an ACS football grand final and then the next evening play Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet. When he walked off the football field and off the stage, the hugs, the congratulations from his mates, male and female, were equally effusive and supportive. There was no distinction, no difference in the warmth or affection for his efforts as a footballer or an actor. That is a sign of a special school.

Our youngest son felt sufficiently confident at St Michael’s to sign up as the only boy in Dance Fusion in Years 7 and 8. It seems that he could indeed ‘move’, as in 2010 he led the Mitre House Year 12 team, the only all-boys team, to success in the A Grade Aerobics competition – but then in the same year he also played fullback for the 1st XVIII Football Team. As they say, diversity opens minds.

Each of our sons had the good fortune to tackle the Kosi to the Coast expedition – 21 days of walking, rafting and canoeing; a unique experience with their Year 11 peers. Our eldest son completed Kosi in 2002.

Despite having done little rafting since, during Easter this year, and some 13 years later, he guided three friends down the Mitchell River. It would seem a St Michael’s education lasts a lifetime!

At Speech Night in 2010, I sought to articulate what made St Michael’s a special school. The best I could do was to allude to a scene in the iconic Australian film, The Castle, in which the Federal Court judge asks the suburban lawyer which part and which clause of the Australian Constitution supported his argument. Frustrated, with little knowledge and recognising he was way out of his depth, the lawyer holds up the hefty tome and despairingly offers that: ‘It’s the vibe, your honour. It’s the vibe’.

So in 2010, I suggested it was the vibe that made St Michael’s special.

In drafting my address for Speech Night, I asked myself: ‘Can I define this better? Can I define what it is that makes St Michael’s special?’ I must say that I still feel somewhat like that fictional lawyer from The Castle. But watching our three boys grow into wonderful young men has provided an additional perspective; a perspective gained through time and their distance from the School.

This perspective suggests that the notion of the vibe remains true, but that the vibe is perhaps better represented as the resonance from the bass part in a music score; the left hand on the piano, if you like. And I think that as St Michael’s we all hear the same bass part, and we understand that it is composed from our foundation, our heritage, our values, our common purpose.

That we, as a School, have this clarity is special.

But why St Michael’s is really special, is that every student has the capacity to play their own unique, personal melody over this bass line. And it is this diversity of melodies, this multitude of different and varied tunes, blending with that common, resonant bass that makes St Michael’s the special school that it is.

Jane and I certainly hear and feel the diversity of those melodies in our three sons. We have an architect in Europe, a doctor in Sydney and an actor everywhere – three motivated, articulate, compassionate global citizens; three great products of a St Michael’s education. And yes, we know that we have been fortunate to be a St Michael’s family.

I wish all of our students every success writing and playing their own melody during their time at St Michael’s and beyond.

MR PAUL ORTON
Chair of the Board of Directors
There are only a few learning institutions in this country that can boast such a long history as St Michael’s; fewer still can also claim an unbroken connection with the original site on which they were founded.
And, throughout the course of this year, as we have celebrated 120 years as a school, we have had many opportunities to acknowledge the significant events and people in our story who have shaped and informed the community we are today.

Sadly, though, this year we lost two of the heroes of our St Michael’s narrative: Sister Scholastica CSC and Mrs Sandra Matheson. We farewelled Schol in February and Sandra in October.

Schol came into a very different world in 1912 and her journey on this earth took her through a century of extraordinary change. When Schol was born, Marconi was still tapping out his Morse; radio, talking films, television and the internet were a long way in the future. The nation-state of Australia was only 11 years old. The world was still two years off the industrialised slaughter of the First World War.

Yet from those small beginnings, against a historical and technological backdrop so different from our own in the 21st century, Schol, in her unique, infectious, and energetic way, played a significant role in positively shaping so many others’ lives in the 20th century through her agency as a pivotal educational reformer in Australia.

St Michael’s would not exist today were it not for the wisdom and vision that Schol, as Sister Principal, brought to the School during the 1960s and 1970s. Schol re-engineered the campus with an ambitious and strategic building program that saw the construction of the Senior School Quad and Vicars Foote Hall and which, by necessity, involved the acquisition of a number of properties in Redan Street.

She was also an entrepreneurial educator who ensured that the School survived and then thrived through a period of significant challenge.
It is no accident that we have badged our online learning platform ‘SchoL.’ After all, given that Schol innovatively led St Michael’s into the second half of the 20th century, it is fitting that she symbolically leads our charge into 21st century learning.

Our other hero, Sandra Matheson, was not only my loyal and indispensable personal assistant for 14 years, but she also worked for my predecessor Tony Hewison throughout his 20-year tenure, and for his predecessor, Margaret Thomas. In total Sandra served St Michael’s for 38 years, nearly two thirds of her life.

