

Diversity  
Opens Minds™



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We thank all members of the St Michael’s community who have contributed to the development of this edition.

Our Contributing Writers

What an exciting year of *M News* 2014 has been. We would like to thank these wonderful five students who have taken on the task of Contributing Writers with such passion and enthusiasm. Their writing has continued to improve throughout the year and, as a result, we have a magazine full of quality stories for our community to enjoy. We trust that their experience as part of an editorial team has been rewarding and fulfilling, and look forward to seeing their names in print in the very near future. Happy reading!

Ms Erin Bull

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Mr Timothy Roberts

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

I really enjoy writing because it allows me to enter another realm in which anything can happen. I like to use descriptive words to express how I am feeling. *M News* allowed me to learn more about the School, and to improve my writing as well! I loved being a part of this exciting group, and I hope to do things like this in the future.

Joshua Graham (5H)

I remember the first story book I ever wrote. I was in grade two, and it was made using Textas, paper and tape. This year, I had the opportunity to contribute stories to *M News* magazine; a real book with a glossy cover and printed pages. The chance to be published was, for me, as it is any writer, really exciting. The opportunity was made even more enjoyable by the entire *M News* team, all of whom can be credited in different ways for this year’s publication. I hope you enjoy reading it.

Ella Hockley (10K)

Writing has always been my preferred platform of expression. I have never been handy with a paint brush or fine liner, so from an early age I found myself turning to a pen (or keyboard, as it may be) as my weapon of creativity. Writing allows me to explore other worlds through my own eyes, and report my findings to those who care to read them. That is why when the opportunity to write for *M News* came along, I jumped at the chance to have my voice put to print, and this experience has given me that and so much more!

Harriette Richards (11M)

I have not always loved writing. It is only recently that I have discovered my passion for it. I really enjoy writing pretty much anything, especially if I know it will be read by someone, somewhere. Being in the *M News* team has taught me about myself, my skills and things I am not so good at. It has been a wonderful experience. As I get older, I hope to write more and more, and make a positive influence on the world around me.

Hannah Shaw (5C)

For me, writing has always been a way to express all my ideas and thoughts; be it a diary, poem, novel or a punchy short story. Writing to inform about the world and our community is not something we’re often given a chance to do. *M News* has given us a great opportunity to do just that, and I am certain this won’t be my last venture into journalism.

Milica Zivanov (11S)



Staff news



Violet Crawford



April Baxter



Amon Powell

Baby joy

The past 12 months certainly seemed to be a year full of newborns among St Michael’s employees, with more than a dozen staff members and their partners welcoming a bundle of joy into the world. They included:

• Sports Administrator Mr Tyren Montebruno and his wife, Jamee (Lacey Jay, born 24 August 2013)

• Director of Learning (Years 6 – 8) Mr Ash Abdou and his wife, Nikki (Nicholas James, born 1 November 2013)

• School Psychologist Ms Brydie Huggins and her husband, Julian (Charles “Charlie” Oscar, born 4 December 2013)

• Risk and Compliance Manager Mr Andrew Tomaszewski and his wife, Setareh Sadegh-Vaziri (Ava Nasrin, born 9 December 2013)

• School Psychologist Mrs Emily Crawford and her husband, Digby (Violet May, born 3 January)

• Head of Health and Physical Education Mrs Emma Griffin and her husband, Matt (Aimee Emma, born 27 January)

• Admissions Officer Mrs Julie Baxter and her husband, Steven (April Rose, born 30 January)

• Junior School Teacher Mr Sean Powell and his wife, Sara (Amon Michael, born 11 March)

• Mitre Head of House Ms Taryn Johnston and her husband, Fabio (Ella Grace, born 13 March)

• Junior School Teacher Mrs Morgan Lacey and her husband, Edward (William Ryan, born 13 March)

• Mitre Head of House Ben Jeacocke and his wife, Efthamia (Alec Zioglis, born 18 March)

• Senior School Teacher Ms Simone Tausend and her husband, Simon (Yumika Lauren, born 4 April)

• Junior School Teacher Ms Bryony Horrocks and her husband, Michael (Ruben Ian, born 9 April)

• Senior School Teacher Mrs Melanie Grant and her husband, Chris (Charlie Xavier, born 24 April)

• Breen Head of House Miss Emma McDonald and her partner, Sam (Charlie James, born 9 May)

• Junior School Teacher Mrs Kara Alexander and her husband, Emerson (Audrey Clementine, born 8 June)

• Junior School Teacher Ms Melissa Lindsay and her partner, Joe (Alice, born 1 July)

• Senior School Teacher Mrs Alison Howard and her husband, Simon (Edward Alister, born 29 July)

• Junior School Teacher Ms Hilary Davidson and her husband, Tony (Alba Francis, born 8 September)

Vale

*St Michael’s pays tribute to the members of our community who are no longer with us today, and we send our love and sincere condolences to their family and friends.*

**Jacqueline Todd (nee Kirfield) (OM 1942), died on 31 October 2013**

**Claire Tallent (OM 1958), died on 5 November 2013**

**Wynne Pullman (OM 1940), died in December 2013**

Wynne attended St Michael’s from 1936–39, following which she became a distinguished character actress, appearing on radio, in plays and on television.

**Jan Hughes (former member of the School Council), died in February 2014**

Jan was the wife of Major General Jim Hughes AO, a former Board member.

**Lily “Lily Roo” Mary Lockyer, died on 27 March 2014**

Lily Mary Lockyer, daughter of Teaching and Learning Officer Mrs Kristie Lockyer and her husband, Peter, was born four months premature on 26 March but sadly died the following day. Nicknamed ‘Lily Roo’ by her eldest cousin, Lily’s legacy lives on through the Lily Roo Fund, which ensures that preterm babies and their families receive the same incredible care and compassion that Lily and her family received at the Royal Women’s Hospital.

**Angela Wakefield (OM 1944), died on 22 April 2014**

**Dr Henry Gordon-Clark, died on 28 April 2014**

Dr Henry Gordon-Clark, husband of Dr Jan Gordon-Clark (former Board member), served on the Fathers’ Day Association and as Co-Chairman of four School Carnivals. Dr Gordon-Clark was also a member of the Building Appeal Committee.

**Lukas Bryant (OM 1995), died on 19 May 2014**

**Margaret Cavallo (nee Herm) (OM 1945 and past staff), died on 19 July 2014**

**Will Alexander (OM 2011), died in October 2014**

Will attended St Michael’s in Year 9 and 10, leaving the School in 2009 to attend Taylor’s College in Waterloo, NSW. During his time at St Michael’s, he was a member of Hughes House and a keen table tennis player.





## From the Editor

*'There are painters who transform the sun to a yellow spot, but there are others who, with the help of their art and their intelligence, transform a yellow spot into the sun.'* – **PABLO PICASSO**

I believe that the right words, stories and people have a way of finding you when you need them; if you are open enough to listen and see. I am one of those creative souls who never stops 'transforming a yellow spot into the sun', and I want to make others feel and see what I do.

As I have always deeply appreciated the creativity of St Michael's, I was thrilled to launch our new marketing campaign this year. It showcases the essence of our education – a place where 'creative minds are forever learning'.

Different people associate creativity with different things – imagination or being inventive, taking risks or challenging convention, thinking originally or producing new things. For many of us, creativity is an expression of our artistic talents.

More traditionally, creativity has been associated with the achievements of extraordinary individuals such as Chopin, Marie Skłodowska-Curie, or Copernicus (I am Polish, after all!). Much early research into creativity has focused on the work of highly creative people, or those considered geniuses. However, research now demonstrates that it is possible to be creative in any activity that engages our intelligence, because intelligence itself is essentially creative. Creative processes are rooted in the imagination, and our lives are shaped by the ideas we use to give them meaning. We all have creative capacities – but in many instances, we do not know what they are or how to draw upon them.

Everything around us – our homes, cities, roads, all kinds of services and the magnificent world-wide-web – was conceived and developed by practical people who know how to implement creative ideas. Creativity can be readily associated with a wide range of everyday tasks and activities, and its importance at a personal level is often greatly underestimated.

This edition of *M News* brilliantly showcases creativity at St Michael's. From traditionally creative areas such as visual arts and design ('The essence of creativity', page 4), to a superb new building designed for innovative teaching and learning ('Educating for the 21st century: The Commons', page 16); from new ways of experiencing learning between year levels ('The Middle Years at St Michael's', page 38), to our staff members' diverse professional development ('The learning doesn't stop for our staff', page 42).

Every time we work on *M News*, I find that the words, quotes, images and stories reinforce the idea that our world is full of wonder, beauty, courage, perseverance and creativity.

I hope the magazine helps you to see what we see...



**Mrs Bo Rutecki**

**DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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# Master Planning at St Michael's



Since its founding almost 120 years ago, St Michael's has been known for its quality of teaching, learning and caring. Supporting innovative teaching by our dedicated staff members requires facilities and infrastructure of a high standard, therefore detailed Master Planning is necessary to ensure our built environment effectively supports our educational model.

As an inner-city Melbourne campus, we must respond to the following question: How do we best use our available space by providing buildings and facilities that further increase our capacity for quality teaching and learning?

In 2014, the answer lies in The Commons – the result of a detailed five-year master planning process from initial discussions, to planning, to construction, to opening. Serving as the School's educational, social and technological hub, The Commons will contain all the advanced facilities our students require to make the most of their gifts – including a new Food Technology centre, a Knowledge Commons research facility, leading science facilities, a capacious indoor cafeteria, and flexible classroom spaces for students from Kindergarten to Year 12. To ensure our school's rich history is accurately preserved for future generations, the building will also contain a dedicated archival section.

Building a school's reputation for innovation is a long-term and continuous process, requiring considerable skill, patience and foresight. Even before The Commons project is realised, the Board has already begun work to update the School's Master Plan for the next decade. The purpose of master planning is to ensure a constant improvement in the facilities that support teaching, learning and caring. This means identifying areas where the School has the opportunity to improve a facility, or needs to address the replacement and construction of new facilities and infrastructure due to such factors as ageing or, in some cases, a scarcity of externally available venues that meet the needs of particular programs and/or the School as a whole.

At a high level, master planning includes monitoring the availability of strategic properties adjacent to the School, reviewing the lifecycle of key buildings and facilities, and working with the School Leadership Team to support the evolving educational vision of St Michael's with the associated required facilities.

Master planning is evident in major projects such as The Commons, as well as yearly capital projects including the Senior Quadrangle (2012–2013) and the pool/gym upgrade (2014). Running in conjunction with these upgrades is the major work occurring in the ICT sphere. Our ability to successfully adapt new technologies to the classroom is generated by the evolution in background infrastructure that commenced in 2012 and continues to this day. This nimble adaptivity has given us the ability to plug in or attach new technology to our network without major redesign and reconfiguration.

While improving the campus's facilities is a top priority, the core of St Michael's has always been far more than bricks and mortar. When it opens in Term 1 2016, The Commons will attract further curiosity and admiration to the St Michael's community.

I hope you can join the School community in creating a vibrant future for St Michael's.

**Mr Paul Orton**  
**CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



“Our broad and integrated programs give students many opportunities to extend themselves while discovering new passions and interests.”

**MR SIMON GIPSON – HEAD OF THE SCHOOL**

## St Michael's: A 21st century learning community

Today's young people face a different set of challenges from their parents. New industries, technologies and jobs are emerging at breathtaking speed, creating new ways of living and working. In this radically evolving environment, entrepreneurship, expertise and productivity are more highly prized than ever.

Traditional approaches to education will increasingly struggle to meet these changing demands. To be effective, education must shed progressively obsolete approaches to school organisation, teaching practices and models for learning. Schools must embrace the core skills of creativity, collaboration, self-reliance and problem-solving. This approach is reflected in *St Michael's: Learning*, the School's perspective on 21st century learning.

St Michael's is also taking a leading role in creating a genuine K–12 learning community, which will further enhance opportunities for the young people in our care to take on learning appropriate to their strengths, talents and abilities as they grow and evolve. Learning is not simply a sprint to the finish – it is a rich journey, filled with many valuable experiences.

Building a genuine K–12 community also challenges the false dichotomy that currently exists between approaches to learning at primary and secondary school. Research consistently points to the fact that although we cognitively develop through clearly defined stages, we do not achieve the same levels at exactly the same time. Nevertheless, schools continue to be structurally organised by chronological age. A redefined K–12 learning community permits greater opportunities for students to learn when they are ready, not just when the curriculum dictates they should.

And, while we recognise the importance of celebrating milestones of childhood and adolescence, and accompanying rites of passage, we also believe these should not totally dictate how we structure learning. *St Michael's: Learning* thus endeavours to achieve the best of both worlds by striking a balance between the importance of ritual and tradition and the value of flexible and innovative learning.

*St Michael's: Learning* also acknowledges the central importance of fully engaging students in a broad curriculum that encourages and inspires. Our broad and integrated programs give students many opportunities to extend themselves while discovering new passions and interests.

A core element of life at St Michael's has always been an understanding of our responsibility to ensure that students learn within a community authentically grounded in clearly articulated social, moral and ethical values.

Our primary goal is to ensure that when our students leave us at the end of their educational journey, they do so as confident contributing citizens, knowing what they are good at and where they want to progress to, and clear about who they are as individuals. Underpinning all of this is their understanding that their fundamental obligation as people on this fragile planet is to make a positive difference to those around them.

This philosophy is expressed throughout The Commons, a transformative K–12 learning facility, designed to embody the needs of an innovative 21st century learning community.

**Mr Simon Gipson**  
**HEAD OF THE SCHOOL**



# the essence of creativity

## VISUAL ARTS & DESIGN AT ST MICHAEL'S

From Kindergarten to VCE, artistic creativity is central to the St Michael's vision. Students have the freedom to express their ideas under expert tutelage.



“The most interesting part about art is the diversity and the freedom of it. You can do whatever you want, with whatever you want, however you can – there is no right or wrong.”

– MS DAWN TAN

## Art in the junior years

### Exploration and expression

From their first day at St Michael's, students are encouraged to explore their artistic inspirations. Children move freely in and out of the classroom, visit the studio regularly, and engage with art in every way possible.

The small Margaret Thomas House studio, which holds six children, provides an intensive learning environment. 'We have small half-classes for Art up to Year 4,' explains Art Teacher Mrs Martine Cook. 'We encourage children to move around the studio while creating artworks based on their experiences.'

This system gives children the best opportunity to express their creativity. 'Children are encouraged to explain and discuss what they're currently working on, and what they'd like to do in the future,' Mrs Cook says.

Building up the children's artistic confidence is a primary goal. 'Students often feel more confident in front of a small group, and are more comfortable expressing themselves within a relaxed environment.'

Children quickly begin taking charge of their own learning. 'We encourage children to model skills, without ever telling them what the final product should be,' Mrs Cook says. 'For example, we show the children how to make a pinch pot, rather than saying: "Everyone roll a ball of clay. Now, everyone put their thumb in the middle..." The children learn from observing – they copy our actions when they're ready, and we help them individually.'

Placing faith in students' autonomy pays off. 'From the time students arrive at Margaret Thomas House, they're viewed as capable artists,' Mrs Cook confirms. 'As a result of this independence, they quickly learn new skills. At St Michael's, the child is at the centre of each art class.'

Integrating creativity into the learning experience makes a huge difference. 'Students develop their passion for art via free play, which involves extensive problem-solving,' Mrs Cook says. 'Students make connections between different media, and often use recycled materials to make striking objects.'

Routine and surprise are both essential elements of the learning experience at Margaret Thomas House. 'The children have a morning meeting before entering

the studio, where they find out whether they're going to have an art play day or work on a project. Knowing what to expect at the beginning of each day gives them the stability to develop their own artworks. There's a real push for the children to work together, and they often collaborate on installations,' Mrs Cook concludes.

### Inquisitive minds

This emphasis on independence continues throughout the junior years. 'There's a lot of enquiry, and students take an active role,' says Art Teacher Ms Dawn Tan.

Students' opinions are listened to and valued. 'We talk extensively with the students in classes, and ask them: "What do you think about this aspect of the artwork?". Our discussions follow organically.'

The students often choose their own projects, with impressive results. 'Year 1 made a light for the library, which they've christened the "Quiet Chandelier",' says Ms Tan. 'Students were asked what form the light should take, and the whole class discussed colours and materials – including ties, knotting and wiring.'

This interaction continues right throughout the junior years, by students providing feedback on each component of the course. 'At the end of each term, we ask: "What did you enjoy, and what didn't you enjoy? What did you find difficult, and what would you like to do next time?";' Ms Tan says.

Students respond enthusiastically to this approach, learning new skills through independent trial and error. 'It's important that the students have the chance to learn why things don't always turn out as planned,' says Ms Tan. 'If they want to try something different, I often let them. If it doesn't work, I ask: "What could you do differently next time?";'

When students collaborate, the results are often remarkable. 'Year 4 students created a huge panorama of Melbourne landmarks, where they divided the canvas up between them, hopped around it, and progressively added things on. The spectacular work has been framed and is now on display.'

Unconventional solutions and lateral thinking are strongly encouraged. 'A lot of recycled materials are used in our classes, many of which were provided by parents,' Ms Tan says. 'We also visit Resource Recycle, which stocks unusual materials.'

The St Michael's syllabus also engages students' natural curiosity. 'They often learn outside the classroom to focus on the natural beauty around them,' Ms Tan points out. 'For example, some have been considering nature and discussing the change of seasons, which they're busily incorporating into their own works.'



Year 4 students work together to create a canvas of Melbourne landmarks.



# Art in the senior years

## Developing the creative process

For all art students at St Michael's, the studio is the initial learning environment. 'From Year 7 onward, the groundwork is being laid for VCE,' says Miss Monique Warwick, Head of Visual Arts and Design. 'Our students experience as many techniques and studio spaces as possible.'

As their skills progress, students have many opportunities to engage with new artforms. They create a blend of 2D and 3D art during the beginning of their senior years, and explore many styles and techniques – including wire sculpture and printmaking in Year 7, ceramic sculptures and still life painting in Year 8 – and are introduced to artistic styles and methods.'