Alongside diligent attention to her role, Sandra also had a passion for the history of the School, particularly within the broader context of the history of St Kilda, and, thanks to her endeavours, we now enjoy a comprehensive record of the provenance of the buildings on the School site and the stories of the people who lived there.

It was Sandra, for example, who discovered that Boz, Charles Dickens’s illustrator, actually lived in the 1850s for a time in Marlton, the mansion in which the School was founded and which we still use for teaching and learning today.

Sandra’s contribution to the School will be recognised through the naming of the Sandra Matheson Archives in The Gipson Commons, and through the presentation of the Sandra Matheson Prize for English which was awarded for the first time at this year’s Speech Night.

The narrative of any school is created by the people within; Sandra and Schol have been significant characters in our story.

* Taken from Mr Simon Gipson’s Speech Night address on 9 December 2015.
Yet as we reflect on 2015, and the contributions that both Schol and Sandra made to our St Michael’s dreaming, we also need to consider other significant national and global events that have characterised the year: the centenary of the nation-defining events of Gallipoli; the elevated concerns about the impact of climate change; misspent political entitlements and revolving doors at The Lodge; the horrific brutality of attacks in Paris, Beirut and Kenya and the rise of the Islamic State; and the associated refugee crisis in Europe.

Unsurprisingly, we have also seen the increasing frequency of terms to define this sense of global instability. Post-9/11, the US military started to describe geo-political turbulence as VUCA: volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. The acronym VUCA and the contemporary world to which it refers now infects all areas of study from commerce to technology.

The journalist Thomas Friedman notes in *The World is Flat* that a major reason for VUCA lies in the rapid way with which information and communications technology has brought the world closer together, but also permitted an easy efflorescence of disparate perspectives, politics and identities.

As we have become more global, we have also become more regionalised. The centripetal forces of technology towards uniformity are counteracted by the centrifugal impetus towards individuality.

In response, one way of attempting to deal with VUCA has been to corral uncertainty and ambiguity by imposing rule-bound constancy and certainty in our lives and expecting uncomplicated, absolute answers to all questions. This is reflected in the way in which some politicians and the media reduce multifaceted social, ideological or geo-political issues to three word slogans, two dimensional adjectives, or singular, emotionally charged labels.

Simple certainty may have a seductive draw and it explains this rise in fundamentalist thinking across the right and left of politics, a broad swathe of religions, and in the tabloid media. But, as the 20th century satirist H.L. Mencken once said: ‘For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple and wrong.’

Complex issues require complex responses. And, as Matthew Syed claims in his recent work *Black Box Thinking*, the world is much more complicated than we ever acknowledge.

Human existence is messy and convoluted. The world is just not black and white, nor (gratifyingly) is it 50 shades of grey, but a broad spectrum of vibrant colours.

Writing during the Arab spring of 2011, the contemporary Syrian poet, Ali Ahmad Said Esber, writing under the pseudonym Adonis, asserted that: ‘I’m against an ideology based on a singleness of ideas.’ The role of the richness and linguistic power of poetry, he says, is ‘to diffuse perfume against ignorance and fundamentalism’.

What he is suggesting is that ambiguity and complexity should be embraced; people should be permitted their differences. Countries and culture should have their flavours, their variations, and their religions. Any attempt by one to impose a singular ideology, to insist on doctrinal conformity, to demand an absolute adherence, to be unbending, to deny questions, is to be abhorred.

We should respect difference, not condemn it; we should celebrate heterogeneity; not eliminate it. As a wise authority once suggested, diversity does open minds.

Hence, we need to be tolerant and accepting, nimble and adaptive, and ultimately dynamically responsive to the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world around us.

Yet, almost paradoxically, we should also hold fundamental beliefs predicated on the importance and sanctity of each individual and the unique contribution they bring to the world.

When we reflect on the 120-year history of our school, it is this central credo that has guided and shaped us, captured of course in our oft-repeated mantra that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity, respect, care and compassion.