In Year 9, the Visual Arts program continues to branch out after becoming an elective. The intersection between Visual Arts and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) begins to feature during this time, where students are introduced to the Adobe Suite in digital design and the Fine Arts. They also begin to learn about the frameworks of art through Modernism, providing a rich historical perspective on the past century's major artistic movements.

Year 10 students who are keen to develop their skills in traditional art-making can achieve this in two discreet courses – one looking at technique, the other exploring self-expression. The specialisation in ICT and design is further broadened in Year 10, where the program separates into two major courses: Design and Multimedia, and Visual Communications and Design (VCD). By studying design techniques in detail, students develop the tools that will carry them through to graduation.

In VCE, there are five classes in which students can pursue one or more of three branches: Visual Communications, Art, or Studio Arts (incorporating New Media, Mixed Media and Photography). The latter is split into separate studio areas: Mixed Media (including sculpture), New Media (digital art), and Photography (analogue and digital), with a fully equipped darkroom available for traditionalists.

## Different spaces, diverse mindsets

The faculty of Visual Arts and Design houses self-contained studios dotted throughout the School. These can be used for general or specialised learning, including painting, printmaking, photography, graphic design, ICT and sculpture/ceramics. Many studio spaces, including Frank Woods House and the Sculpture Ceramics Centre in Wellington Street, are separated from the rest of the campus. 'Because students' artistic choices are influenced by their early experiences in the studios, we immerse them in many different spaces,' says Miss Warwick.

## Authentic experience

St Michael's students receive many opportunities to display their artworks. 'Exhibiting work is an essential part of each student's artistic development,' Miss Warwick notes. 'By providing display spaces, we help students engage in the full cycle of art-making.'

The opportunities extend beyond the St Michael's campus. 'Several of our students' work is also displayed at a nearby café, for example,' Miss Warwick continues. 'We're always looking for new places to exhibit, because public recognition is an important part of artistic growth.'

The pinnacle of this program is the 12 exhibition, held each year in Term 4 at St Kilda's Brightspace gallery. This celebration and recognition of student achievement links the students with the art industry, as they can contribute to the curation of their work in an authentic gallery environment. 'The 12 exhibition presents a unique opportunity for the artistic minds at St Michael's to express and expose their ideas in an unpredictable public environment,' says Oscar Popham (OM 2013), who helped set up last year's exhibition.



the essence of  
**creativity**  
VISUAL ARTS  
& DESIGN  
AT ST MICHAEL'S



Sofia Pellizzari and Louis Walter (both 10M) portray the different media of Visual Arts.



## Learn by doing: immersion in the arts

The immersion projects offered to Year 10 and 11 students in the arts are a defining feature of the art syllabus, developed to enhance students' artistic knowledge by offering them a memorable local or overseas experience. 'The history and art I experienced on the trip far exceeded my expectations. It was inspirational,' remembers Gabe Tavares (10K), who attended the first week of the Master Class before attending the Italy immersion project.

Locally, students attend intensive studio-based workshops from a range of Melbourne artists and specialists. By studying with accomplished artists, students hone the skills they can utilise in VCE. This year, students have done oil painting with Archibald Prize-winning artist Lewis Miller, copperplate etching with the Australian Print Workshop specialists, botanical illustrations with artist Helen Burrows, and Copic marker illustrations with product designer and lecturer Mark Wilken, as well as experiencing the School's darkroom processes for the first time. The week culminated in the students curating their own exhibitions: their artworks are now displayed around the School in locations including the Bayton Gallery, the Neave Room and the Staff Common Room.

Students travelling to Italy as part of the Art and Language Tour gained a new perspective on art by travelling to some of Italy's richest historical and artistic regions – including Rome, Tivoli, Florence, Siena, Pisa, Orvieto and Venice, finally departing from Milan. Before leaving for Italy, students had the privilege of studying with visiting artist Andrea Smith, an Australian expat working in Rome. She taught them the realist techniques of drawing from observation, stemming from the traditions of the Florence Academy of Fine Art. They experienced artworks from across the globe while in Italy, spanning from Ancient Roman times to the Renaissance and Modernism, as well as art and architecture from the contemporary scene.

The experience gained from immersing themselves in the process of art-making and the cultural experiences of both these programs will continue well into their VCE, and will have lasting effects on their development in the Visual Arts and Design fields.



Clare Niere (11B), Ella Hockley (10K), Harriet Dongegan (11M) and Sophia Pellizzari (10M) take in the sights of Venice during the Italy Trip.

## Visual Arts in VCE

The St Michael's Visual Arts program is renowned for its comprehensive emphasis on practical skills. 'Each of our students becomes an expert in their chosen area,' Miss Warwick says. 'They have one teacher for the whole subject, but may use all the studios if they wish.'

Spurring students' creativity is the key to their artistic growth. 'Our Studio Arts program compels students to exercise curiosity and explore their personal style,' notes Art and New Media Teacher Mr Sam Lucas. 'We're there to keep them engaged – when they hit a brick wall, we push them in a new direction.'

Conveying knowledge at this level of detail requires an innovative approach to teaching. 'If we want our students to excel in their fields, we have to have expert staff,' says Miss Warwick. 'We have photography specialists teaching in the photography studio, and so on. All of us are adept at crossing over to teach other areas, but we can also delve into our medium of specialisation when required.'

The diverse branches of Art at St Michael's are united by a common core. 'Visual Communication Design, Art and Studio Art all require a design process, drawing skills, and skilled visual analysis,' says Miss Warwick. 'Students' ability to articulate their ideas, discuss their artwork, and their knowledge of the art and design world, ensures that they have a strong skill set should they wish to pursue this direction after graduation. We gain great pleasure from observing the level of maturity Year 12 students develop in talking about their artworks, and our greatest pride is when we receive emails from graduating students letting us know that they have been successful getting into their art or design course of choice.'

## Growing interest in New Media

New and digital art-making is a rapidly growing area of the Arts syllabus. While 'New Media' originally referred to digital works which allowed for digital interactivity, the subject encompasses everything that doesn't quite fit into traditional media – from print and digital painting to 3D modelling, game design and movie-making.

To excel in the subject, advanced ICT skills are required. 'I have to be on top of many programs to teach the subject effectively,' says Mr Lucas. 'Years 9 and 10 start their experience with industry-standard programs including Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop; as the students progress, they are encouraged to develop their skills in digital art-making, choosing their own creation methods.'

New and Digital Media is defined by artistic risk-taking. 'An exciting New Media development is the concept of inviting the audience to actively participate in the work,' Mr Lucas observes. 'Rapid advances in digital media allow students to explore split screens, live works and multiple storylines.'

Surprisingly, one of the subject's major challenges is making students aware of their talents and abilities in digital media. 'It's hard telling the students that the games and presentations they design on their computers, and the amazing music videos they make on their phones, are actual artworks,' Mr Lucas reveals. 'The process of creation comes naturally to them, so they often don't realise its importance.'

# Griffin documents artists at work

Griffin Simm (12B), one of St Michael's promising young artists, was this year engrossed with his major Art project for VCE Photography. 'For our proposal, we chose something we want to explore over the course of the year,' he explains. 'We do various trials at the beginning, which lead to a final piece.'

Griffin has been expanding on the idea of artists at work. 'I want to explore artists in the spaces they create their work in,' he notes. 'I'm photographing everything from painters to photographers to sculptors to furniture designers, and hope to have a broad range of images by the end of the year.' The idea has had a long gestation. 'Last year, I was helping my mother's friends Pierre and Charlotte, a furniture designer and part-time photographer,' he recalls. 'I realised that I was really interested in Charlotte's studio while looking at her unique tools, including hand-made sandpaper.'

Entering other artists' studios opened Griffin's eyes to the diversity of artistic practice. 'Witnessing Charlotte and her husband Pierre creating something so distinctive inspired me to look into their creative process,' he continues. 'Their furniture is raw, organic and handmade, but it's also precise. By documenting how these artists use tools in their studio, I aim to shed light on their creative decisions.'

The subject matter of Griffin's project closely relates to his career ambitions. 'I'd like to become a commercial photographer, so organising and attending a photo shoot is valuable,' he says. 'I'm doing multiple shoots on several artists this year. Ideally, I'll have three final images of people in their studios.' Griffin's creative choices reflect his eclectic interests. 'I've always been interested in various types of art and creative design,' he points out. 'When I was younger, I wanted to be an architect, then a photographer. I enjoy trialling different media, and dipping into the world they entail.'

Griffin's early love of architecture has influenced his photography style. 'I love clean, modern buildings, but I also appreciate 1940s, 50s and 60s designs,' he says. 'I prefer simple images with unity and balance. My thought processes in photography are closely aligned with my favourite architectural styles.'

Griffin's focus extends beyond minimalism. 'Last year, my photography folio was on "Science Fiction and the Expression of the Strange", featuring unconventional lighting and bizarre scenes,' he reveals. 'I initially wanted to do surrealism, and my teacher, Mrs Manning, helped me narrow it down and create a precise set of images. To avoid going off course, I always consult my teacher before creating a piece.'

Griffin's class involves extensive conversation. 'I'm interested in my classmates' process, and have gone to their photo shoots in the past,' he says. 'I wouldn't say it's a competition, but there's definitely a strong cross-fertilisation of ideas. If someone finds an artist that another person might like, they'll encourage them to check out their work. Our classes involve working alongside each other and helping each other along the way.'

Griffin's finished work was displayed at the 12 exhibition. You can read the full story at [www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/2014/10/13/12-exhibition](http://www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/2014/10/13/12-exhibition)







the essence of  
**creativity**  
VISUAL ARTS  
& DESIGN  
AT ST MICHAEL'S

## Scholarship success for Liam

Liam Poole (12M) won a scholarship to study art at the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) over the 2013–14 summer holidays. 'My mum came home with a postcard from a café last year, featuring an image of Simran Gill's No. 5,' Liam says. 'On the reverse, it prompted you to apply for a scholarship. I had about a month to create my own artwork, sent it off, and got a call back around a month later, saying: "Well done, you're in!"'

In response to the original work, Liam has created a striking image. 'Gill's artwork depicts a person in east-Asian dress, sitting in a tropical garden with an industrial landscape in the background,' he explains. 'The person is wearing a headdress with fruit, bananas and headgear.'

As you can see from the accompanying image, Liam's approach is highly imaginative. 'The photo was taken in my backyard – an interesting experience, as I haven't really been into photography before,' he says. (Liam also personally smashed the TV in the picture.)

The scholarship included a week in Canberra, with 16 students – a boy and a girl from each state – selected to take part. During the week at the National Gallery of Australia, Liam gained a valuable glimpse behind the scenes. 'We spoke to all the curators who conserve, store and transport the artworks, which gave us a sense of how the gallery works,' Liam explains.

The scholarship also involved a substantial practical component. 'We did quite a bit of artwork while we were there, including life drawing and screen printing,' Liam says. 'After visiting the Roy Lichtenstein exhibit, we went straight down the road to do our own screen printing.'

The scholarship recipients were taught by established artists throughout. 'We met Simran Gill, the artist of the original work,' Liam says. 'Her origins are Malaysian, and she migrated to Australia in her late 20s. After becoming interested in art, she began to collect objects and make things out of any material she could get her hands on.' Last year, Ms Gill represented Australia in the Venice Biennale. 'As someone who wasn't born in Australia, her artwork revolves around identity,' Liam recalls. 'It was great to discuss all those things with her.'

Liam also posed some perceptive questions. 'I asked her if she's ever consciously gone back and made decisions about her own work, based on what she's written,' he recalls. 'She said that she makes an effort not to make judgments – she leaves that to others.'



*Ice Pendulum*  
by Lily Hibberd

## Lily's innovative artistry



Since arriving in France more than three years ago, Ms Lily Hibberd (OM 1990) has been working as a freelance artist and researcher. Ms Hibberd also exhibits her work in Paris with Galerie de Roussan.

Earlier this year, she commenced an artist's residency with the Musée des Arts et Métiers (Museum of Arts and Crafts), a major science and technology museum. 'I have a six-year Visa to conduct research and create art at the museum,' Ms Hibberd explains.

The museum has a highly technical focus, displaying many innovations that shaped the modern world – including Leon Foucault's 1862 measurement of the speed of light with rotating mirrors. 'I'm often inspired by the exhibits, and I love basing work on concepts that were first thought about over a century ago,' Ms Hibberd reveals. 'Some of my works are sculptural, while others are film installations, photographs or performances.'

Prior to Paris, Ms Hibberd was working in Martu communities in Australia's Western Desert with Martumili Artists indigenous art centre, interviewing older artists. 'I'm trying to capture the way the artists think about their work. The Martu speak one of five languages, and I was fortunate to learn a little when I spent three months there in 2013.'

Ms Hibberd's association with the Australian desert began in 2012, when she was commissioned to create a documentary with Martu filmmaker Curtis Taylor on the telephone booths in remote Pilbara communities.

'The Phone Booth Project is part of an exhibition called *We Don't Need a Map*, touring Australia this year,' she says. 'Among this major exhibition of Martumili Artists paintings, several non-Martu artists were commissioned to create new media works, including video installation artist Lynette Wallworth. When we made the final video installation work, we dragged an abandoned phone booth from the desert into the Fremantle Arts Centre.'

As a St Michael's student, Ms Hibberd was always heavily involved in art. 'Although I loved every subject, I was based in the art room for most of Year 12,' she remembers. 'I was making paintings like mad. As soon as I encountered oil paint in Year 10, I was painting day and night.'

After graduation, Ms Hibberd enrolled in Monash University. 'The attitude towards art was highly technical, but I was lucky to learn about these things in such detail.' Further degrees followed, including a Graduate Diploma, Master's degree and PhD. 'I went to the Victorian College of the Arts, then realised I needed to study some more to challenge myself,' she observes.

Ms Hibberd's decision to become a freelance artist was a leap of faith. 'I had a permanent teaching position at Monash University, but I left it to pursue my own artwork,' she recalls. 'That was three years ago, and I've worked continuously as an independent artist since.' Ms Hibberd's inspirational career is a lesson in the importance of trusting your instincts.



# A final farewell to Vicars Foote Hall

(1973 – 2014)

In a matter of months, the St Michael's community will welcome the largest building project in the School's history, The Commons. As construction continues on this exciting venture, it's only fitting that we take a moment to remember the previous site and its many decades of existence – Vicars Foote Hall.

Construction on Vicars Foote Hall began in 1969, a time which brought sweeping social, political and technological change across the globe. And while the values and life of St Michael's remained essentially the same, the School was becoming increasingly conscious of the growing demands for educating girls to university entrance. At school, subtle changes to the uniform had been implemented, including skirt length and a requirement for girls to wear red ribbons in their hair, and hats during the summer and winter months. The year 1969 saw our students and staff gather around the School's two television sets to watch man set foot on the moon and, over the coming years, 'living in the 70s' was more than just a great Skyhooks album. St Michael's girls barracked in front of the TV for their classmates on *It's Academic*, the School staged drama productions with the boys of Adamson House at Wesley College (before St Michael's became coeducational), and 'midnight feasts' were all the rage in the School's boarding house.

Under the direction of the then Principal, Sister Scholastica, the School ran a fundraising appeal throughout the four-year project, seeking to raise \$120,000 from the generosity of current and past parents and Old Michaelians. Plans for the new building included a hall, stage, 'supper room', tuck shop, music rooms, 'vestibule' and cloakrooms, and the Margaret King Chapel – named after Mrs Selwyn King, a friend and benefactor of the Community of the Sisters of the Church.

Despite a slight delay in the delivery of steel in 1972, the building was finally opened on 17 March 1973 by the Most Reverend Dr Frank Woods, the then Archbishop of Melbourne. Ongoing upgrades and construction work saw the building change and develop over the years. From 1985–86, refurbishment works and an extension of the Chapel of St Mary (formerly known as the Chapel of the Resurrection) included an upgrade of the Chaplain's office, refurbishment of Vestry, remodelling of the Vicars Foote Hall entrance foyer, and the development of the George Lucas Room on the first floor of Vicars Foote Hall. On 29 June 2009, the Chapel of St Mary was relocated from Vicars Foote Hall to the Bishop's Hall building.

Since its opening, Vicars Foote Hall has been a common space located central to the campus, utilised by students, staff and members of the School's wider community. Families will recall the hall being packed to the rafters for the School's annual Trivia Night, and the sounds of our talented student musicians filling the room during concerts and performances. Students will have memories of sporting victories and House assemblies all celebrated in Vicars Foote Hall, and perhaps not-so-fond memories of the rows of tables for their annual exams. Staff will reminisce over the many years of Christmas luncheons that were hosted in the hall, while tucked away in storage was decades of St Michael's memorabilia and treasured archives. It was also a space where whole-school photos, which are taken every five years, were hung and honour boards were displayed.

So as we get set to embark on the School's exciting building project of The Commons, we say farewell to Vicars Foote Hall, and thanks for the memories.



Mire House Choir performs in Vicars Foote Hall in 1976.

## THE STORY BEHIND THE NAME

Miss May Vicars Foote was born in Hawthorn, Victoria, in 1881, the second of six children to Thomas Vicars Foote and Jessie Cussons. Miss Vicars Foote was a student at St Michael's, completing her schooling in 1907. Her younger sister, Dorothy (OM 1910), was also a St Michael's student, as was her younger brother Hedley's three daughters, Jessie (OM 1928), Nancy (OM 1930) and Sheila (OM 1933). Miss Vicars Foote was a member of staff at St Michael's for more than 40 years, and was the first lay Headmistress from 1937 to 1945. At the time of her resignation, it was said that her personality and influence was woven into the very texture of the School's life.

## DID YOU KNOW

**Vicars Foote Hall was officially opened the same year as the Sydney Opera House.**

'In the hearts and minds of many generations of Old Girls, she will remain inseparable from their most vivid remembrance and loving thoughts of their school days, and in the minds of the Sisters she will be remembered with deep gratitude and appreciation for the unswervingly loyal service rendered to them at all times, and especially in times of difficulty and stress, when she was a tower of strength and support to all.' (*The Michaelian*, December 1946). Miss Vicars Foote died on 23 May 1981 in Armadale, Victoria, and Vicars Foote Hall was named in her memory.



# Our supportive community

When Vicars Foote Hall was being built, the School relied heavily on financial support from members of the community. Sister Scholastica wrote the following letters to parents, friends and Old Michaelians seeking donations towards the project.



June 1969

**OUR NEW LOOK – Vicars-Foote Hall**

Dear Parents, Old Grammarians and Friends,

The time has passed speedily since we wished one another a Happy Christmas – in fact, Easter has come and gone... What of the next project? Are we doing anything? Yes, it is the Vicars Foote Hall. Miss May Vicars-Foote was Headmistress of St. Michael's for some years prior to her retirement and a member of the staff for many years prior to that. The Architect has completed plans, and I hope that it will not be long before we start. The money? We must have faith and all do our best to interest others in St. Michael's. We built the School, starting from scratch and borrowing – and we must now try again, even if we are reducing one debt with our right hand and incurring another with our left! This could be a case of “not letting your left hand know what your right hand is doing”, for Christ Jesus spoke these words in His Sermon on the Mount when telling the people that true glory and honour is gained by silent, inconspicuous giving. You may know some people who would like to do this.

Why is it that the boys' schools, and not the girls' schools, have had large gifts of money given them? Is there no one who can find a wealthy donor for a \$100,000 project, which is really quite economical? This new building will contain the Hall, Stage, Supper Room, Tuckshop, Music Rooms, Vestibule and Cloak Rooms, and the Margaret King Chapel – many things in one.

Mrs. Selwyn King, for whom the Margaret King Chapel is to be named, has been a friend and benefactress of the Community since very early days. She knew Sister Bridget well and is now living in Sydney. It is through her generosity in establishing a trust fund that the Chapel will be built.

We may not stand still – St. Michael's will go forward in faith because you all stood as ONE in 1967, when we worked for the School building. We still need you – and all your friends as well. Our need is great for such a building as the proposed Vicars-Foote Hall.

Let us all be in it once again and with that same spirit and war-cry – Come! For the “love of Mike” let's do it!

With all good wishes and the assurance of the Sisters' prayers.

Yours sincerely,

**Sister Scholastica C.S.C.**  
**Provincial Superior**

**DID YOU KNOW**

Senior students celebrated the opening of Vicars Foote Hall by holding the inaugural ‘Miss St Michael’s Quest’. Contestants were judged on general grooming, poise, personality and dress sense.

April 1972

**UP SHE GOES!!!**

**THE NEW SCHOOL HALL REACHES FOR THE SKY**

**A Letter from Sister:**  
**St. Michael's C.E.G.G.S.**  
**Mariton Crescent, St. Kilda. 3182.**

Dear Old Grammarians, Parents and Friends,

You are probably all aware of the exciting fact that the new School Hall, cum Chapel, cum Tuckshop, cum Music Centre is well under way – at least, as far as the builders are concerned – although due to the last S.E.C. strike there has been a hold up on the delivery of steel, part of which has now come.

You may wonder why I say, “at least as far as the builders are concerned,” for as far as the actual “Appeal” is concerned we are not yet halfway towards the set target of \$120,000. Naturally this is a little disappointing, for when we built the secondary school five years ago, parents (both past and present), friends of the school and Old Grammarians worked together wonderfully. For this the Sisters, Staff, girls and especially myself, were extremely grateful.

I will never cease to thank all those who supported that first stage of our overall plan, in 1967, and especially those fathers and Old Grammarians who worked so faithfully throughout the whole campaign; this meant the first 12 weeks of the “intensive phase”, as well as the less arduous “follow-on” period. Our magnificent result of reaching the \$100,000 target was indeed a credit to all. This amount was achieved by the oneness of giving (I was told that 100 per cent of the parents gave). We are still paying off the other \$123,000 for the total cost was \$223,000.

I do not believe that this same spirit is dying. We were just most unfortunate in this “Hall” appeal coinciding with the great cloud of financial depression which gathered and overshadowed us all towards the end of 1971, as well as the fact that both Christmas and the holidays were approaching. Consequently the slightest mention of “St. Michael's Fund Raising Campaign,” was the “last straw” to many people!

The result of all this has been that our target has not reached the halfway mark. We have worked hard for 24 weeks, whereas in 1967, it was completed within 12 weeks. The same tactics and continuous effort has been applied, but alas! Only about one third of the previous manpower from parents and old grammarians came forward to help. Incidentally, several of these valiant helpers had worked for the first appeal. This Appeal speaks quite clearly for itself, in that our greatest need is for more men to join the ranks of those helping now, and for extra old grammarians to assist the regular few.

The Sisters are aware of the difficult economic situation throughout the country. I do not know whether you realise that 80 per cent of the fees is used for paying staff salaries, so the remaining 20 per cent does not go very far in meeting other expenses – such as, lighting, heating, postage, equipment, telephone, general repairs, etc.

In our efforts to improve the buildings and playing fields at St. Michael's we have reached the limit of what we are able to borrow, hence the need for this Campaign. When the overall plan is completed the School will indeed compare favourably with that of other schools, but it is vital for our present effort to succeed. We will then be about four fifths of the way, for we will then have completed –

- 1) The Senior School.
- 2) The Hall and Tuckshop (for the use of both the Senior and Junior Schools).
- 3) The Musical Centre and Chapel.
- 4) Playing fields.

This leaves the final renovation of the Primary School, which was fitted out during the 1967 summer holidays, prior to the demolition of the old Junior School buildings.

Finally, I ask you personally to help us. The School needs your physical help, your financial help, whether much or little. The Sisters need you to help them to carry out this project which is vitally necessary for the cultural, spiritual and physical development of the girls.

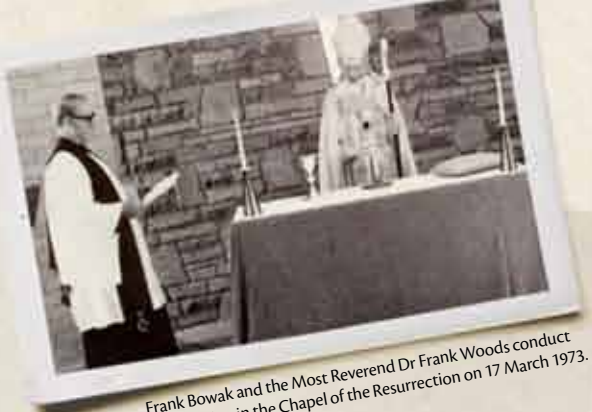
How about giving one, two, five or 10 dollars a week for the next five years, or whatever you feel is possible? This would help the girls tremendously. If previously you have felt unable to give, or have not yet realised the School's need, perhaps you would be kind enough to consider, or reconsider, St. Michael's Appeal.

I cannot end this letter without expressing deep gratitude to those who have untiringly, faithfully and unselfishly borne the “heat of the day” and who have been responsible for the 24 weeks of visiting people, which, as I said above, could have been completed within 12 weeks, had there been more helpers. Let us clear this campaign up before June 30. It can be done if more parents help those who have already given much of their time and energy for the School.

Thank you for bearing with me.

Yours sincerely,

**SISTER SCHOLASTICA, C.S.C.,**  
**Principal**



Frank Bowak and the Most Reverend Dr Frank Woods conduct a dedication in the Chapel of the Resurrection on 17 March 1973.





## How the removal of Vicars Foote Hall unfolded...

23 May 2014	Plans for The Commons approved
June/July non-term time	Power and water to VFH shut off
	Decommissioning of VFH and the Cafeteria
	Construction of temporary Cafeteria
	Gas, water and electricity feeds between VFH, the Quad and pool/gym complex is split
	Relocation of lockers from the Quad and pool/gym complex
	Construction of a new locker bay and bike enclosure completed
21 August 2014	Demolition of VFH begins
25 August 2014	First VFH bricks smashed
3 September 2014	The existing Cafeteria is removed
5 September 2014	VFH completely demolished
6 September 2014	Link between the pool/gym complex and VFH removed
12 September 2014	VFH site is flattened
18 September 2014	Change to parking spaces on Redan Street and Chapel Street to accommodate construction works
10 October 2014	Piling (drilling) into the site begins
15 October 2014	Pool car park closed until the end of the year

# educating for the 21st century

## THE COMMONS

The Commons has been half a decade in the making. Five years since initial discussions of a brand-new learning facility for our students. Five years since plans for the School's first ever K–12 building were drawn up. Five years since we began the bold endeavour now known as The Commons.

Architectus, designer of The Commons, has worked with St Michael's for more than a decade. The firm began its association with St Michael's when the School's Master Plan was first established, exploring opportunities to replace existing buildings or develop areas conducive to quality learning.

Fast-forward to the present, and our school community has benefited from many new facilities – including the Sisters' Building, designed as a transitional space for Year 6 students entering the senior years and Year 12 students moving into tertiary education; Coleman Walk, linking each half of the campus; and the award-winning Allan Pizzey Building, built in consultation with the wider community to meet our younger students' learning needs.

This emphasis on innovative spaces culminates in The Commons. Custom-designed for learning, the building responds to students' diverse needs, rather than forcing each student into a single mould. The floorplan can be rapidly altered in response to specific lesson requirements – including a collection of self-contained teaching pods, with other areas convertible into 'breakout spaces'. While traditional box-style classrooms treat each student as a passive observer, The Commons' future-focused vision of space promotes active participation in the learning journey.

Architectus Director John Wood describes St Michael's as a school with its finger on the pulse of education's future. 'One of the educational principles coming through at St Michael's is a sense of autonomy for the students,' he says. 'They discover in their own minds what interests them, and the School endeavours to give them the tools to follow that path.'

“Quality resources and facilities are a significant part of our education, and while the features currently offered at St Michael's have so far served the students well, the new spaces that The Commons will include are expected to improve this experience tenfold.”

MILICA ZIVANOV (11S)

“Every college is different, but St Michael's is an educational institution that has their finger on the pulse with what is happening locally, state-wide, nationally and internationally.”

MR JOHN WOOD

According to Mr Wood, The Commons explores new areas of learning. 'An underlining element of the building is to make it feel comfortable, with a sense of authenticity,' he explains. 'Everything in this building has a purpose, and part of that purpose is to make people feel good.' Mr Wood echoes the words of Mr Simon Gipson, Head of the School, when he describes the building as a space for possibilities. 'Our role as architects was to interpret what "spaces for possibilities" means for each of the key players on the design team and within the School Leadership Team, as well as for junior and senior students, staff, parents and alumni.'

'It's absolutely critical to get the design right – otherwise future students and staff won't be able to utilise it as they would like. It's about flexibility, mobility and adaptability,' Mr Wood continues. 'It's a collaborative effort between us, the School and the builder – it has to be. The School knows what it does educationally; our role is to draw out information that's critical to shape the building. The builder has to understand the sensitive nature of educational sites, and what they're all about.'

Mr Wood calls the creation of a K–12 facility a demanding brief. 'But we've managed to create a building that has elements which focus on specific needs, and a building which is very much about supporting people,' he says. 'I think there will be elements of surprise in it, and, hopefully, it will foster a sense of enquiry.' He describes the building as visually controlled. 'It is very well thought through on all levels – intellectual, educational and philosophical. It really will create spaces for possibilities.'

RMIT Deputy Dean of School of Media and Communications Dr Lisa French, whose son Liam is currently in Year 12 at St Michael's, understands the importance of a quality educational facility. RMIT recently completed its \$200 million, 12-storey Swanston Academic Building, known around campus as 'Building 80' and home to the university's College of Business. 'It's completely brilliant,' Dr French says. 'It has a lot of spaces for students to hang out, to meet with each other.'





“The Commons will be a building for both junior and senior students, encouraging mingling and shared learning. It’s going to cost a lot of money, but the benefits it will give to the many generations of Michaelians to come will far outweigh the cost.”

HANNAH SHAW (5C)

Similarly, The Commons will play an important role in creating a space for members of our community to converge in casual and formal environments, such as the cafeteria, the versatile atrium, and study areas which can accommodate individual learning, small gatherings or class-sized groups. ‘These kinds of spaces are really important for belonging,’ Dr French says. ‘We know that student experiences rely on that as much as what they do in any classroom. They help to balance the pressures and stresses of study with downtime. The physical facilities to any educational institute are very important.’

As Dr French observes, transparent rooms are particularly adept at accommodating diverse learning styles. ‘Different curriculum areas work in different ways,’ she explains. ‘I think a large part of what teaching and learning does all the time is review these kinds of things, and look at different spaces and approaches. If it’s a good space, it will facilitate good learning.’

With her own son comparing universities for next year, Dr French notes that building design can have a substantial effect on students’ transition from secondary to tertiary education. ‘Most undergraduate students come straight from high school and from a variety of backgrounds, so when they arrive, it’s a different culture than what they’re used to,’ she explains. ‘They’re separated from their family and friends, so you need to create spaces that accommodate this. It comes back to that sense of belonging – when students are in a comfortable environment, it does make the whole experience a lot easier.’

The Commons building’s fluid and responsive approach to space and design reflects the vital role of independent learning in the 21st century. When opened in 2016, it will form the centrepiece of our innovative campus.

“If it’s a good space, it will facilitate good learning.”

DR LISA FRENCH



“This is such an exciting new project for St Michael’s! In 2016, I will be in Year 7, and I’m looking forward to the new areas, especially the science labs. It will be such a benefit to our learning.”

JOSHUA GRAHAM (5H)

# WE ARE NEARLY THERE...

## Donate today and help us reach our 2014 goal of \$1 million

Visit [www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/thecommons](http://www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/thecommons) or call Laura on (03) 8530 3292



\$960,000.00K  
11/11/2014

2014 GOAL  
\$1M

THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

# THE COMMONS

...coming in 2016



# tech talk...

How our students and staff are utilising the latest programs, gadgets and online networks for their teaching and learning.

St Michael's has long been known as an information technology innovator, with a comprehensive range of skills offered across all year levels. Several teachers and Old Michaelians discuss what makes the School's technology program stand out.



Students collaborate on iPads using the software program, Collusion.

## The IT fundamentals

Mrs Chari Clarke, Director of Teaching and Learning (Junior School), is enthusiastic about the IT opportunities at St Michael's. 'Our students are taught with a raft of technologies, which gives them more options,' she says. 'When researching, they have the option of finding information using iPads, desktops or traditional books.'

Across all media, research skills are fundamental. 'From Year 3 up, we teach students the "Big Six" – our term for the series of steps they need to go through when researching and presenting their findings,' Mrs Clarke explains. 'They know they just can't Google the answer, and we provide them with a range of specialised tools to make their research skills more accurate and succinct.'

In every aspect of the classroom, technology is thoroughly integrated into the learning process. 'Students can record their learning with iPads and other devices, and we document their oral presentations with digital technology,' Mrs Clarke continues.

Teaching with IT involves a different way of learning, presenting and researching. 'The students are very comfortable with it, which is great,' says Mrs Clarke. 'IT has really helped us document students, and there are even some situations in which a teacher can learn from the students.'

This broad approach to IT brings many advantages. 'If a student is performing in a play, we can record it and place the file directly in their electronic portfolio,' Mrs Clarke explains. 'We've just introduced electronic portfolios into Years 4–6, which include a multimedia component. The students' performances were lost in the past, but we can now record and store them in detail.'

Integrating IT with the learning process brings other advantages. 'By documenting students' learning, we get a comprehensive record of what they've done,' says Mrs Clarke. 'It also allows increased communication with parents, which is great. Our parents now view the School as the main port of call for communications, and the teachers make the children's learning visible. It's made a big difference to busy parents, who can now view photos or videos of their child on Schol.'



Students use iPads to research online some of Melbourne's most iconic landmarks as part of an art project, as shown on page 5.



## Advanced learning in IT

In the IT department, there has been a major effort to integrate platforms across all devices. 'We're striving for an open cross-platform approach, where students can bring in a range of devices to suit their learning needs,' says Mr David Howard, Head of Learning Systems. 'To reduce classroom downtime, we also have a comprehensive helpdesk service.'

The tech-savvy nature of many St Michael's students has made it far easier to integrate technology into the classroom. 'We chose iPads for Years 6 and 7, so that teachers and students use the same device,' says Mr Howard. 'Year 9 students can choose a Mac or PC, either a customised machine or something lighter.'

In this case, independence is a key motivating factor. 'In Year 9, the students choose their own software and manage themselves,' says Mr Howard. 'To give them an extra challenge, the teacher will sometimes ask for work in a different format to what they've done before.'

At other times, students can often submit assignments on the platform of their choice. 'Assignments can now include photos, movies, sound files or a podcast,' Mr Howard continues. 'For other assignments, the teachers might ask them to submit a narrative work via a song, a dance, or a video.'

Mr Howard also runs regular sessions – 'Small Bites' – designed to improve the students' IT skills through practical participation. 'A team of skilled students assist with the rest of the class in these sharing sessions, where students can teach each other new skills,' he notes. 'We also run sessions for teaching staff, which students are welcome to attend.'

By placing such a strong emphasis on technology, St Michael's ensures that its students are able to flourish in a modern environment. 'We're hoping St Michael's graduates can become critical consumers and creative collaborators,' says Mr Howard. 'When they're researching online, for example, we teach them to look at each source's validity and gauge whether they're being scammed. We're building up their skills to combat cyber-bullying – including how to detect if something isn't right online, and what to do about it.'

## IT in VCE

According to Mr Howard, studying IT in VCE has clear advantages. 'IT Applications is a great all-round subject for students to have for any university degree, or even later life in terms of business skills,' he explains. 'Software Development provides students with an effective pathway into the more specialised path of programming, user interface and design, programming syntax and debugging tools.'

Mr Howard points out that Software Development gives students a key perspective on the industry. 'The subject provides students with a view into the user experience,' he says. 'They're trained to think from a user perspective as well as a development perspective, and consider how people interact with programs.'