And these fundamentals are embodied most visibly in the central figures of our St Michael’s narrative – heroes like Schol and Sandra. Both, in their own way, were models for women in leadership – in Schol’s case, long before the term was coined; they both exemplified faith in action; they really were ones for the ages.
ENROLMENTS AND ATTENDANCE

- The number of students enrolled at St Michael’s in 2015 averaged 1305, with 481 students in the Junior School and 824 in the Senior School.
- Gender ratios across the whole school were 53% boys and 47% girls.
- The average student attendance rate for each year level (excluding students in Margaret Thomas House, our early learning centre) was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year level</th>
<th>Attendance rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>96.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>98.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>97.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>97.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>98.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>96.40%</td>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>96.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>95.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>94.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>94.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>94.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>94.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>92.85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A total of eight Open Mornings were held in 2015, with approximately 458 families in attendance across the year. In addition to the School’s scheduled Open Mornings, the Admissions Team conducted more than 170 private tours throughout the year for prospective parents. The School continues to improve the content and format of Open Mornings to meet the expectations of prospective parents.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

JUNIOR SCHOOL

This year perseverance, effort and attention to detail were central to our learning in Margaret Thomas House to Year 6. Building resilience as part of this process was integral to each student’s pathway to achievement.

Even the most creative ideas need analysis and evaluation if they are to add value. Sustained effort and perseverance are closely linked to achievement, and any global innovations that have been embedded and sustained have gone through a rigorous process.

The students in Botanica explored rainbows, and through their enthusiasm for learning, experimentation and observation reached an understanding of light refraction well beyond their years. This abstract concept was investigated in depth, and the commitment and attention to detail demonstrated was extraordinary. In Floris, the children learnt about emotions and self-regulation through the Zones of Regulation. Learning to name and manage these zones which we all experience is a key to achievement in learning and in life.

Language and behaviours associated with the zones were woven throughout the learning experiences with an aim to be in the ‘green zone’, a calm state of alertness. The children enjoyed persisting with strategies to achieve this as often as possible. Arbor wrestled with a big concept – the exploration of leadership. They enjoyed writing to Mr Gipson, garnering his understanding of leadership and the positive attributes a leader needs to have to influence others. The children in Silvae looked outside of themselves and focused on others, too. Their understanding of mindfulness, focus and concentration was apparent in many ways. Strategies to elevate their own and others’ wellbeing were empathetic, expansive and innovative. These skills developed in Margaret Thomas House provide a strong emotional and social foundation for future learning and interactions.
The wonders of the Year 4 inquiry into animals and the children’s meticulous attention to detail as they created an animal mask was quite inspiring. The process included breadth of research and data gathering, which coalesced into detailed learning, persistence, resilience and the important balance of autonomy and teamwork.

High expectations are held for the Year 5 students as they grow and mature, building their self-belief and self-image. An important aspect of this is the Year 5 Sport program, which builds on their physical education in the younger years. The combination of skill building, teamwork and responsibility enables each student to represent their school as strong, capable and caring ambassadors. This is both an opportunity and a challenge, and beyond the St Michael’s gates they experience greater diversity and understanding of difference. Learning to win and lose with grace and dignity, and treating everyone with dignity, respect, care and compassion whatever their sporting ability, is a very authentic learning experience.

Year 6 students shone this year on stage in Suessical Jr. After weeks of hard work and hours of rehearsal, they gave a stunning performance. They were so proud of themselves because they had worked hard, struggled at times, and persevered together. The expectations for coursework remained high with projects, persuasive essays and other assessments also due. The students will always remember the excitement of those nights of stage, achievements at School carnivals, Exodus and the ongoing expectation of class learning outcomes. Above all, they will remember that they did it!

Learning that the greatest rewards come from hard work, effort, perseverance and sometimes failure is such an important element of each student’s wellbeing and academic achievement. 2015 has been a year to savour.
SENIOR SCHOOL

St Michael’s is an academic school. This message can sometimes be lost in the array of exceptional performances and diverse achievements of our students as they engage in the rich co-curricular programs that are, in many ways, the hallmark of a St Michael’s experience.

It is important to acknowledge the part that these experiences play in the enhancement of academic success and in the development of confident and self-aware learners. But it is also important to recognise the individual successes achieved by the commitment of students and staff. For us, academic success is measured by the individual stories of the students who outperform expectations and who leave the School with a confident and realistic plan for the next stage in their learning journeys.

At the beginning of 2015, we delighted in the perfect score of 99.95 achieved by our 2014 Dux of the School, who also received a Premier’s VCE Award. Although this achievement is not to be underestimated, there are many other stories of success that do not attract the same press. We continue to encourage and support our students to undertake challenging courses in VCE and maintain enrolment figures in higher-level Mathematics, Languages and Sciences of up to double the state average.

Many students gain access to courses by achieving study scores in prerequisite studies in these learning areas. In reflecting on the 2014 Year 12 cohort’s performances over their years at St Michael’s, we see a threefold increase in the number of students ranked in the top 10% of the state when compared with their NAPLAN performance as Year 9 students. Of the cohort, 97% received a first-round tertiary offer of their choice.