Studying IT provides students with a broad range of useful skills. 'The skills learned in IT also benefit those who pursue other careers,' he points out. 'The subject features a troubleshooting aspect; students also learn debugging and problem-solving steps. IT students can master useful skills such as setting up modems and routers – the skills are highly transferrable across a range of hardware and software.'

St Michael's is one of the few schools that runs both Year 12 IT subjects. 'Since I joined St Michael's in 2008, we ran either IT Applications or Software Development,' he notes. 'Last year, for the first time, we ran each of the Year 12 subjects. That's virtually unheard of across the state, because IT numbers have been generally dropping for the last decade or so. At St Michael's, however, the discipline remains very strong.'

By the time they finish Year 12, our students have developed the advanced computer skills they need to take advantage of the modern world's opportunities. 'Whether it's a tablet or a laptop, St Michael's graduates will know exactly what device to use in university,' Mr Howard says. 'Our students also graduate from a school with first-class infrastructure, which gives them a far more enriched experience than they would have at schools with slower networks.'

## How technology is helping us to connect

The SchOL system, which was launched in 2013, has played a key role in centralising communications across St Michael's. 'One of SchOL's major tasks is to centralise communication across classes,' Mr Howard observes. 'Students and parents can now travel anywhere in the world, and instantly have all the information they need to communicate with teachers, parents and peers.'

The syllabus is governed by this strong interactive component. 'Students in the Humanities faculty can ask inquiry-based questions on my class page, which other students can respond to,' says Mr Howard. 'This allows the whole class to learn from each other, rather than just from the teacher.'

The online learning system at St Michael's also allows a higher degree of continuity between year levels. 'After a class is recorded in SchOL, it's there for the next year – so we don't have to start from scratch,' he says. 'When somebody else steps in to teach Software Development in 2015, all the resources will already be in place. This will allow us to build up a knowledge base, rather than unnecessarily repeating information each year.'

Robotics is one of IT's most exciting areas, and St Michael's is currently pursuing this area with enthusiasm. 'We've purchased three "Spheros" – a little ball which connects to an iPad or Android device via Bluetooth,' says Mr Howard. 'The students have to get their ball from Point A to Point B by negotiating a series of obstacles. We're going to set up a course on the oval with ramps and jumps, and orchestrate a race between three student teams.'

This exciting project will engage students from multiple year levels, from all sections of St Michael's. 'We're hoping to involve the Design & Technology department in building the ramps, jumps and tubes for the obstacle course,' says Mr Howard. 'The Junior School will be involved in the challenge to complete the course – perhaps with a Senior School student to guide them.'

This inclusive plan ties in with the ambition to teach students computer skills as early as possible. 'While the Year 6 students have their iPads, we also want to teach them about computations and logical thinking in a fun and interactive way, which will help them in later years when they encounter problems,' Mr Howard concludes.

## Electronic collaboration

Mr Jai Ross, ICT Manager at St Michael's, is enthusiastic about the possibilities offered by the IT department. 'Over the past 18 months, we've reviewed the classroom technology to gauge students' progress,' he says. 'To promote more interaction and collaboration, we're working with iPad software called Collusion, which allows students to work on the same electronic 'canvas' in a group setting. The technology arose from a Kickstarter initiative, which was backed by St Michael's.'

With Collusion technology, the group work sessions become highly collaborative. 'The students use a fine-tipped stylus pen, which transmits the message using ultrasonic sound. Students could be using their iPad or writing notes, and see the other person's notes appearing on the same canvas. As the canvas is large, students can zoom around on the iPad as well as zooming in on other people's work in real time. It has many uses – for example, students might be at a university lecture taking notes, and everyone's interpretations can be collated to look at later.'

This interactive notepad system has significant benefits for students' learning. 'It's great for brainstorming and collaboration,' Mr Ross confirms. Our Junior School students were the first in the world to use the interactive notepad – we even had a film crew out here to cover it. The teachers created an assessment with equations, which the students were then able to work on together.'

Using the notepad is a uniquely interactive process. 'You can select the numbers you've written, and move them around with your finger,' he says. 'For this exercise, the teacher purposely wrote an equation in the wrong order, and asked the students to reassemble it.'

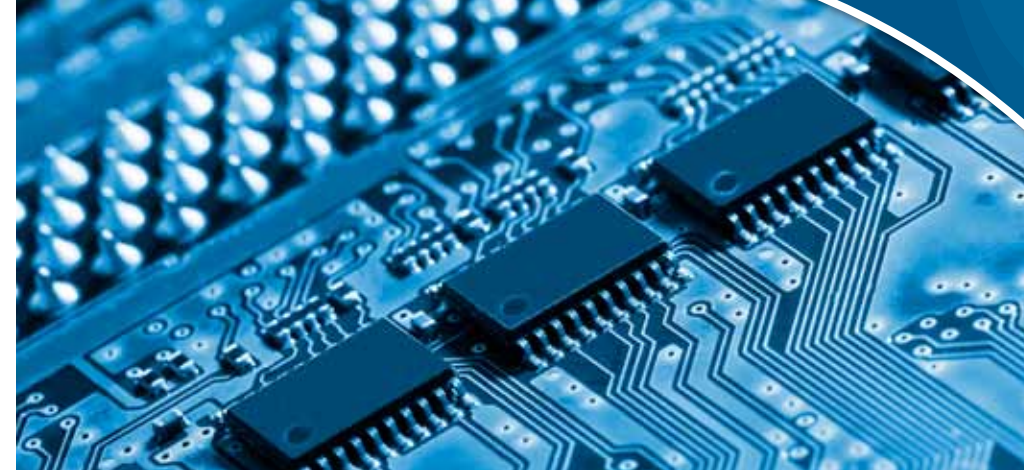
Videoconferencing is one of the other major developments supported by the IT department. 'We're forming a federation with Skype, which enables the program's users to interact with Linc users,' Mr Ross says. 'We're encouraging students in the classroom to interact and collaborate with other schools in future, and the interactive notepad presents an ideal way of doing this.'

tech  
talk

From left: The School's internal online program SchOL has been designed to streamline communication and collaboration between students, teachers and parents; iPads have become a useful tool for students' studies across all year levels; Junior students at St Michael's were the first in the world to use the iPad software program Collusion.







When The Commons opens in early 2016, it will introduce a wealth of IT opportunities for all students. 'The Commons will be fully wireless, which is a significant advance,' Mr Ross reveals. 'We're not building an AV system for today – we're building one that will still be current in 10 years' time.'

The interactive design of The Commons offers many opportunities to the IT department. 'The partitioned rooms within The Commons can be combined into a single classroom,' says Mr Ross. 'We're designing screens on a trolley system, which allows us to send a signal to any part of the room – the projector can then be taken into the open area. It's controllable via wall panels, where teachers can select content for

different classrooms. This makes the whole space highly flexible, as you can display information in multiple ways – something we've never been able to do before.'

In 2015, Mr Howard and Mr Ross are attending a conference in Philadelphia, USA, about the importance of innovative IT policy in schools. 'Over 3000 school delegates go to the conference,' Mr Ross points out, 'with the aim of working closely with other schools around the world on a variety of different technologies.'

In an increasingly interconnected world, having a comprehensive IT strategy is essential. This tireless emphasis on innovation will keep St Michael's at the forefront of communications technology.



Jack Bares works in the IT industry, setting up servers, connecting computers to the internet, and working in routing protocols.

## Forging a career in the industry

**Graduates from our Information Communication and Technologies program enter a number of sectors from every area of IT. Two St Michael's graduates who have gone on to pursue careers in the field share their story.**

### Jack Bares (OM 2011) – Front-end Developer

The IT program at St Michael's is renowned for its depth and clarity. 'I started IT in Year 9, and continued through to Year 12,' says Jack Bares. 'It was by far my favourite subject, and Mr Howard was a great teacher – he knew when someone was really interested in the subject, and really went the extra mile.'

Jack's positive IT experience continued in Year 12, when he was fully supported for his unconventional approach to a major project. 'I was hoping to do an assignment in a different language than the one specified,' he says. 'The assignment was originally a web page, but I wanted to do a C++ application instead. Mr Howard agreed – and even learned C++ so he could mark it! He really put the effort in to the classes, and I'm really grateful for all his help.'

Before he began his involvement with IT at St Michael's, Jack was a video games aficionado. 'I was obviously a fan of video games at that age, and learned about IT both at home and at school,' he recalls. 'Originally, I wanted to be a video game programmer.'

After studying IT for several years, Jack realised that it might be his calling. 'It wasn't until I started doing web-based material in Years 11 and 12 that I began to think about turning it into a career. I'm currently studying Computer Science at Swinburne – while I wasn't 100 per cent sure what I wanted to do when I graduated, I knew it would be ICT-based.'

For his current employment, Jack has branched out. 'I do network development – setting up servers, connecting computers to the internet, and working in routing protocols,' he says. 'I also completed a Web Development course, which includes Console Applications (Windows Apps).'

In his third year of Computer Science, Jack is pursuing the mobile market. 'We're currently doing iPhone and Android apps, and there's also a significant development and project management component,' he notes. 'The course is preparing me for a career in just about any aspect of ICT.'

Jack is already putting his entrepreneurial skills to good use in the industry. 'I've decided to pursue web development, and I've also done some freelance work, including a couple of websites for clients,' he says. 'I started working for a company called Extension at the end of the 2012 semester break, and did work experience at Yarra Trams before that.'

After working for Extension, Jack soon resolved to work for the company. 'Extension taught me about website development, and asked me to stay on with them until I went back to uni,' he remembers. 'When the course started again, Extension asked me to come in once or twice a week; it soon turned into a proper job. I've been a full-time employee there since July.'

Jack will complete the remainder of his subjects over the next year. 'I'm thinking of pursuing a position as a Lead Front End Developer, which involves working a lot with interface designs, UX, and user flow. I'm basically designing the user experience from the ground up, and building it as well.'

After that, Jack has his eye on overseas. 'I'm thinking about spending a year overseas in a couple of years – perhaps in Japan with Microsoft or Samsung, or in the US,' he reveals. It's only a matter of time before someone with Jack's experience is snapped up.



Dan Barrett says St Michael's Head of Learning Systems Mr David Howard inspired him to enter a career in IT.

### Dan Barrett (OM 2008) – IT Developer

Dan did every IT subject he could get his hands on, studying IT in Year 10, IT Applications in Year 11, and Software Development in Year 12.

Dan's commitment to IT has deep roots, as he had an early start. 'In Year 9, I launched my first website,' he remembers. 'It contained tutorials for making maps for computer games ... which may or may not have been played during class! From then on, a small spark was ignited inside me, and I slowly started to delve further into the world of IT.'

Fortunately, Dan received all the encouragement he needed. 'I was strongly encouraged in my pursuit of IT,' he confirms. 'My Maths, Science and IT teachers helped me reach the goals I needed to get into the university course I wanted.'

At St Michael's, one teacher in particular spurred Dan's ambition. 'I would have to say Mr Howard was the biggest inspiration for me in terms of IT,' he says. 'If it wasn't for his Year 12 Software Development class, I wouldn't be where I am today. And from an overall perspective, my Head of House, Mr Gill, was great for guidance and inspiration.'

Dan benefited from St Michael's commitment to technology. 'The end of Year 8 was a good year for St Michael's to introduce laptops,' he reflects. 'Having been a student interested in IT, then being involved in iPad/Mac rollouts at schools a couple of years later, I truly envy students who are in the education system at this very exciting time.'

The ever-expanding IT sector has presented a host of opportunities for enterprising young people like Dan. 'There's a wide range of career opportunities to be found,' he says. 'Yet as IT is quite a broad industry, it's hard to define exactly what a typical "IT job" is. As I wasn't exactly sure what IT career I wanted while I was at school, I found a university course that I liked the sound of.'

After completing his course, Dan was able to gain experience outside of his core area of knowledge. 'I quit university and spent a year in the hospitality industry as my pseudo-gap year, then started my IT career as a service technician,' he notes. 'In just four years, I've gone on to run my own business, work at another business, and run a very successful OS X Server tutorial website ... and I've just started writing my first technical book. If I can achieve all that I have in five years, anyone can!'

Dan's career has really taken off after graduation. 'I'm currently a Systems Engineer and Web Developer,' he says. 'My day job is developing websites for a digital agency in Perth, and in the evenings and weekends I do contract work as a Systems Engineer'. The workload is quite a lot to deal with. 'People often assume that because I work two jobs, you have to work very long hours to get anywhere,' he says. 'In my experience, that's not true – I work two jobs because I like working in the field, and I've taken the opportunity to work more and earn more.'

For those planning to follow his example, Dan has some wise words. 'It doesn't take a genius to be successful in IT – you just have to want to be successful,' he says. 'I would recommend studying IT to anyone. It's a huge industry, and you never know where you'll end up.'



# driven to innovate

St Michael's graduate Clare Cousins (OM 1993) is an award-winning architect and director of her own eponymous medium-sized practice. She discusses her interests, inspirations, and memories of the School.

After graduating from St Michael's, Clare Cousins studied architecture at RMIT. 'From my first year at RMIT, I worked part-time at several smaller practices, she says. 'In third year, I studied in Berlin on exchange for six months, and then backpacked around Europe.'

Returning to RMIT, Ms Cousins worked part-time for the in-house construction company at The Prince Hotel, St Kilda. 'Renowned architects Wood Marsh were designing the redevelopment, and later offered me a graduate position when the project was complete,' she recalls.

After working for Wood Marsh Architects for three years, Clare Cousins Architects was formed in 2005, which currently employs eight full-time staff. 'I always wanted to work for myself eventually,' she reveals, 'perhaps for the flexible work conditions conducive for family life.' Ms Cousins and husband Ben Pedersen have two daughters, Ginger, 6, and Ivy, 3.

Her firm's projects range from bespoke houses to multi-residential housing, retail design and mixed-use developments. 'Our passion for making architecture accessible led us to providing pro-bono design services after Black Saturday in 2009. We created a house design for the *We Will Rebuild* initiative, available at no cost to those affected by the fires. Our design was selected by a couple in Christmas Hills, and it was fulfilling to help them rebuild.'

Ms Cousins' work was recognised in 2013 with the prestigious Australian Institute of Architects' National Emerging Architect Award for her contribution to architectural practice, education, design excellence and community involvement. 'It was a privilege,' she says.

At St Michael's, Ms Cousins was maths and science focused. 'I pursued double Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics during VCE,' she remembers, as well as building confidence through extra-curricular activities.



Clare Cousins (OM 1993) is an award-winning architect. Photographer: James Geer.

'I was involved in various musicals (one at the Malthouse Theatre), and participated in choir and sport. Effective communication is essential in architecture.'

Ms Cousins appreciates the School's holistic approach. 'I still value the broad education,' she says. 'It's a strong drama school, and my brothers went on to creative pursuits. From one family of St Michael's students, we got an actor, a fashion designer and an architect!'

To read the full version of this article, visit [www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/news/old-michaelian-news](http://www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/news/old-michaelian-news)

## Merry Month of May

As part of St Michael's annual Merry Month of May activities, Liliana Scott Carranza (11B), pictured, bid farewell to her long locks for this year's World's Greatest Shave. Her efforts paid off, raising more than \$3000 for the Leukemia Foundation. 'For me, it was such a small sacrifice that will hopefully have a big impact on someone else's life,' Liliana says. 'I'm so glad that I chose to shave for a cure and have absolutely no regrets!' Overall, the month was a huge success, with Senior School students and staff raising more than \$16,000 (including \$11,987.25 from the World's Greatest Shave alone) for charities including the Jellybean Foundation, Heart Kids Foundation and Bailey House Foundation.

By Harriette Richards (11M)  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

# students put candidates to the test in the lead-up to this year's state election

St Michael's Emily Hall was abuzz with the sound of debate, as the three state candidates for the seat of Prahran discussed a series of political issues with Year 12 students at a special forum on 28 July.

The event, organised by Head of Humanities Mr Gerry Martin and Charlie Lempriere (12M), saw the candidates – then incumbent MLA Mr Clem Newton-Brown (Liberal), Mr Neil Pharaoh (Labor), and Mr Sam Hibbins (Greens) – explain their policies, then answer a series of perceptive questions from the students.

Mr Newton-Brown explained the importance of swinging voters on the final result, as well as drawing attention to the issue of building a new state secondary school for Prahran. Mr Newton-Brown also made the case for sticking with your party and leader through difficult times, and observed how social media has changed the political landscape.

Next was Mr Pharaoh, who covered a range of issues including his ongoing support for marriage equality (via Rainbow Labor Victoria), equal opportunity laws and affordable education. Explaining that both of his parents were the first in their family to go to university, Mr Pharaoh made a strong case for affordable higher education as a crucial path to employment.

Mr Hibbins concluded the initial round by reinforcing the importance of accessible education. Taking a personal approach, he noted that having the opportunity to attend TAFE was instrumental to his success. Mr Hibbins pointed out the influence of each person's actions in the forthcoming election, citing the importance of young people's perspectives to democracy.

After each speaker had introduced their platform, there was an opportunity to discuss the issues with the audience. The Year 12 students posed a series of perceptive questions, including: 'Do you think updating our public transport system is more important than funding the East-West link?', 'What are the benefits of having separate

state governments?', 'What are your views on global warming?', and 'If elected, what do you see as major educational reforms?'

Tosh Blakley (12K), who hosted the forum, was very pleased with the event, as he views young people's interest and participation as essential to the political process. 'I was asked to host, and gladly obliged,' he notes, pointing out the importance of ensuring that local political issues are covered. 'It was great to hear from the candidates, especially in relation to the forthcoming election. There's definitely a level of apathy among our generation, as many people don't know a lot about state politics. Australian politics is a passion of mine, and it's great to raise awareness about these issues.'

According to Mr Martin, 'the opportunity for our students to connect with real politicians, put forward their concerns and engage with the political process is meaningful and tangible. Furthermore, it motivates and challenges students to be active citizens in our community.'