There is always room for improvement! 2015 has also seen an increase in the support provided to our senior students with the introduction of study skills programs and the extension of the Headstart and revision programs for our Year 12 students. A new initiative by the School, ‘100 Days to Success’, was also introduced to assist our graduating students with their final months of secondary school. Even the parents have been involved with an outstanding turnout at the Year 11 study skills session for parents. We are also pleased with the take-up of many of the new curriculum offerings in VCE. Year 11 students of 2016 will be undertaking Philosophy and Ancient History as new additions to our already extremely broad VCE offerings. We have also been accredited as one of the first schools able to offer VCE on a Northern Hemisphere timetable. This will enable our Advanced Mathematics students to spread their final VCE exams over three exam periods and give them more flexibility in managing their workload during their final two years of secondary school. Should this initial trial prove successful, we intend to offer further opportunities for our able students to access other studies in this way with the same advantages as our Mathematics students will enjoy.

This year has been a year of anticipation as The Gipson Commons rises from the ashes of Vicars Foote Hall, and staff have been deeply involved in planning for this amazing new opportunity. The building is rich with technology that will enable greater flexibility for learning. There will be multiple ways in which the classroom can be opened and shared via recording, live streaming or the participation of larger audiences. Student work will be more visible while underway with the open plan and glass walls, particularly throughout the senior science areas.

A small number of students have been trialling activities in robotics and programming which will be rolled out to classes and enthusiasts utilising the physics area and surrounding spaces. We will also see many of the School’s clubs begin to operate in The Gipson Commons, and groups such as COSMOS, Chess Club and Public Speaking Club will operate within the new spaces. This will also enable these activities to be open to younger students in our first truly K-12 environment. The range of programs to be offered includes Maker Space, programming activities, research guidance, SchoL assistance, video and multimedia, wider reading, electronics and technology activities. This will involve staff stepping into and out of activities in a more organic and less traditional way.
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: NAPLAN

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for all Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in Australia. NAPLAN tests provide a snapshot of students’ achievements relative to national benchmarks and national statistics.

In 2015, St Michael’s performed consistently above the state mean (average) in 18 out of 20 NAPLAN testing areas, as the scores shown in the following graphs indicate. (Scores for 2014 are also given for the purpose of comparison.)

LITERACY AND NUMERACY BENCHMARKS

This table shows the proportion of St Michael’s students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 who met the NAPLAN benchmarks in reading, writing, spelling and numeracy in 2015, together with the percentage change in these data from 2014.

Note: The NAPLAN benchmarks represent the ‘minimum suggested standard’ in the five assessment areas, while the graphs to the right show average achievement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-3%)</td>
<td>(-1%)</td>
<td>(+1%)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>97%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>(-1%)</td>
<td>(+1%)</td>
<td>(+6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-3%)</td>
<td>(-1%)</td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>(+2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Punctuation</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-)</td>
<td>(-1%)</td>
<td>(+1%)</td>
<td>(+1%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-3)</td>
<td>(-1)</td>
<td>(+1)</td>
<td>(+2%)</td>
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VCE RESULTS – CLASS OF 2015

At the heart of St Michael’s lies the belief that a school of quality and excellence provides a rich and comprehensive learning environment to ensure that when students complete their time at St Michael’s, they do so confident in the knowledge of who they are and what they are good at, and imbued with the skills, values and attributes that will enable them to be contributing citizens in whatever communities they choose to live as adults.

St Michael’s students have achieved another outstanding academic year, following the release of their Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) results on 14 December 2015. Of the Class of 2015, 150 students undertook the full VCE and 147 applied for an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank, which is used by tertiary institutions to determine who will receive places in higher education courses).

In 2015:

- 52% of students received an ATAR score of 80 or higher (placing them in the top 20% of students in Victoria)
- 33% of students received an ATAR score of 90 or higher (placing them in the top 10% of students in Victoria)
- 19% of students received an ATAR score of 95 or higher (placing them in the top 5% of students in Victoria)
- 3% of students received an ATAR score of 98 or higher (placing them in the top 2% of students in Victoria)
- 19% of students received a study score of 40 or above
- 98% of students who applied for an ATAR were offered first-round higher education places.

2015 has been a magnificent year in VCE performances at St Michael’s with a range of student achievement, reflected by the fact that one-third of the cohort achieved ATARs of 90 or better, and more than half the cohort had an ATAR of 80 or better. It is also a testament to the wonderful work by our teaching staff, who continue to go above and beyond in supporting every student during their VCE studies.

Of particular note is the strong scores achieved across a range of studies, including study scores of 40 and above for 100% of our Dance students, 56% of our Product Design and Technology students, 50% of our Arts students, 41% of our Biology students, and more than a third of both our History: Revolutions and Physical Education students.

The high level of results across the curriculum is a true reflection of the diversity of interests and abilities of St Michael’s students. When we look at the spread over the past five or six years of the subjects in which students have excelled and scored perfect 50s, studies from English, Mathematics and Japanese to Legal Studies, Business Management, Biology and Food Technology have continued to be successful.

St Michael’s continues to encourage students to excel in areas of their passion and choice. It’s not just about channelling them into a narrow, limited stream of subjects; this is demonstrating the breadth of possibility for students at St Michael’s.

We are very proud of this year’s results and congratulate all Year 12 students on their personal achievement. VCE success is their passport to a range of opportunities beyond St Michael’s, and preparation for this is the School’s fundamental obligation.

We congratulate our Dux of the School, Kate O’Hara, who achieved an ATAR of 99.45.

There were three perfect scores of 50, achieved by the following students in the following studies:

- English – India Jilly (12M)
- History: Revolutions – Liam Price (12B)
- Software Development – undisclosed.
We also congratulate two of our Year 12 students for being awarded a prestigious Premier’s VCE Award – Claudia Conley for her studies in Dance and Vincent Lowe for his studies in IT Software Development – as well as Lydia Ganci and James Crozier, who were selected to participate in Top Class Theatre Studies and Top Class Drama, respectively, as part of the VCE Season of Excellence program. James was also then selected to perform at Top Acts in May 2016 after a successful Top Class routine.

Each year, St Michael’s students continue to show passion and diversity in the fields of further study they choose to pursue. The graduate year of 2015 was no exception, with the courses chosen including a variety of single and double degrees. Some students also chose to defer to either do a GAP year, travel or enter into the workforce.

Many students in our 2015 cohort have been accepted into some remarkable courses and institutions:

- Claudia Conley is studying a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Dance) at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA)
- Maverick Newman moved to Perth to commence his studies of a Bachelor of Arts (Musical Theatre) at the Western Australian Academy of the Performing Arts (WAAPA)
- Rosie Lieschke, who was accepted into the Fireworks Art and Design Gallery’s Bright Young Things exhibition in early 2016, is studying Product Design and Engineering at Swinburne University
- Lija Anderson is studying a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Dance) at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERTIARY OFFERS BY COURSE TYPE 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course type</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society and Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture and Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and related areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERTIARY OFFERS BY DESTINATION 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destinations</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Melbourne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monash University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swinburne University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deakin University</td>
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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

OUR COMMUNITY

The School has a long history of volunteering in the community. Our Community Engagement programs inform and educate students, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society. In 2015, we continued our commitment to help those less fortunate, and raise awareness of key issues, both in our local community and beyond.

- The 2015 Community Action Team (CAT) were proudly committed to providing rich experiences and events to support the numerous charities for our Community Action Days. ‘Together we can make a difference’ was again the focus for all students to authentically believe in and strive for. The CAT was very selective, and investigated the charities thoroughly to ensure we had sound reasons as to why we would support them. This process enabled all students to take ownership of the Community Action Days. Charities and causes supported throughout the year included World Vision, the Leukaemia Foundation, the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, the RSPCA, the Cancer Council and the Starlight Children’s Foundation.

- The Environmental Action Group (EAG) worked hard to not only contribute to our environment, but also to raise awareness. Together the group brainstormed many ideas to improve St Michael’s ecological footprint, and created posters, presented at assembly and planned initiatives to share these concepts with the Junior School. A ‘Waste Free Wednesday’ was held, encouraging students to go a day producing little to no waste from their lunch and snacks. The Octavius Brown Kitchen Garden was well-attended throughout the year, with students taking part in gardening activities and caring for the chickens. The School celebrated World Tree Planting Day by planting new plants around the School and providing an opportunity for Prep to Year 2 students to plant their own seedlings and take ownership for facilitating growth. A ‘switch-off’ day was also held in November when staff and students turned all electrical appliances off for the afternoon.

- It was a remarkable year for the Senior School in its community action endeavours. The Merry Month of May launched with a music video featuring St Michael’s staff – including Mr Gipson – singing and rapping to promote the month’s aims. What followed was a month-long series of events to support four important charities: the Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund, Heart Kids, One Girl and the Leukaemia Foundation. The Year 10 ACTION students also chipped in with their own charity drive, raising more than $3000 for the Oaktree Foundation. As a result of the month-long activities, a record $18,605 was raised. The five House-led Community Action Days were remarkably successful, with our students supporting the ‘Close the Gap’ campaign, the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre, the St Kilda Gatehouse Foundation; Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders), and CanTeen. The Years 7–9 student leaders met regularly, creating clear plans and strategies across a number of areas to support environmental issues within the School, World Vision’s 40 Hour Famine campaign, and Pay a Sack Forward. In June, a group of 16 students and three staff travelled to Cambodia for a pilot immersion project with the aim of establishing ongoing connections with groups in Cambodia while providing our students with insights into development issues in a country with a dark and complex recent history.