The students were also addressed by a representative of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) on the importance of enrolling to vote.

'This year, for the first time, I can vote in an election – and I'm very excited,' Charlie says. 'I'll definitely show up to the polls, and won't be donkey voting.'

Charlie has some thoughts about state politics. 'The state election is a valuable aspect to our democratic system, in place to represent the people and support them,' he notes. 'It was fascinating to see the three candidates for the Prahran district explaining how they will attempt to do just that.'

'Clem Newton-Brown, Neil Pharaoh, and Sam Hibbins all have different past experiences, beliefs and ideas for the future,' Charlie observes. 'The clash of ideologies was an important dissemination for the 140 students ready to shape Australia's political path.'

'The debate went smoothly, the candidates introduced themselves and expanded on considered questions from the audience,' Charlie continues. 'This was a great chance for the two Politics classes to engage with the people who influence textbooks.'

Madaleine Armstrong, Tosh Blakley (both 12K), Mr Sam Hibbins, Mr Neil Pharaoh, Kirra Solterbeck (12S), Mr Simon Gipson, Mr Clem Newton-Brown, Alice Mika (12S), Charlie Lempriere (12M) and Mr Gerry Martin.







our international connections

## how we learn on a global scale

The teaching and learning opportunities offered to St Michael's students and staff extend far beyond the walls of the classroom and the gates of our school grounds.

## International opportunities for our students

As part of the School's Languages, Visual Arts and Music programs, students have the opportunity to host international guests and, in turn, travel overseas to experience different cultures and communities across the world.

Learning languages has always been a major part of the School's curriculum. Our students can participate in learning exchanges with Le Bon Sauveur in France and Keio Shonan Fujisawa Junior and Senior High School in Japan. Through these exchanges, students acquire a better knowledge of the culture and dialect they are studying, and also gain a greater awareness of themselves and their own language and community.

The Le Bon Sauveur exchange has taken place every second year since 1999. The independent Catholic coeducational primary and secondary school is situated in the western suburbs of Paris. French families host Australian students for approximately six weeks in the December – January summer holidays, and then the families of Australian students host French students who come for approximately five weeks during their summer holidays in June – July.

Staying with host families enables students to be immersed in French life, and provides them with a stable, friendly and safe environment. Excursions and daily meetings with other St Michael's students are also organised to ensure that students feel connected.

The exchange with Keio Shonan Fujisawa Junior and Senior High School started in 1995 as a yearly exchange, and now takes place every second year. St Michael's students in Years 10 and 11 have first priority to take part in the program, travelling to Japan in January and welcoming the Keio students to Australia in February/March. The trips provide a mix of immersion in the life of students' exchange families, participation in the life of the exchange school, and sightseeing.

This year, as part of the program, 17 Japanese students spent 10 days at St Michael's. 'The exchange program is a reciprocal arrangement,' explains Japanese Teacher Mr Tetsu Yamada. 'A group of St Michael's students went to Japan in 2013 and stayed at our sister school for two weeks.' The initiative brings many benefits to students from each school. 'The students already know each other from last year's St Michael's visit,' Mr Yamada adds. 'The Japanese visitors got to see what Australian culture is like, and had the opportunity to speak English. This not only deepened their understanding of Australian language and culture, but also helped them to form enduring friendships with our students.'

During their stay, the Japanese students enjoyed a host of activities, including a cooking class on how to make scones, the chance to explore photography as part of the School's Visual Arts and Design program, an African drumming session and much more.

Every second year, a group of senior students are selected to perform throughout Europe as part of the European Choir Tour. Beginning in 2003, the four-week program has visited various cities, from Iceland to Italy, and has become one of the most sought-after and valued international experiences on offer at St Michael's.

This year, 29 students from Years 8 to 11 travelled through France, England, Ireland, Wales, Germany and Austria where they performed concerts for local communities and spent time sightseeing and taking in the native culture. Community Liaison Officer Ms Laura Doran, who accompanied the students on the 2014 trip, described the program as a 'once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our students'. Born and raised in Ireland herself, Ms Doran said it was great to return home and share the 'Irish way of life' with her colleagues and students. 'For me, it was wonderful to see the students experience the places and environment that I've grown up in and appreciated from such a young age. Ireland is another world away from what these kids are used to back in Melbourne, so it's great for them to be able to experience that and perform at some of the most iconic venues, not only in Dublin but across Europe in places like Paris, Morlaix, Edinburgh and Llangollen as well. They'll cherish these memories forever.'

Gabriel Phillips (11M) said he would highly recommend his younger peers take advantage of the 'amazing opportunity'. He said travelling to a new place every couple of days and sightseeing, particularly in France and the UK, were among his highlights of the trip. 'In Wales, we performed at an eisteddfod with people from other countries, in a massive parade – that was a lot of fun, meeting new people from all over the world,' Gabriel recalls. 'France was unforgettable, especially our host families – they were pretty amazing. Speaking French was a little challenging, but being immersed in the culture was fantastic.'

'I've done Euro Choir twice now – when I was in Year 9 and Year 11 – but they were very different experiences,' Gabriel adds. 'If you do it in Year 9, you have a lot of fun, and you gain independence. In Year 11, it's more about leadership qualities. It's a great experience if you're looking towards a leadership position in Year 12 – I think you would learn a lot on the trip.'



The 2014 European Choir Tour performs at St Andrew's Cathedral in Glasgow, Scotland.



Also part of the St Michael's Music program is the China Tour, a new initiative which started in 2013 and involves an instrumental group performing in Beijing, Xian and Shanghai. The Tour was developed with an Asia-centred focus to complement the long-established European Choir Tour. 'The experience is a remarkable one for students, including developing resilience, immersion in another culture and learning about our place in the world,' explains Dr Chris McGillen, Head of Performing Arts/ Director of Music. 'The China Tour was open to instrumentalists, which fulfilled a need within the program.'

During the inaugural trip in 2013, a group of 18 students came together to form the very first orchestra to travel overseas, visiting locations including Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, Great Wall of China, Summer Palace, Temple of Heaven, National Centre of Performing Arts and the Peking Opera. 'The students had an amazing time, with one of the peak experiences performing on the Great Wall of China to a huge audience,' Dr McGillen adds. The next China Tour is being planned for 2017. Reflecting on her participation on the China Tour last year, Freya Devos (12H) described the program as a 'treasured experience'.

A biennial Italy Trip is an opportunity for enthusiastic students from Years 10 to 12 who enjoy studying art and/or learning the Italian language to build on their understanding of Italian culture while developing their skills.

Rome marked the beginning of the 2014 trip to Italy. The Italian students attended an intensive six-day language course, while the Art students visited several galleries and sampled a variety of Rome's historical and cultural treasures. Florence followed, with our students enjoying a range of masterpieces – including, of course, Michelangelo's *David in the Accademia di Belle Arti*. This was followed by day trips to Siena and Pisa, then a two-day stop at a villa in Umbria. The students completed the last leg of the trip with renewed energy, spending four days in the remarkable water-bound city of Venice, with a small group day-tripping to Verona.

After a final stop in Milan to see Leonardo's *The Last Supper*, the Art students said farewell to Italy. 'We hope the students will be able to apply what they've learnt on their travels to their artistic practice,' says Head of Visual Arts and Design Miss Monique Warwick. 'It's also about learning the language of art, and grasping the symbols and signs embedded in the artworks.'

'My students are really interested in speaking Italian, yet sometimes struggle to put the language in context,' adds Italian Teacher Mr Salvatore Monterosso. 'Learning within four walls is one thing, but students can really benefit from visiting the country. As a teacher, seeing them challenging themselves every day was the best part.'

## a winter spent a world away

On a cold, windy Melbourne night, just after 1am, my mum and I hopped in the car and took off down the highway, headed for the airport. As we waited eagerly with the other St Michael's families, our anticipation grew. We were a big bundle of nerves and excitement as we stood by the exit door awaiting the arrival.

Finally, the glass door opened and out poured a mass of French exchange students; some still half asleep but most smiling with excitement. We flocked to the group, each collecting our own correspondents and whisking them away to the comfort and warmth of our cars. Once home, showered, fed and settled, my student, Alexandra, slept for an impressive 20 hours before I made the decision to wake her.

Flash back six months, and these roles were completely reversed; I was the one arriving, exhausted after 24 hours of

travel into a new home with new faces and a different language. I was thankful to have the knowledge and understanding gained by my own exchange experience in Paris the previous summer to help me best accommodate Alexandra. After a few jetlagged days of settling in, Alexandra was finally able to relax and make herself comfortable in my home with my family, and the strong bond we formed during my time in Paris was soon rediscovered.

Applying for the French exchange program at St Michael's almost a year ago was, without a doubt, one of the best and most rewarding things I have ever done. Everything about this program has taught me something about myself, culture or language, and I am confident I have made memories that will stick with me for years to come, not to mention the international friendships that have arisen.

The concept of the 'exchange' is highly evident in the entire process. My time spent in France and Alexandra's time spent in Australia have undoubtedly led to the exchange of countless cultural aspects, such as food, entertainment, backgrounds, means of celebration and, of course, language, the core focus of the program.

Hosting Alexandra in Melbourne has been a truly incredible experience in itself, leading me to discover so much more about my home city than I ever knew existed. The occasion also sparked the idea to visit the Great Barrier Reef in the June-July holidays to show Alexandra a little more of Australia, which was just as exciting for me as it was for her!

**By Harriette Richards (11M)**  
**CONTRIBUTING WRITER**



Students perform on the steps of the Great Wall of China during last year's China Music Tour.

our international connections  
how we learn on a global scale >

## Bringing culture to our classrooms

As our school logo states, diversity opens minds, and this important value of St Michael's certainly incorporates the people employed by the School. You may be surprised to know that St Michael's has a number of teaching and non-teaching staff who have packed their bags and boarded a plane to call Australia home. And, in turn, they have found a place at St Michael's, whether that be in the classroom, the boardroom or working hard behind the scenes.

Italian Teacher Mrs Rosalinda Di Virgilio moved to Australia nine years ago from Italy and, having started working as a high school teacher for the first time last year, she can compare first-hand the differences between the Australian and Italian school system and culture.

Mrs Di Virgilio arrived at St Michael's in 2013 after a five-week stint as a student teacher. As a new addition to the School, Mrs Di Virgilio immediately appreciated the diversity of academic and cultural activities through which boys and girls could grow together. 'This is the way I grew up at school in Italy,' she recalls. 'St Michael's cares a lot about its students and has a very good pastoral care program.'

Unlike schools in Italy, Australian schools give students many possibilities with a variety of subjects to choose from, Mrs Di Virgilio explains. 'It doesn't happen like this in Italy. In Year 8, when you are 12 or 13 years old, you have to decide what kind of high school you want to attend, as there are different schools for different subject areas.' The downfall of this system, Mrs Di Virgilio notes, is 'if you make the wrong choice or the wrong decision initially, you have to stick with it for five years. You can't change. Having chosen the Tecnico Commerciale (commerce/technology) school, I found I didn't like it after three years, as I realised I didn't want to become an accountant or study commerce at university. When I was 17, doing a student exchange in England and then Spain, I discovered I loved languages. But I had to wait for university, where I chose to study languages and literature.'

Mrs Di Virgilio explained that in Italy, students study a lot of theory and have to prepare for almost daily oral assessments. 'It's really scary!' she says. 'What I value here in Australia is the more practical perspective of education and the choices available; doing Drama, for instance, is something that is not possible if you choose a technical high school. That's what I love here.'

Head of Mathematics Mr Darren Smyth, who this year successfully passed his Australian citizenship on 13 June, has no regrets about his move from England to Melbourne in January 2011. 'Australia seemed like a nice place to live from all the *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* episodes we'd been fed in the UK,' Mr Smyth laughs.



Harriette Richards (11M) gives her exchange student Alexandra a taste of Australia during a family trip to Hamilton Island.



‘I miss my family a lot, but the quality of life here in Australia is quite extraordinary. In all the places I’ve been in Australia, and I think I’ve seen most of them, there is something undefinable about Melbourne. It’s small enough to be friendly, big enough to be a city; cultured yet naive and innocent; Australian yet European.’

Mr Smyth said he was ‘strangely moved’ by the citizenship ceremony. ‘Being an Australian citizen was something I really wanted,’ he explains. ‘Standing there singing the National Anthem actually meant something for the first time. I’d been asked to sing it before in my previous school, but felt no resonance with it. Being accepted by Australia as my home country now, there is something much more personal about singing the National Anthem. The ceremony was formal but relaxed – very Aussie. However, I did find it wildly hilarious that I was pledging allegiance to the Queen when I was already British!’

Since arriving at St Michael’s at the beginning of this year, Mr Smyth says he has had a strong desire to be the best he can be. ‘St Michael’s seeks the best from its staff, so this year has been one of learning for me,’ he says. ‘The School has some amazing staff and students and I feel proud to be working here. I have the support of a department who want nothing more than the best from the students, and a manager who has taken my strange ideas and allowed them to come to fruition and allow the education of students in the Mathematics Department to go from strength to strength.’

Director of People and Strategy Ms Clare Murphy described St Michael’s as having a great mix of staff, who each bring something unique to the School. ‘Because we have such a diverse culture and environment, people are attracted to that and come from many different backgrounds and countries to work at St Michael’s,’ she explains. ‘A lot of people comment on our culture, our values and the vibe of the School when applying for a role here at St Michael’s. And when they look at our website and then visit the School, even if it’s just for an interview, they see that what’s on the website matches what it is that we actually do.’

‘It’s a different set of skills and knowledge that staff from overseas bring to the School and can then share with other staff and our students,’ Ms Murphy adds. ‘Particularly with our Languages teachers – they have first-hand experience with the culture, which is the next best thing for our students as opposed to actually being in the country themselves. It’s very authentic.’

## an Australian girl in Italy

The 2014 Italy Art and Language Tour left Melbourne on 17 June, bound for a three-week adventure travelling through Rome, Florence, Venice, Umbria and Milan.

I was really looking forward to travelling overseas in a different way, and to see Italy in a different light – on a school trip. Spending the time away from home and with a group of people I otherwise wouldn’t have travelled overseas with was a unique experience, and I’d encourage anyone with the opportunity to take it.

The three weeks I spent in Italy not only taught me a better quality of Italian language, but countless other useful, casual phrases and gestures that I wouldn’t have learned back in Australia. I found the best way to consolidate what I’m taught in the classroom is to speak often and confidently. With any language, there are many differences between what’s written in the textbook to what’s said on the street. With a language like Italian – constructed of many dialects, casual expressions and hand gestures – there was no better way to learn than to be immersed in the language. The easiest way to pick up the lingo was by having short conversations with the locals – waiters, shop assistants, train supervisors, taxi drivers, even uniformed men to ask for directions. All of these conversations contributed to our constant learning of the language.



While this trip has developed my Italian language skills, it was also three weeks I spent away from home, away from my parents, gaining independence and learning about a foreign culture, a new language and a different society.

The cities we visited were all special in different ways. In Rome, we visited many of the tourist attractions, like the Colosseum and the Trevi Fountain. In Florence we saw the classic Statue of David and the Uffizi Gallery. During our four-night stay in Venice, we were happy to stay 20 minutes off the mainland on the island of Lido – we even went to the beach. Midway through the trip, we were lucky to have spent two nights at a villa in Umbria in the countryside, where we swam in the pool and spent time with the horses. We finished off the trip with one night in Milan, where we saw Da Vinci’s *Last Supper*, and had some time to shop. Although it was raining, and we flew out first thing the next morning, every day of the trip (including the grey day in Milan) was memorable.

By Ella Hockley (10K)  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

## our international connections how we learn on a global scale >

### Exchanging our knowledge and extending our learning

St Michael’s continues to be one of Australia’s leading independent schools, so it’s no surprise that we receive numerous requests, year after year, from other schools across the country and even the world to learn about our programs and innovative approach to education.

Early in the year, we welcomed a group of visitors from Naruto University in Japan, who toured St Michael’s to learn about education in Australia. By visiting our school, the nine teachers were able to improve their teaching skills, taking into account the differences between Australian and Japanese education.

In March, we welcomed Cambodian teachers Mr Thou and Mrs Leakhena from the Cambodian Children’s Fund (CCF). The School’s connection with CCF formed after Head of the School Mr Simon Gipson spent two months of his three-month long service leave in January 2013 volunteering with the organisation – which aims to provide a future for impoverished children who have spent their lives on society’s margins – and advising on how to provide children with the best opportunity to enter university.

Mr Thou and Mrs Leakhena were delighted to visit St Michael’s, describing their visit as a great opportunity to observe an Australian school. ‘The condition of our trip was that we bring back all our ideas and experiences to develop CCF education, which we’re happy to do,’ Mr Thou explained.

The different educational approach in Australia was an interesting experience for the visitors. ‘In Cambodia, all the students are silent and concentrate on the lesson,’ says Mrs Leakhena. ‘In contrast, Australian students are very different – they are quite challenging, but also very fast!’

Mr Thou and Mrs Leakhena also noticed that technology plays a very large role in Australian education. ‘Australian students use a lot of technology, including internet and iPads,’ Mr Thou notes. ‘We would like to do this at CCF when we have more funds, space and resources; at the moment, we can’t buy iPads in Cambodia because they’re too expensive. We have nearly 2000 students in our care, which is why we need more resources. We recently got a donation of iPads – even though we don’t have enough iPads for every student at CCF, we can use what we have to improve our students’ learning.’



Above: Mr Thou and Mrs Leakhena visited St Michael’s this year from Cambodia to observe life at an Australian school.  
Below: St Michael’s welcomed a group of visiting teachers from Japan’s Naruto University.



## from Serbia to St Michael's

I came to St Michael's as an international student from Serbia last year when I was in Year 10. I'd been aware that the schooling system was very different – for example, we don't have uniforms or a House system in Serbian schools – but I didn't expect to have any difficulties getting used to it, and hoped to fit in smoothly. The teachers and students were welcoming, and not once did I feel like I was receiving special or unfair treatment, which is something I'm still grateful for to this day.