St Michael’s has a key strategic aim to be an endorsed employer of choice and an exemplary professional learning organisation. Our focus on our people is a key factor for the School’s success, as research shows this has the greatest impact on student outcomes. The School has four key achievement areas in relation to our people:

- Proactive and innovative management of current and future staffing requirements to optimise individual, team and organisational strengths.

- The provision of responsive and meaningful terms and conditions of employment which clearly reflect the value of staff and appropriately reward and recognise quality.

- A holistic growth, development and wellbeing framework for all staff to optimise their strengths and ability to contribute positively and productively to the St Michael’s community.

- Recognition of learning and achievements.
St Michael’s has had a number of key initiatives to support the achievement of these goals, including the Leading to Learn Project, which resulted in the implementation of a K–12 organisational structure in January 2016; Project 2020 – the School’s workforce planning strategy; Ziebell – our internal professional learning program; VIBE – our health and wellbeing strategy; and our Coaching framework.

The School was successful in being one of only 90 organisations Australia-wide to receive the Workplace Gender Equality Agency Employer of Choice citation for 2015 – the fourth consecutive year the School has received this award.

In 2015:

- Approximately 53% of staff (teaching and educational support) held Bachelor Degrees, 21% held Master’s Degrees and 12% held other higher education qualifications.
- The staff engagement survey shows 73% of our staff are highly engaged with the School.
- Approximately 84% of the teaching staff were retained from 2014 to 2015, while the overall retention rate for staff was 81%.
- The average attendance rate for teaching staff was 97.4%.
- The School invested an average of $800 on professional development for each member of teaching staff, and $400 for each member of educational support staff. In addition, the School supports teaching staff with Professional Learning Leave.

‘This year, we celebrated a wide range of achievements across all administrative departments.’

ADMISSIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Admissions and Community Engagement Department used this anniversary year to promote 120 years of St Michael’s history, innovations and achievements to the School community and general public. During this special year, we:

- achieved enrolment stability, in a marketplace where the independent school sector is declining overall
- maintained gender balance across all year levels, expressing our coeducational philosophy
- made the strategic decision to increase Years 7 and 8 enrolments from 2016
- comprehensively reviewed and reorganised Open Mornings, increasing service to prospective parents and ensuring impressive attendance
- launched successful advertising campaigns on topics including The Gipson Commons, scholarships, and Year 7 enrolments.

We also increased our presence across many areas, including:

- Digital advertising – generating increased traffic and enquiries while reaching different audiences
- eCommunications – we have improved our service to prospective parents by distributing more personalised communications (including eNewsletters and online surveys)
- Social media – increased focus on community engagement, including our Twitter account
- Parent information evenings – new Years 4, 5 and 6 parent information evenings have presented educational achievements and personal journeys
- Media coverage – with increased positive publicity across multiple outlets, particularly The Age
- Quality publications – including M News, The Michaelian, and the Prospectus
- Anniversary celebrations – with notable events and initiatives including the 120th celebration concert and Gala Ball, as well as weekly historical updates in our Community Newsletter
- Increased community and alumni engagement – including eight reunions, career counselling, archive sessions and student mentoring
- Fundraising – The Commons Appeal continued, with strong support for the ‘Buy a Brick/Paver’ initiative.
FINANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

2015 was a momentous year for St Michael’s, evidenced by the enormous amount of endeavour and planning undertaken towards the culmination of The Gipson Commons building, the largest revitalisation and construction process in the School’s history.

The School was also successful in achieving the following key deliverables:

• Conclusion of the School-wide landscaping upgrade
• Completion of the St Michael’s Masterplan – a document which will provide the pathway for the development of the School over the next 20 years.

2015 was also a year of diligent planning and preparation for the School’s future by:

• Embedding the new K–12 Operational Model within the School’s finance, compliance and operational structures. This process included ongoing work restructuring and reforecasting of the School’s long-range financial model in conjunction with rolling out a change to the School’s auditing firm.
• Major focus and improvement on the Emergency Management Committee with multiple emergency drills and procedures conducted throughout the year.
• Major emphasis placed on the restructuring of the Occupational, Health and Safety Committee across the year. This saw the creation of a more effective committee with greater definition of roles and responsibilities, in particular highlighting how these will be tied into the new K–12 structure.