One of the things I found most unusual was how students had different classes for all their subjects, allowing them to interact with most of the students in their peer group. For the first eight years of my education, I'd had all my classes with the same group of people, which only changed in high school; this excluded electives, which you had in every year because, unlike VCE, there isn't a point where you can choose your own subjects. Instead, all students take the same subjects, and more are added as you near the equivalent of Year 12, so you end up doing 16 subjects including three languages, all science subjects, music and

art, regardless of your interests or talent. Having all my classes with a different set of people has helped me to make more friends, and I'm very happy I get to do the subjects I like in my last two years of secondary school.

Most of the co-curricular activities at St Michael's involve students from across different year levels, whereas at my old school in Serbia, each sport had a separate team for each year level, and plays that we performed were usually put on by students who are studying it in Serbian (the subject equivalent to English), with some guidance and supervision from their teacher. In a sense, those productions were similar to St Michael's student productions, such as this year's *The Physicists*, in which I had a part.

My time at this school has been very positive, and given all the experiences I've had and the friends I've made here, I am glad that I go to St Michael's.

**By Milica Zivanov (11S)**  
**CONTRIBUTING WRITER**

## Cambodia calling

Sebastian Strangio (OM 2000) has been writing about Cambodia for many years. This year, he is releasing his first book, *Hun Sen's Cambodia*. 'I've studied the Khmer Rouge period and its aftermath, as well as how the country has developed since,' he explains. 'The last part of the book looks at the issues faced by Cambodia today.'

The country currently faces many challenges. 'Cambodia's unusually corrupt, with a lot of land grabbing and concern about foreign aid money,' Sebastian continues. 'I wanted to provide a synthesis of how the country works, what that reveals about Cambodia's history and development, and what it means to try and import democracy and human rights into a country that has historically never experienced them.'

Since moving to Cambodia in 2008, Sebastian has been heavily involved in the country's life. 'I worked for the *Phnom Penh Post*, one of the two English-language papers, for about three years,' he remembers. 'I started doing freelance work in the region, covering Bangladesh, Thailand, Korea and Burma. When I got the opportunity to do the book, I decided to focus my energy on that.'

Sebastian travelled extensively for his research. 'I had done trips for other stories, and was able to incorporate a lot of that reporting in the book. I also did four or five trips to certain regions, looking at issues of forestry and illegal logging, indigenous land rights, and religion's role in political campaigns.'

Covering last year's election took Sebastian right around the country. 'I tried to get out of the capital as much as I could, because the majority of Cambodia is rural and still very poor,' he notes. 'The division between city and countryside is one of the great developing challenges the country now faces.'

Sebastian's career has proceeded in many small steps. 'When I quit my job in 2011 and started freelancing, I was unsure how successful I'd be,' he admits. 'I remember doing a really big trip to Northeast Asia, Vladivostok, Seoul and Northeast China, and I successfully pitched the story.' Since that time, Sebastian has written for many major sources. 'I wrote a couple of pieces about a North Korean restaurant chain for the *Atlantic Monthly* – there are several in Cambodia, and some in other Asian countries. I look at the economics, as well as the human side. The Atlantic loved the piece, which really boosted my confidence.'

*Sebastian's new book is available for pre-order at [www.sebastianstrangio.com/hun-sens-cambodia/](http://www.sebastianstrangio.com/hun-sens-cambodia/), or via [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)*

*You can view the full version of this article at [www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/sebastianstrangio](http://www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/sebastianstrangio)*

## from Redan Street to Raminingining...

# ...how two Old Michaelians met in north-east Arnhem Land

I never envisaged working with a fellow Old Michaelian here in Raminingining, a remote Indigenous community 580 kilometres east of Darwin. Raminingining is situated on the Arafura Sea Swamp with a population of about 1000 people. The community was established in the early 1970s and became recognised as Aboriginal land with the passage of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* (1976).



I attended St Michael's from 1997 to 2002. After hanging up my fedora, I completed a Bachelor of Nursing/Arts at The Australian Catholic University. I spent several years working at St Vincent's Hospital before making the move up to the Northern Territory in June 2010 for a working holiday – four years later, I'm still here! I live in Nhulunbuy and work as a Remote Mental Health Nurse for the East Arnhem Mental Health Team. I completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Mental Health Nursing in 2012 and am currently studying a Masters of Public Health.

There is something special about this place. Raminingining is built on land owned by the Djadawitjibi people of the Djinang group. They are Yolngu people, whose principal creative being is Garrtjambal, the Red Kangaroo. The Yolngu people I work with are a wealth of knowledge, inspiring and good fun. The language barrier is a challenge, but I am learning bits and pieces when I can.

It took a few Facebook photos of my St Michael's reunion for Dr Anne Patton, another Old Michaelian, and I to cross paths. Anne attended St Michael's from 1969 to 1974 before completing her Medical Degree at

The University of Melbourne and internship at The Royal Melbourne Hospital. Anne, her husband David, and their two children Nicholas and Sarah, made the big move up north to pursue work in remote Aboriginal communities. In 1995, Anne worked in a remote community called Wadeye (Port Keats) and later moved to Nhulunbuy (Gove) in 1999 before settling in Darwin. Anne is now working as a Consultant Psychiatrist for Top End Mental Health Service. Part of that role includes remote travel to communities such as Raminingining.

When Anne and I connected, we shared stories about our time at St Michael's, and our parents picking us up from Redan Street. We talked a lot about the uniform, those hats and prefects. Anne told me she remembers spending lots of her school years in haberdashery stores looking for red ribbons for the school uniform. Of course it was a different time when she attended St Michael's – the nuns were teaching and it wasn't coeducational yet.

My fond memories of St Michael's are the drama performances, in particular *Les Misérables* and *Chicago*. Other memories would definitely be Exodus and travelling to Japan on exchange in Year 9. My favourite Exodus trip was the solo experience in Year 10 – maybe that inspired me to move remote.

Now together, Anne and I are out bush and hard at work with people and their families affected by mental health problems. Rather than searching for red ribbons, instead we're keeping an eye out for that Red Kangaroo! In the future, I plan to follow in Anne's footsteps and study medicine and do psychiatry. It's a long road, but I'll get there – eventually.

**By Ali Thorn (OM 2002)**



Anne Patton (OM 1974) and Ali Thorn (OM 2002) with members of the Raminingining community.



# Read all about it ... on the web

For the full stories, go to [www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/news/mnews](http://www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/news/mnews)



The Astor Theatre resounded to the strains of ABBA earlier this year, as St Michael's students in Years 7 to 12 partook in the annual and ever-popular House Singing competition with a 1970s heart.



St Michael's Grammar School has been nationally recognised for its Scholarship Program after receiving this year's Admissions Event Award at the 2014 Educate Plus Biennial International Conference. The prestigious award, pictured with Director of Admissions and Community Engagement Mrs Bo Rutecki and Admissions staff Mr James Anderson and Mrs Susan Papotto, was presented 'in recognition of excellence in a specific event or series of events targeting enrolments'.

A group of word buffs have come together to form a special club which provides students with an opportunity to improve on their writing skills. Write Club, part of the Senior Libraries Literacy strategy, meets every fortnight for creative writing exercises, and has also welcomed guest writers/publishers to their sessions to discuss all things 'writing'.



Tristan Cole (10B) was recently awarded the highly sought-after Royal Victorian Aero Club Flying Scholarship. Tristan is a young man of many talents, having learned to fly over the past year, as well as compete in keel boat sailing with the Royal Brighton Yacht Club and train in Kung Fu at the Golden Lion Academy, where he holds a Junior Black Belt.

Students, staff and parents attended a special event on 17 September to officially launch the School's new Kitchen Garden, located in front of Frank Woods House. The new learning space was constructed in April with great support from many parents, PFA members, the Kitchen Garden Committee, the Design and Technology Faculty, and Property and Maintenance teams.



St Michael's Grammar School and Red Stitch joined forces earlier this year for a specially commissioned play by Glyn Roberts, which featured 12 students from Years 10 to 12 and four adult professional actors, including the talented Dion Mills.

The Buddies Program is a wonderful initiative where children from Kindergarten and Preparatory spend time and spark friendships with students in Year 5. The program sees the Year 5 students act as mentors to the younger students, with each year level learning how the other grades spend their time at school.



On 19 September, St Michael's welcomed to the School American actress and Down syndrome ambassador Lauren Potter, who plays Becky Jackson in the hit US television show *Glee*. During her speech to the Year 9 students, Ms Potter spoke movingly of the difficulties she has experienced and overcome as a person with a disability, and the importance of accepting others for who they are.



A group of Year 10 students took part in the 2014 Australian History Competition in August with some outstanding results. This was the first time St Michael's has been involved in the challenge, and the achievements of our volunteer students are worth celebrating.

Old Michaelian Tamsin Young is taking the roller derby world by storm, having this year competed in The Great Southern Slam as part of the Victorian Roller Derby League All Star team in June, before heading over to the United States where her team was ranked number 5 in the world.



Photo credit: SLDixon Photography



Students in Year 6 took to the stage in September to perform in the Year 6 Musical *Peter Pan Jr*. The production was a huge success, with a compelling array of songs, including *The Night Sky*, *Hana Mana Ganda* and *Fly to Your Heart*.



Oliver Pizey-Stratford (6JP) delivered a special presentation to Junior School students in July, explaining to his classmates what it's like to live in a wheelchair. A keen sportsman, Oliver simply wanted to show people that he could do almost anything anyone else could, and explained how he dealt with day-to-day challenges.



Encouraging Innovation

Building continuity

Bridging divisions

# the Middle Years AT ST MICHAEL'S

The beginning of adolescence is one of the crucial periods of each child's unfolding story. It is an ideal opportunity to prepare for the challenges of adulthood, and successfully negotiate the onset of maturity. At St Michael's, we recognise that the middle years are a pivotal period in each student's education. St Michael's staff members discuss their role in the School's integrated comprehensive Middle Years program.

## Encouraging innovation

In the view of Mr Ash Abdou, Director of Learning (Years 6–8), the Middle Years is a focal point for fostering innovation. 'There are two highly significant developmental periods in every St Michael's student's life,' he explains. 'The first is in Margaret Thomas House, where children are undergoing significant brain development and physical changes; the second begins with the onset of adolescence, which is an equally significant time of cognitive, emotional and physical development.'

Yet while the former period is acknowledged as one of great change, the significance of the latter is often underestimated. 'During each student's educational journey, the variation in development is often the most pronounced in the Middle Years,' says Mr Abdou. 'At St Michael's, we address that significant period with a careful focus on teaching, learning and caring.' During adolescence, students craft their own identity and begin to define their place in the world. 'We look at what's conducive to young adolescents' development, at a time when their identity and friendships are most important to them,' Mr Abdou says. 'Cognitive and physical development varies, as students develop at different rates. Some are ready for Senior School at the beginning of Year 6, while others take a little longer.'

'We recognise how important it is to be aware of each student's rate of development,' he continues. 'Many students are physically and emotionally more mature than others, and this period can be tumultuous for some; each student's individual experiences are different. When students are becoming young adults and developing autonomy, their peers are important to them. Students in the middle years also begin to develop a strong sense of social justice during this time, and many become more emotionally connected to the world around them.'

An intensive focus is crucial during this time of change. 'As a school, we are looking at development programs for our young adolescents,' Mr Abdou points out. 'Our goal is to create and maintain significant teacher-student relationships as they transition from year to year.'

The School's timetable has been significantly revised to accommodate a flexible approach in the middle years. 'It provides teachers with the opportunity to work collaboratively and across the junior and senior environments; teaching in new and innovative ways, while at the same time collaborating as a team of professionals who possess an understanding of young adolescents. Some of our Senior School teachers are now teaching core subjects such as Mathematics and English in Year 6. This provides them with a unique opportunity to bridge the divide between the junior and senior years,' Mr Abdou notes. 'When students move from Year 6 to Year 7 to Year 8, they're able to maintain and build on the strong connections formed with their teachers and tutors in previous years. This new integrated timetable makes each student's transition to the senior years a continuous process.'

Encouraging a high level of flexibility has created an abundance of collaborative learning opportunities. 'Our goal is to create the best of both worlds – we're essentially taking the best of what we offer students in the Junior School and Senior School, and combining them in the middle years,' says Mr Abdou.

'Our transdisciplinary curriculum in the Junior School provides students with the intellectual and conceptual tools to make meaningful connections between distinct areas of learning,' Mr Abdou continues. 'As students transition through the middle years, they move from a transdisciplinary curriculum which makes connections to multiple areas of learning to a discipline-based curriculum which organises knowledge into subjects. With Year 6 Mathematics and English, for example, we're encouraging students to make connections with other subjects; however, we are also preparing them for Senior School, because the teachers are familiar with the curriculum in Year 7 and know where they're headed.'

## Building continuity

Mrs Chari Clarke, Director of Teaching and Learning (Junior School), confirms the importance of transdisciplinary learning at St Michael's. 'We're calling this period the Middle Years rather than Middle School, as a result of the major changes we've made,' she says. 'Given the extensive links we're fostering between all year levels, it's a huge advantage to have all students studying on a single campus. For example, the Year 6 students obviously have a close connection with the Junior School, but they're now also linked with the Year 7 students. It's important for them to form contacts with each group, so the younger students can feel like they're a part of the whole school.'

Mrs Clarke is pleased about the increasing level of crossover between Years 6 and 7, which extends to staff members teaching across year levels. 'I really appreciate the fact that we now have some of our Year 7 teachers teaching our Year 6 students, and vice-versa,' she points out. 'This is a really strong aspect of our effort to become a holistic K–12 school, because it's providing us with key insights into the relationship between Senior School and Junior School. The Year 6 students can now gain a real sense of how Year 7 operates before they get there.'

The revised syllabus now features a genuine exchange between Years 6 and 7. 'We've had a Senior School Mathematics teacher teaching our Year 6 students in the past, and we now also have a Senior School English specialist teaching them as well,' Mrs Clarke says. 'It's great for our teachers from both areas to see how the other works, look at the differences, and decide whether Year 6 students can adopt some aspects of learning that work well for Year 7 students, and vice-versa.'

The plan is rapidly expanding. 'Year 6 classroom teachers will either teach Mathematics or English, in addition to Transdisciplinary Learning (TL) inquiry learning,' says Mrs Clarke. 'Mrs Emma Phillips teaches English and TL to her Year 6 class, for example, and Ms Tracy Pidduck teaches them Mathematics. Similarly, Miss Jacqueline Pagnani teaches English and TL to her Year 6 class and English to Year 7 students, while Ms Mietta Embury will teach them Mathematics – but they specialise in what we consider the core curriculum of Mathematics, English and TL.'

This system is already making the process of moving between year levels far easier for the students. 'The Year 6 students get a feel for what Year 7 is going to be like, which aids their transition,' Mrs Clarke observes. 'When the current Year 6 students enter Year 7, they'll already be familiar with those teachers – it won't be totally new, so they'll settle into classes more quickly.'

The integrated program also aids the social aspect of students' transition, as they get to know their peers from other year levels. 'We're hoping to run Year 6 and 7 Mathematics and English at the same time in future, which would enable the two groups of students to learn together,' says Mrs Clarke. 'The aim is to create a Middle Years timetable, with staff specifically committed to teaching these years.'

The plan for integration is already seeing results. 'This initiative is opening our eyes to what's happening across different areas of teaching,' Mrs Clarke concludes. 'We've already started to iron out the creases, and we've now started to see how we can further improve the process.'



Bridging divisions

Year 6 and 7 Teacher Mr Sean Powell is one of the first to make the crossover. 'I'm currently teaching the Year 6 students – except instead of teaching Year 6 English, I teach Year 7 Mathematics,' he says. 'By reducing the divisions between Years 6 and 7, we're helping the students make the transition, so they don't feel as if they're moving between two completely different worlds.'

For Mr Powell, teaching Year 7 is particularly valuable. 'It helps me get a feel for what the next level of Mathematics is, which is also great for my Year 6 classes, he observes. 'Now, when I'm teaching Year 6 Mathematics, I can extend the students more easily. And the benefits of this flexibility also work the other way – because I taught my current Year 7 students in Year 6, I can support them too.'

'That sense of continuity is a huge advantage for the students, as they enjoy seeing a familiar face,' Mr Powell continues. 'Last year's cohort was great, and we're all excited about learning together again. Because I don't have to get to know everyone from scratch, we can get straight into the learning – it's a huge time-saver.'

One of the major advantages of a more tightly integrated learning structure is avoiding the disruptive 'jump' between Years 6 and 7. 'If you move from Year 6 to Year 7, it's harder to share knowledge of students if all the teachers are new,' says Mr Powell. 'We were able to pass on some knowledge about students to teachers in the past, but everything's much more comprehensive now. For example, if a Year 7 teacher wants to enquire about a student from last year, they can find out straight away instead of looking through all the documentation. The information we have about each student's progress is now far more coherent and openly available.'

The system also accelerates students' intellectual progress. 'There are simply many more opportunities to introduce complex concepts,' Mr Powell confirms. 'The strong links we're currently creating between Year 6 and 7 breaks down the barriers between teaching staff, and counteracts the mentality that Junior School teachers work in a certain way, while Senior School teachers work in a completely different way. Because we're now interacting more, it's becoming clearer that our teaching methods are continuous. With a subject like Mathematics, dealing with abstract content becomes far easier when you can begin explaining these ideas in the earlier years, then reinforce them in Year 7.'



Fostering maturity

According to Head of Teaching and Learning Mr Tim Dorning, the Middle Years program integrates the School's two halves while retaining the experience of change. 'There's still a defined transition between the two schools, as moving from the junior to senior years is a key rite of passage,' he observes. 'A lot of curriculum content carries through very strongly from Year 6 to Year 7, and we're making the link as strong as possible.'

The Year 7 students will retain contact with a trusted teacher. 'Students of that age need a central person in their educational life,' Mr Dorning notes. 'Year 6 students have one teacher who's primarily responsible for them ... but what happens when they move to Year 7? The Middle Years at St Michael's provides an answer to that question.'