The School is proud of the accomplishments achieved throughout the year – a fitting way to mark the launch of our innovative teaching and learning facility.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

2015 AND 2014 FINANCIALS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015 $</th>
<th>2014 $</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>39,294,342</td>
<td>38,848,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee benefit expenses</td>
<td>23,208,135</td>
<td>22,626,253</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depreciation and amortisation expenses</td>
<td>2,032,373</td>
<td>2,090,180</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property and rental expenses</td>
<td>1,996,002</td>
<td>2,224,347</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational services expenses</td>
<td>1,906,544</td>
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<td>Administration expenses</td>
<td>1,142,675</td>
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<td>Marketing expenses</td>
<td>755,439</td>
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<td>Travel and vehicle expenses</td>
<td>1,057,466</td>
<td>937,553</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance costs</td>
<td>484,853</td>
<td>191,388</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other personnel expenses</td>
<td>332,133</td>
<td>328,047</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other expenses</td>
<td>2,824,708</td>
<td>2,468,917</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surplus before tax</td>
<td>3,554,014</td>
<td>4,209,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus for the year</td>
<td>3,554,014</td>
<td>4,209,509</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* It is noted that the 2014 surplus included a one-off non-cash item of approximately $857K in respect of the derisking of the investment portfolio. Therefore, the actual operating surplus for 2014 was approximately $3.352 million.
PEOPLE AND STRATEGY

The People and Strategy Department’s key focus is attracting, retaining and sustaining quality staff. The Leading to Learn Project has been ongoing, and the People and Strategy team has been working with stakeholders to better explore the possibilities of a true K–12 school. The new leadership structure will be implemented in 2016.

We have continued working on Project 2020, with a focus on succession planning. We have also streamlined our recruitment processes and introduced a survey to better understand how we can support new staff.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

VIBE, the School’s health and wellbeing initiative, continues to support staff. Nearly half the staff participated in the Global Corporate Challenge, encouraging them to take at least 10,000 steps a day over 100 days. This program also introduced an employee assistance program, activities and health promotions.

The Staff Engagement Survey ran for a third year, with staff participation of 78% and an engagement rating of 73%. The team worked with different areas of the School to develop plans for increasing engagement.

PROPERTY AND MAINTENANCE

2015 was a milestone year for property, with The Gipson Commons building nearing completion. As the largest construction project in the School’s 120-year history, The Gipson Commons will provide both students and staff with the foundation for 21st-century learning. 2015 commenced with the revitalisation of the pool and gym facilities, and concluded with the beginning of a landscaping plan and new oval.

Finally, 2015 has been notable for the completion of the School’s Masterplan – a document which will provide the pathway for the development of the School over the next 20 years. Staff and student learning environments are central.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

Accompanying the Masterplan has been the completion of a five-year vision for ICT, with a focus on readily adapting to new technologies through nimble planning.

This form of adaption results in a large investment in discrete infrastructure (cabling, servers and wireless networks), enabling the School to ‘clip on’ new technologies when available. This approach differs markedly from others in the sector, who often focus on branded technologies with the risk of rapid product obsolescence.

THANKING OUR COMMUNITY

As we do every year, it is fitting that we pause to acknowledge all members of our broader School family who have given so much to ensure that we continue to thrive as a leading learning community.

I would like to recognise the committed and enterprising endeavours of the Parents and Friends Association who, once again, have kept our parent body connected through a variety of functions, events and possibilities for engagement with the School. I particularly thank PFA President Mr Michael Avery, the PFA Committee, Class Reps and all parents and friends of the School for their service in 2015.

Our Old Michaelian Committee has also provided many opportunities for our alumni to maintain their connection with the School. Through their archiving project, the Old Michaelians have also been actively involved in ensuring that we protect our rich heritage by reorganising and cataloguing our extensive collection of documents, photographs and memorabilia. In 2016, their extensive effort will take pride of place in The Gipson Commons in the Sandra Matheson Archives. I thank most sincerely all members of the committee who have provided valuable advice, guidance and support in ensuring that we continue to sustain links with our alumni, whilst also providing practical service in preserving our history.

If managing the external demands of a VUCA world are an onerous requirement of my role, they are more so for our Board of Directors. We are fortunate to have such a committed Board who gives generously of their time and their expertise to ensure that the School is rigorously governed and financially robust. Despite the demands of their professional lives beyond St Michael’s, they have provided unqualified support and guidance.

I am deeply grateful for the work of all Board members, especially the Chair, Mr Paul Orton. This year, Paul steps down after five successful years as Chair, leading the School through significant, transformational change. On behalf of the School community, I formally and publicly acknowledge all that he has done so unstintingly on behalf of us all.
THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

I also wish to recognise the work of all staff members at the School. As I so often assert, it is my firmly held belief that everyone who works at St Michael’s plays their particular part, no matter what their role, in providing the best possible learning environment for the students in our care. Each and every member of staff is integral in ensuring that we authentically achieve the quality and excellence for which we strive.