The House system at St Michael's is justly renowned for its contribution. 'The Year 7 House System is structured very similarly to a Year 6 class, where the students have a regular group around them for many of the classes,' he continues. 'Once the students get past Year 7, they start to mix more, broaden out, and associate with other people in their year level.'

Mr Dorning sees many positives to this integrated system. 'Research shows that development in stages is very important, including interactions with adults and peers,' he says. 'Year 8 is one of my favourite years to teach, as the students are steadily gaining a sense of maturity. By the end of the year, many have discovered that they've got some control over their education – for example, they realise it makes a difference who they sit and work with. They're able to make the transition more easily if they have a common group around them, as it fosters a sense of familiarity.'

The syllabus also includes distinct continuities between year levels. 'Our focus remains on providing students with the most valuable experience. While entering Year 7 still involves a major change, we still retain strong structural links with Year 6,' Mr Dorning notes.

Minimising disruption clearly benefits students' retention of knowledge. 'If there's too much to cope with, students will focus on the changes rather than the learning,' Mr Dorning observes. 'Rather than wondering: "Everything's different, so what do I concentrate on?," we want them to think: "I'm familiar with some things, so I'll concentrate on the new elements."' For this reason, we don't reset everything between Years 6 and 7 in one go. Our staff are genuinely invested in seeing students develop over this important time, and building up the continuity between Years 6 and 7 enables staff to take a real interest in their students' autonomy.'

Ensuring that each student is exposed to a variety of experiences at an early age is paramount. 'If you give students a lot of choice too early, they tend to choose what they're familiar with, so they get less breadth in the end,' Mr Dorning continues. 'That's why it's vital to have a curriculum with a wide core – it gives younger students the chance to base later decisions on sound knowledge, rather than on limited experience. We broaden students' choices as they get older, but we do it at the right time.'

This considered approach to education reflects children's rapidly developing cognitive capacities. 'Students change significantly over time,' says Mr Dorning. 'In Year 8 and 9 Mathematics and English, for example, their thinking rapidly shifts from concrete to abstract. Having a clear sense of continuity across the year levels makes this transition far more effective.'

'Our key goal in the Middle Years at St Michael's is fostering a teaching, learning and caring framework that supports, enriches and reflects the strengths and needs of students as they transition from year to year,' Mr Dorning concludes. 'The organic approach to Middle Years education at St Michael's helps make each transition between year levels positive and memorable.'



WHERE ARE THEY NOW...  
...an Old Michaelian in space

St Michael's graduate Mr Jonathan Oxer (OM 1989) has been involved in the space industry for some time. His latest project is designing the electronics for ArduSat, a compact, affordable satellite suitable for use by students.

For most people, the barriers to space experimentation were simply too high. 'It's not just the cost of the device, but also the infrastructure,' Jonathan notes. 'Most satellites are optimised for one purpose, so the engineering costs involved in getting it into orbit are often as much as the satellite itself.'

The first step to overcoming this limitation was the advent of the CubeSat standard, introduced in 1989. 'With CubeSat, you're not starting from zero every time,' Jonathan explains. 'There's growing knowledge about what works, so lessons learned by one group can be taken advantage of by another.'

CubeSat's low-cost, high-value model has been extremely successful in recent years. 'The total number of CubeSats that had been launched until mid-2013 was around 90,' says Jonathan. 'But 45 have been deployed in the last six months alone, with another 50 in the next six. Even NASA are starting to build CubeSats, because they're quick and easy – why start from scratch if you can use what's already there?'

While compact, the satellites are highly refined. 'A CubeSat is a 10-centimetre cube of 1 litre volume,' Jonathan continues. 'The electronic modules fit inside the chassis, with solar outer panels. They orbit at 400 kilometres altitude, travelling 28,000 kilometres per hour – fast enough to circumnavigate the earth every 92 minutes.'

The CubeSats don't stay up forever. 'Space isn't a true vacuum, so the satellite very gradually slows down as it collides with tiny particles,' he explains. 'It reaches a cascade failure point in around six months, when it re-enters the atmosphere.'

The real secret to CubeSats' affordability is their ability to incorporate affordable electronics. 'I've been working with an electronic development board called Arduino, which you can buy for \$35–\$40,' Jonathan says. 'They're popular in education, electronics and programming, as well as for scientific experiments. The design is a useful building block for many different projects. This contrasts with the expense of traditional space technology, which is financially inaccessible for most people.'

Jonathan helped combine CubeSat with Arduino to form the ArduSat system, whose reliability and low cost gives students a real chance to conduct space-based research. 'A major purpose of ArduSat is to give students the opportunity to run experiments in space, which they're understandably excited about,' says Jonathan. 'Students and teachers are already familiar with the Arduino architecture, which they can plug into their computer with a USB cable.'

After reading about the ArduSat project, Jonathan offered his services as an electronics engineer to substantially refine the satellite's circuitboard. 'The payload module I helped design has 16 computers on it, and each node can run an experiment independently,' he notes. 'Inside each satellite are around 23 sensors, which measure a wide variety of phenomena in space.'

Jonathan's involvement with ArduSat has been crucial to the project's success. 'It costs around \$80,000 to build and deploy a CubeSat,' he explains. 'This isn't feasible for a class, but an ArduSat makes it possible by running multiple experiments simultaneously on its 16 processors. Splitting the load brings the cost of a week of research down to under \$300, making space experimentation viable for schools.'

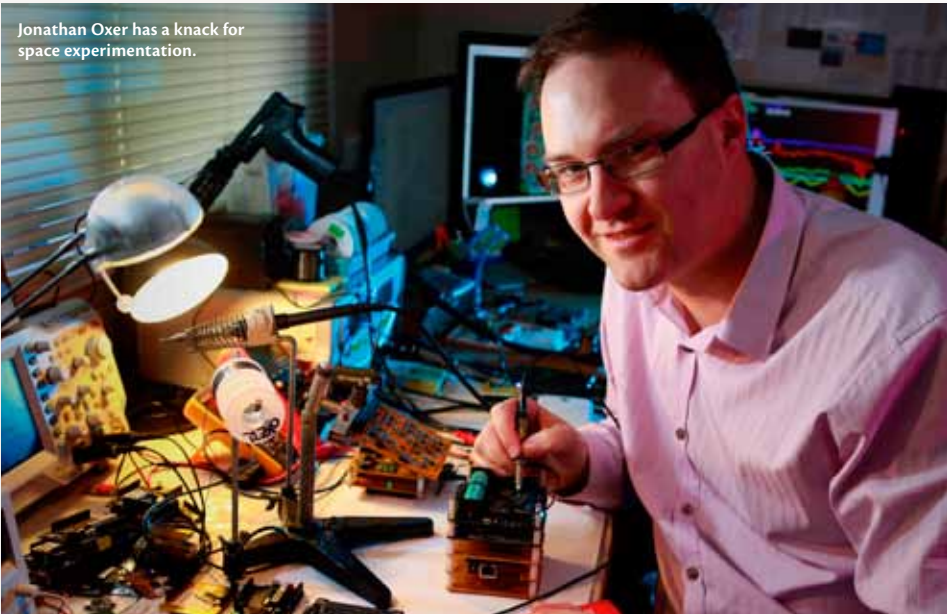
ArduSat also gives students the opportunity to run the proposed experiment before the satellite is

launched. 'They can replicate the experiment on their local Arduino system to make sure it works,' Jonathan says. 'When they're happy with it, they send it via the internet to mission control in California, where it enters a queue to be run on the satellite. When the experiment is finished, students simply download the results as a CSV file.'

Prior to his work with ArduSat, Jonathan achieved widespread attention after having a microchip implanted in his arm. 'With the chip, I can walk up to a convenient place and unlock the door,' he says. 'Just as other people would use a pass to enter their office, I use my arm.' Installation was painful. 'I loaded the chip into the end of a needle and inserted it myself, after getting medical advice,' he says. 'The mechanism against self-harm is very strong!'

Despite Jonathan's efforts, he acknowledges that the technology has not reached the mainstream. 'Reactions have been interesting,' he recalls. 'There's a lot of paranoia about RFID, even though it's no more trackable than a Visa card. I could have the same chip in a ring or wristband, and nobody would have a problem.'

Read the full article on our website, or visit [www.freetronics.com/ardusat](http://www.freetronics.com/ardusat) to view Jonathan's presentation on ArduSat.





# the learning doesn't stop for our staff

The idea that teaching is a destination, not a journey, is far from the truth.

For St Michael's staff, learning is an ongoing process. Every year, staff members are completing postgraduate degrees, certificates and certifications as part of the effort to improve and develop their skills, and become better professionals.

St Michael's has a great number of teaching and non-teaching staff who have recently completed or are currently doing further study – a commitment which not only benefits their own individual learning, but helps to bring new skills and inspiration to their students and colleagues.

## The power of positivity – MRS ANNABELLE KNIGHT

Mrs Annabelle Knight, Associate Head of the School (Learning and Innovation)/Head of Junior School, is studying a Masters in Positive Psychology. 'It's not all about positive thinking – it's about optimal and resilient thinking,' she clarifies.

When Mrs Knight found out that the course was available at the University of Melbourne, she immediately took the opportunity. 'I'm really passionate about positive psychology, particularly as it relates to wellbeing,' she says.

'We have a reputation as a country which is great for young people, yet we have high levels of depression and anxiety,' Mrs Knight points out. 'Why aren't some of our young people necessarily flourishing? Without being old-fashioned, I feel as if we may be losing some of the essence of what's important.'

'It was fascinating to attend the 2013 World Positive Psychology Conference in Los Angeles, and realising how transdisciplinary it all was,' Mrs Knight says. 'This is reflected in my course, with people ranging from health professionals to teachers to businesspeople.' Mrs Knight has even had the chance to meet the discipline's founder, Dr Martin Seligman, during her studies. 'Along with other members of the course, I was very fortunate to be invited to lunch with Dr Seligman at the beginning of the year,' she remembers.

Learning how to make a meaningful difference is a key motivation for studying positive psychology. 'In my studies, I'm thinking deeply about emotions, spirituality, psychology and wellbeing, including what makes people flourish.'

The course offers many opportunities for the learning practice of St Michael's. A large positive psychology component has already been integrated into the School, and a positive learning curriculum from Margaret Thomas House (MTH) to Year 12 is currently being created. 'At St Michael's, positive psychology is only one aspect of wellbeing,' says Mrs Knight. 'Our curriculum explores many other aspects of this core concept – including contributing citizenship and leadership, spirituality, digital citizenship, health and nutrition, and sleep and mental fitness.'

The idea of wellbeing is integral to the School. 'My first semester was on the principles of positive psychology,' Mrs Knight continues. 'We all know what positive emotion is, because we can feel it directly. Even if we don't know the details of the theory of "flow", we know what being deeply engaged feels like, and what positive relationships can add to our lives. It's crucial that wellbeing comes before performance – it's not separate.'

'Improving isn't about focusing on what you're doing badly – it's about what you're doing well,' says Mrs Knight. 'Positive emotion builds resources, and working well is a good way to start a new coaching conversation. When a bridge falls down, why do we focus on what went wrong, rather than on the bit that stood up?'

The thinking of positive psychology has clear implications for learning. 'It offers a framework to think and be. It isn't an addition to my life; it is my life. I feel really fortunate to have been accepted, and to have a chance to influence others through my learning.'

Mrs Knight has already had the chance to share her insights at St Michael's, to great effect. 'Many people are as interested about it as I am,' she says. 'I've just completed professional learning with (Acting Head of Senior School) Gerard Houlihan and (School Psychologist) Natasha Wolf, and we've now got a positive learning program from MTH to Year 8. It's an organic process.'



Mrs Annabelle Knight, second from right, has a team meeting with Junior School Directors Mr Murray Phyland, Mr Tim Roberts and Mrs Chari Clarke.

For those who are sceptical about positive psychology, Mrs Knight has some advice. 'What's the worst that could happen if we smile a bit more and optimally think our way through a problem? The children have responded so well to the ideas of positive psychology, and those having difficulty self-regulating are learning new strategies and techniques in this area.'

Mrs Knight offers some practical measures. 'I tell the students: "Think about the impact you're having on others – and in the meantime, I want you to smile at three people you've never smiled at before." After acting on that advice, a child came back to tell me: "I didn't realise how good it would make me feel." A simple action taught the child something important about altruism and empathy.'

Mrs Knight's learning has informed her that positive psychology is more than slogans. 'People sometimes say that positive psych is soft and fluffy, but I disagree,' she asserts. 'It is evidence-based and there is burgeoning research to affirm its place in our community. How can being kind to someone, being a good listener, or doing someone a favour be a bad thing? Thinking about someone else's strengths shifts your mindset from a fixed to a growth mindset, and I'm really passionate about it.'

## Developing research skills – MS MARGARET LAWSON

Ms Lawson has kept up her learning after St Michael's – she is currently doing her third year of Master of Education Teaching Librarianship at Charles Sturt University, one subject at a time.

Distance education perfectly suits Ms Lawson's needs. 'I collaborate with the other students via Facebook, and a group of us meet monthly in a Clifton Hill café,' she says. 'It's nice to be able to discuss the course in person. I meet with about eight others who are studying to be a Teacher/Librarian, or have worked in a similar position and need their qualifications.'

Ms Lawson's path back to study has been quite complicated. 'I decided to do the MEd (Teaching Librarianship) about six years ago, but I put it on hold twice when I got pregnant,' she recalls. 'Eventually, I said: "I need to do this." Head of Library Ed Kostraby gave me the opportunity to work in the library, and I'm really enjoying the interaction with the students and teachers. I should have done it 10 years ago!'



The course's content relates to many issues that are relevant within the library. 'I had to justify the teacher/librarian's role within the School, given that everything is now going electronic,' she says. 'I also wrote a leadership profile essay on Simon Gipson and Mr Kostraby for my assessment task, comparing their two leadership styles.'

Currently nearing the end of her course, Ms Lawson is looking forward to using her new skills, including social networking for teachers and librarians. I joined the School as Head of IT, and I've always dealt with electronic learning,' she notes. 'It was a natural progression for me.'

Ms Lawson had already embarked on other degrees before arriving at St Michael's. 'I started a Master of Business in IT at Melbourne University, which I finished at Grad Dip level,' she says. 'When I got here I started looking more at the library aspects I liked, including working with children.'

Joining the Library Faculty after IT gave Ms Lawson the opportunity to change her focus. 'I enjoy assisting the students in problem solving,' she says. 'Students often come into the Library and ask: "I'm really stuck with this, can you talk me through it?" You've got to ask: "What's the assignment? What is the teacher trying to do?" You then flick the teacher an email, and say: "I've just helped so and so – let me know how they go." We also proofread English and Humanities essays and provide research help – I'm doing a lot of wider reading in children's literature.'

The coursework also includes detailed logs of her experience, where Ms Lawson has to maintain a blog and submit a fully referenced 8000 word essay on everything she's learned. 'Writing a hard essay in a hurry has a profound impact on the way you go about teaching. If you've struggled with a deadline yourself, you can tell the students: "Last time my back was against the wall, this was what I had to go through to get myself out of the mud."'

Developing the mind is one of Ms Lawson's key motivations. 'It's easy to stand still, especially if you're teaching the same subject year after year,' she says. 'I value being able to tell students: "I read a paper last week, and they quoted an essay that would be relevant to your work – let's look for it together." It's important for each teacher to share in their students' intellectual journey.'

Studying hones the mind and polishes analytical thinking. 'To teach research skills effectively, teachers need to have experience in these skills themselves,' Ms Lawson concludes. 'That's why it's important to never stop being a student – it really gets you back to the grassroots.'

the learning doesn't stop  
for our staff

## Making connections – MS CLARE MURPHY

Another staff member who has taken on extra study is Director of People and Strategy Ms Clare Murphy, who recently completed her Master of HR Management. 'Doing this degree has benefited my strategic work at St Michael's, as I can relate certain elements of my job to practical aspects of the course,' she points out.

Ms Murphy made the decision to do her Master's before beginning at St Michael's, having already begun combining the degree with full-time work, and finished last year. 'Many staff talk about the challenges of combining full-time work, personal life and study – but after six months of not studying, I'm already wondering what I'll do next!'

Ms Murphy is heavily involved with the HR sector, both within and outside St Michael's. 'A lot of my professional development comes from external networks,' she confirms. 'I'm on the Australian Human Resource Institute Council, supporting two committees that run forums and professional development for AHRI members. I assist with industrial relations, occupational health and safety, and organisational development committees, and often get asked to present at forums. That enables a lot of engagement with people in HR outside of education, which enables us to look at other areas. At St Michael's, we're not just aiming to have the best HR department in the school sector – we also want to be benchmarked against the corporate sector.'

By choosing subjects directly related to her work, Ms Murphy has already been able to directly apply the knowledge she has learned. For example, the Strategic Workforce Planning Unit complemented her work in workforce planning strategy. 'The degree benefits all of my team, as I now involve them in projects beyond the scope of their current roles,' she says. 'People and Strategy Manager Timea Toth assists me with workforce planning, and we often discuss what's involved at the strategic level. It also aids professional development and growth, as it encourages her to take on new skills and responsibilities.'

Managing the workload proved to be a challenge for Ms Murphy. 'About a third of the way through, I switched to studying by distance because I was finding it a real challenge to get there,' she says. 'I was at Swinburne University in Hawthorn, and I would have to leave work at 4pm just to get there on time. Studying by distance was much easier, as I could lock myself away and get all my work done on a quiet weekend. While some people learn better face to face, I found distance education more manageable.'

Doing the degree has given Ms Murphy a renewed focus. 'I spent my first couple of months at St Michael's looking at systems and processes, including basic things like making sure a thorough recruitment process was in place. Yet my studies provided me with the knowledge to implement a strategic focus. People and Strategy Officer Jacqueline Ang now manages the recruitment, and I can focus on workforce planning and strategy.'