I would like to acknowledge the dedicated engagement of the School Leadership Team – Mrs Annabelle Knight, Associate Head of the School (Learning and Innovation)/Head of Junior School; Mr Tim Dornin, Head of Teaching and Learning; Ms Clare Murphy, Director of People and Strategy; Mrs Bo Rutecki, Director of Admissions and Community Engagement; Mr Scott Feehan, Director of Business and Corporate Secretary; and Mr Gerard Houlihan, Deputy Head of the School. They are a diverse and talented collaborative group who share a passionate commitment to teaching and learning at St Michael’s.

In 2016 we become a genuinely K–12 school, with a leadership structure to match. As a consequence, Mrs Knight assumes the role of Associate Head of the School (Innovation and Learning) after 11 years as Head of Junior School. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Mrs Knight’s leadership of the Junior School over that time, which has brought our primary years learning program international recognition.

I would also wish to highlight five long-standing members of staff who conclude their time at St Michael’s.

Mr Ash Abdou, Director of Learning (6–8), initially joined the School in 2005 on a one-year contract, before returning in 2007 to assume an ongoing role teaching Mathematics. Mr Abdou has contributed much through his focus on middle years learning as we have worked towards our K–12 vision. He leaves us to assume the role of Head of Mathematics at a prominent Queensland independent school.

I would like to also acknowledge the commitment of Mr Brendan Cian, who joined the School in 2001 as an English and Geography teacher, and who has been Co-Head of Hughes, Acting Dean of Pastoral Care and Students and, most recently, Community Action Coordinator. Brendan leaves us to assume new professional opportunities at an independent school closer to home.

Mr Ed Kostraby, Head of Library in the Senior School, finishes at the end of 2015 after nearly 18 years of service to the School. Mr Kostraby leaves us to pursue a portfolio of retirement options, including doctoral studies that bring together two of his passions: his Ukrainian heritage and the cultural centrality of libraries.

Mrs Leesa Gallard also completes her time at St Michael’s in 2015 after 20 years with the School, most notably as the Great Barrier Reef Project Coordinator for the last 13 years – a program with which she has been directly involved since its inception in 2000. During her lengthy connection with the School, Mrs Gallard also served as Co-Head of Mitre House and Dean of Staff.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge our Wellington Street crossing attendant, Mr Fred Fitzgerald, who for more than 20 years has assured our safety at what, at times, can be a challenging journey, and who ends his lengthy service to the School in 2015.

I also take this opportunity to thank the other members of staff who are about to conclude their time with us. I hope that your experiences at St Michael’s have been professionally rich and personally rewarding, and wish you well in the next stage of your careers.

And so we reach the end of the 2015 school year and look to all that 2016 holds for the St Michael’s community: a year when we will finally see The Gipson Commons open for business; a year when we realise the promise of flourishing as a true K–12 school. I look forward to seeing you again next year as we experience the continuing development of the St Michael’s story and as we nimbly and dynamically adapt to the complex, changing world around us.

MR SIMON GIPSON
Head of the School
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MR PAUL ORTON
Chair, Board of Directors
Commenced 26 April 2007

PROF GABRIELE LAKOMSKI
Deputy Chair, Board of Directors
Commenced 22 November 2000

MS SARAH DAVIES
Chair, Marlton Advisory Committee
Commenced 4 April 2011, retired 13 August 2015

MR ANDREW EDDY
Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee
Commenced 10 September 2012

MR SIMON GIPSON
Head of the School
Commenced 1 January 2000

MR JIM HARRINGTON
Facilities, Infrastructure and Technology Committee
Commenced 4 April 2011

MRS FIONA MEAD
Finance Audit and Risk Management Committee
Commenced 28 April 2014

THE REV DR CARY MANSELL
Marlton Advisory Committee
Commenced 28 October 2013

MS ALANA KILLEN
Commenced 27 April 2015

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM

MR SIMON GIPSON
Head of the School

MR GERARD HOULIHAN
Deputy Head of the School

MRS ANNABELLE KNIGHT
Associate Head of the School (Learning and Innovation)/Head of Junior School

MR TIM DORNING
Head of Teaching and Learning

MR SCOTT FEEHAN
Director of Business and Corporate Secretary

MS CLARE MURPHY
Director of People and Strategy

MRS BO RUTECKI
Director of Admissions and Community Engagement
Every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this list. If an error has occurred, please accept our apologies and email community@stmichaels.vic.edu.au