At St Michael's, staff are encouraged to take on further study. 'Teaching staff now have Professional Learning Leave,' says Ms Murphy. 'Before 2013, teachers tacked study leave onto their Long Service Leave, which gave them an extra six or seven weeks.'

The system is now far more flexible. 'The School has evolved in its support for professional learning,' Ms Murphy continues. 'Before, you weren't able to take this leave until you'd been here 10 years. We've changed that now – you can now access your entitlement after five years pro rata, and you can take it flexibly.'

The previous approach was quite restrictive. 'If you were doing a Master's, for example, and you took days off to study for it, you had to apply to the School to say: "Here's what I'm going to study, and here's how it's going to benefit St Michael's." Staff had to state what they were going to do with their leave, and how they're going to share that knowledge with their colleagues – it all had to be mapped out and approved in advance.' This has now changed under the new arrangements. 'One of our major goals is to make Professional Learning Leave available more to staff earlier in their career,' says Ms Murphy.



Members of the School's People and Strategy Team, Ms Timea Toth, Ms Clare Murphy and Ms Michelle Bourrillon.

## Philosophy, mind and spirit – MR LUCAS MCGAURAN

Lucas McGauran, who teaches Mind, Body and Spirit at St Michael's, is a firm believer in the importance of continuous learning. Having finished an Arts Degree in philosophy and a Dip Ed before beginning at St Michael's, he has found the knowledge he has gained from study extremely useful for his everyday teaching experience.

As the teacher of Mind, Body and Spirit, Mr McGauran continually draws on the knowledge he has gained during his studies. 'As I'm teaching Body, Mind and Spirit, a philosophy degree has been extremely helpful,' he reflects. 'I particularly enjoyed studying Philosophy of Religion, and Sociology of Religion offered a fascinating overview of different religions' social aspects.'

Mr McGauran's teaching practice has benefited immensely from these studies. 'Philosophy of religion basically examines arguments for and against the existence of God,' he says. 'Having a philosophy background has been a great benefit for me, because so many of my students have detailed questions about this issue. As I've studied these questions in relative depth, I can try and help students arrive at their own answers.'

Many thorny questions are asked at this level. 'The students in Years 7, 8 and 9 ask questions such as: "How do we know God or Jesus exists?";' says Mr McGauran. 'Then, there are the more complex questions: "Why would God send his own son – who's also him – to forgive our sins?" "Why did he have to die?" There are a million queries, mostly based around the students' understanding of the idea of God and whether he or she exists.'

Mr McGauran's philosophy background has given him a love of this type of discussion. 'Whenever someone brings it up, I'm happy to facilitate an exchange between students,' he says. 'When students start questioning their own beliefs, I find it good fun to deal with. In modern education, there often simply aren't enough opportunities for students to ask difficult questions and go off on intriguing tangents!'

Given the benefits of Mr McGauran's philosophy background, he has resolved to continue his studies in future. 'A couple of months ago, I had the idea of doing my Master's degree,' he recalls. 'I've now reached the point that I really want to go back and learn.'

In his future studies, Mr McGauran has decided to take a different tack. 'While I enjoyed studying philosophy of religion, I'm now hoping to study political philosophy,' he says. 'In my view, the debates that arise in political philosophy are dynamic and relevant to today's world.'

At St Michael's, Mr McGauran enjoys maintaining his connection with philosophy. 'The School's Philosophy Club, which is in its formative stages, meets once a week at lunchtime,' he says. 'I'm currently trying to get a bunch of students from my Body, Mind and Spirit class involved – I know they would really enjoy it.'

One of Mr McGauran's key aims is to get philosophy extended into a full school-wide subject. 'The ideal is to get to the point where philosophy is taught as a subject throughout all the year levels,' he says. 'At the moment, it only becomes its own subject in VCE.'

Mr McGauran finds the sense of freedom that comes with teaching philosophy invaluable. 'Because the School is so amenable to critical thinking, I've got more freedom,' Mr McGauran notes. 'I've felt no pressure to stick to a certain script. As a class, we can explore the intellectual tangents that we're interested in exploring. St Michael's encourages students and staff to think for themselves – which is great for philosophy!'

## Digging into the past – MISS DANIELLE FALLON

Teaching and Learning Administration Assistant Miss Danielle Fallon has always loved knowledge. 'I have a degree in pure history,' she says. 'I've worked as a research librarian, and I've always preferred working in archives.'

Several years ago, Miss Fallon completed her thesis in History at La Trobe University, studying mediaeval mythology. 'I've worked in various countries, including history-related studies in England and Northern Africa,' she says. 'I've worked at a temple in the Northern Sahara with friezes depicting a particular myth. As I had done my thesis on this very temple, I thought I should go and see it.'

This African temple seems to be the origin of a widely known myth. 'It appears to have travelled through France via the courtly traditions, and probably came to England through Eleanor of Aquitaine,' Miss Fallon notes. 'The French seem to have got it from Africa, during the time of the Crusades.'

This passion for the past has practical roots. 'I've worked as an archaeologist before,' Miss Fallon reveals. 'I was working in English schools at the time, and an opportunity came up while I was living in Canterbury, which was bombed heavily during the Second World War. When they were demolishing one of the temporary buildings, they came across a previously lost priory and graveyard. I was able to work on that.'

After experiencing some recent health issues, Miss Fallon thought carefully about her future. 'I came to the realisation that if I don't use my degree, I'll never have the chance to follow my passion,' she says. 'With that in mind, I decided to take up an extra subject in order to complete my Master's.'

Doing one unit per semester, Miss Fallon anticipates a long process of study. 'This is part of my "bucket list"', she notes. 'I've always wanted to work in the field, which is why I got my degree in the first place.'

Even at a flexible workplace like St Michael's, completing a degree while working full-time involves significant challenges. 'The workload is huge – about 10 to 12 hours of reading a week, plus the essays and research. I study when I get home from work, as well as on the weekend.'

Miss Fallon can't speak highly enough of pursuing an intellectual interest. 'I think all people should consider further study in something they've always wanted to do,' she notes. 'Even if you can't use it in everyday life, it keeps your mind ticking over. It's not always enough to come in at 9am do your job and go home. Everyone focuses on physical fitness, but the more active your mind is, the more aware you'll be in later life. Keeping your mind agile should be a major part of everyone's day.'

Other staff members undertaking, or who have graduated from, further study include Mr Ash Abdou (Master of Education), Ms Melissa Stewart (Graduate Diploma in Journalism), Mr James Anderson (Master of International Community Development), Dr Chris McGillen (Master of Music), Mr Gerry Martin (Master of Education), Ms Monika Wagner (PhD in Education), Mrs Elena Martin (Graduate Diploma in Career Development in Education), and Mrs Catherine Berry (Master of Education).





Miss Natalie Calia is enjoying a balance between teaching and performing.

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## Senior School Performing Arts Teacher Miss Natalie Calia completed a Master of Applied Theatre Studies at the University of New England in 2012 while working full time.

### What made you decide to continue your studies?

I made the decision because I felt that it was time for a new challenge in my life. I felt that I had been stuck in a rut for a while and wanted to extend my skill set and further my expertise in this particular field.

### What arrangement did you have? How did you correspond with the university?

I needed to find a course with minimal official contact hours so that I could continue teaching full time while studying. I chose a distance education course that involved a lot of online correspondence, mostly via email, with my supervisor and classmates. The university is based in rural New South Wales so everything had to be done online, and it meant that I wasn't able to attend the graduation ceremony!

### How long did your course take to complete?

The whole course took two years of full time study; I began at the start of 2011 and finished at the end of 2012.

### How did you cope with teaching full time while studying full time?

I was lucky to be in a position where I could align what I was studying with my teaching. While writing my thesis in 2012 I was also directing the senior musical, *West Side Story*. Fortunately, I was able to apply the practical aspects of my studies with the show and the cast became my own sample group.

However, at times I found myself to be very time-poor and had to learn how to best utilise all of my time in order to cope. I became more productive during school hours to allow for my time at home to be spent studying; I was constantly trying to achieve a healthy balance between everything going on.

### In what ways do you feel your further studies have enhanced your teaching career?

I have gained endless knowledge and expertise through my course, which I have been able to apply to directing productions as well as teaching music and drama.

I have been able to become more innovative in the ways I teach and direct, and was asked to present my research at the IDEA Conference in Paris last year, which was a big achievement for my co-presenters and myself. I presented research from my thesis paper about how powerful being part of a production can be for a student and how we can give students the best experience, both socially and theoretically, to gain the most of the process and the performance. Also, through this, I have made connections with like-minded people all over the world that continue today.

### Do you have any advice for people considering undertaking further studies?

I would say you have to be prepared to give up a lot of your time; you may struggle to balance your studies with your work and social life. However, if you are passionate about what you do and want to gain experience and be the best you can be, then undertaking further studies is an excellent idea to fulfill these goals.

### Would you consider doing another course? What would you change about the experience?

Yes! I'm currently looking into more courses, I'm thinking about doing my Doctorate in Education, but would also love to study in the pastoral care side of teaching, perhaps psychology or adolescent counselling. This would be a new pathway and a new adventure but would link back to my work in drama very well, as well as extend my knowledge and expertise as a House Tutor. If I were to go ahead with another course, I would hope to do it with a few contact hours because in my experience, distance education can be lonely at times. Luckily I had a friend studying with me at the same time so we could support each other, but it can still be isolating.

By Harriette Richards (11M)  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



Left: *Far From Her* by Adrian Corke.  
Right: Adrian Corke and his Academic Supervisor Rhett D'Costa examining a fellow graduate's artwork.

## Senior School Arts Teacher Mr Adrian Corke recently completed his Master of Fine Arts through RMIT University.

*The course, which he began in July 2012 when he was living in Vietnam, was run out of the Hong Kong Art School.*

### What made you decide to return to university?

The simplest answer is that my wife encouraged me to and, in all my years of teaching, I've always tried to keep my art practice going. I had long service leave, which then turned into moving to Vietnam and it was just a case of needing to push my art practice beyond just sitting in my studio doing my own work. I needed to go and have that intellectual rigour; discussions with other artists and with my supervisor to help me push my work to the next level. It's really important to practise what you preach. I'm well aware of – and I say this to students – and I understand the difficulties that they experience in trying to generate artwork. I understand it gets easier in that your techniques get stronger the more you do it, but there's still the same 'white paper syndrome'. I love art, I love making art, and I love the headspace of making art. It's always been important for me to keep doing that.

### What major differences do you notice between high school and university?

I work in my studio the majority of the time, doing my painting, reading relevant essays, texts that relate to what I'm trying to do with my painting. So in that sense, I am not actually 'at university' very often. And when I am 'there' it has been on intensive seminar weekends in Hong Kong. During the seminar sessions, you are with other students who are all totally engaged in their art making and the concepts and philosophies involved in that. There is a willingness by all students to push themselves and share. When I was in Vietnam, I worked for RMIT University as a lecturer, and so the biggest difference is there's less of a sense of the students feeling like they have to be there. The students want to be there; they made a choice. There's a very different feel to it.

### Being a high school teacher, what differences have you noticed between your job and the job of a university lecturer?

I've thought about that a lot. My course supervisor is one of the best teachers I've come across. I've learnt a lot from him, by watching him and thinking about what he does. I've learnt a lot about teaching, too. We meet in seminars four times a year. I'm doing it part time in Hong Kong. The program is delivered by RMIT. I go to Hong Kong four times a year; I've just had my last one. There is a group of three other students who started with me, and there are always students at different stages around me.

### Has your course supervisor taught you things you could use in your teaching profession?

Totally! My approach to teaching my students, particularly senior students, is a direct consequence of thinking about the way he goes about doing things. It's been fantastic in that respect – listening to him and watching him elicit conversation, talk to students about their work, get discussions going and so on.

### In what ways will having this degree change/enhance your career?

It's already enhanced my teaching, and the discussions with my senior students especially, talking to them about their work, the ideas they're trying to articulate through their work, I've seen some other ways of doing that. It has also meant that in creating my work and thinking about where it 'fits' within a contemporary context, the knowledge gained is directly translatable to my students. It was also about me, about my own work.

### Have you enjoyed your further study?

It's been great. I'm almost done. My assessment exhibition in Hong Kong was in July, with the final graduation show in September.

### What have you been working on?

Paintings. They started out as large paintings, but they've become quite small paintings on wooden panel, about my experience living in Vietnam. My work is about my experience of moving through an environment. The environment, that generated the work was Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; living there and experiencing that.

### What was your favourite aspect of being a student again?

The intellectual rigour, having someone say to me, or actually, being forced. In fact, my course supervisor Rhett D'Costa would say, 'You're at a barbeque, you're surrounded by people who aren't in the "art world", and you say, "Well, I'm an artist"'. And you have to tell them [about your job], in a manner that means they won't go and look for that other beer, or that other sausage, or disappear, so that was interesting, having to articulate what it is that I'm trying to do. What is the core of my art making? What is my art making about? And that barbeque statement, having to do that, has had a huge impact on the way that I try and get students to articulate, to talk, to try and illuminate or discuss what it is – what's the core of what they're trying to do?

### Has being a student yourself changed the way you think of your students?

Yes, it's made me put into context, or made me realise the importance of, the 'critique session', and having students talk. I always wanted students to talk to each other about their work, but that wasn't something they would do naturally.

### Having that yourself, how can you see the importance of that exercise?

I can now see the value of that, certainly for the senior students, and especially the Year 11 and 12 students, of putting them in the situation where they do have to discuss their work and authenticate what it is they're trying to do.

By Ella Hockley (10K)  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



# Connections

News from Old Michaelians, parents and staff

## Old Michaelian news



We congratulate **Brodie Summers (OM 2011)** on representing Australia in snowboarding at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic Games, where he finished an impressive 13th from 30 competitors.

**Zara Gates (OM 2013)** was recognised for her musical talents after being selected to participate in Top Acts 2014, held on 29 May at the Melbourne Recital Centre.

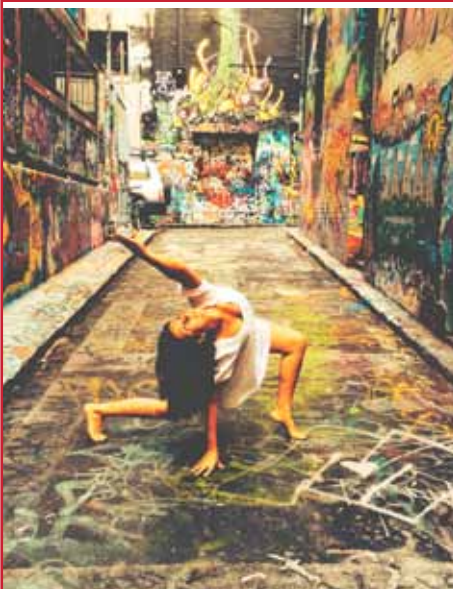
**Natalie Perry (nee Shields) (OM 1995)** has led a wonderful life since graduating from St Michael's, including travels around the world, a successful career in childcare, and relocating to Western Australia with her husband and two daughters.

Former students **Robin Geradts-Gill, Hannah Moon (both OM 2011)** and **Stephen Sholl (OM 2000)** are making waves in the film industry with their new short film *Dario* on show at this year's Melbourne International Film Festival.

Actress **Asher Keddie (OM 1992)** achieved much success once again at the 2014 TV Week Logie Awards, when she received the award for Most Popular Actress and Most Outstanding Actress in a Series for her role as Dr Nina Proudman in the hit television show *Offspring*. Asher also appears in Network Ten's new show *Party Tricks*.

For more information on our Old Michaelians, visit [www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/news/old-michaelian-news](http://www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/news/old-michaelian-news)

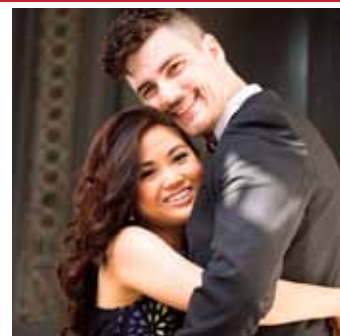
## Staff news



**Dance Teacher Miss Amelia Jones** was chosen to represent Australia in teaching dance at the International Dance Retreat in Udaipur, India. The retreat, held in August, was a cultural exchange program between international dancers, choreographers and teachers from around the world, who shared their knowledge and expertise in dance and education.

Paintings created by **Visual Arts Teacher Mr Adrian Corke** for his Masters of Fine Art degree were this year selected as part of a group exhibition, *This Must Be The Place*, on show from 18–27 June at the RMIT School of Art Gallery. *Read more about Mr Corke's artistic endeavours in 'The learning doesn't stop for our staff' on page 47.*

**Head of Mathematics Mr Darren Smyth** celebrated becoming an Australian citizen earlier this year during the nation's Citizenship Ceremony, held at the Melbourne Town Hall on 13 June. *Read more on Mr Smyth's decision to call Australia home in 'Our international connections' on page 31–32.*



Ms Jacqueline Ang and her husband Robert Lugton.

## Proposals and wedding bells

St Michael's warmly congratulates Staff Admin Assistant Mr Lee Gorner, Accountant Mr Mark Wilson, Junior School Teacher Ms Mietta Embury, Early Childhood Assistant Ms Lina Giampa and Senior School Teacher Mr Jeremy Elton, who this year celebrated their engagements. We also celebrated the following staff members who tied the knot with their partners – Communications Officer Ms Shalini Nair and her husband, Michael Jordan, were wed on 15 March at the Melbourne Museum in Carlton, Victoria; Director of People and Strategy Ms Clare Talbot and her husband, Shannon Murphy, said 'I do' on 3 May at the Museum of Old and New Art in Berriedale, Tasmania; People and Strategy Officer Ms Jacqueline Ang and her husband, Robert Lugton, tied the knot on 21 June at Quaff in Toorak, Victoria; Junior School Teacher Miss Amelia Otto and her husband, Brent Aburrow, were wed on 28 June (by St Michael's own Father Kenyon McKie) at St Peter's Anglican Church in Brighton; School Psychologist Miss Natasha Wolf and her husband, Glenn Lovegrove, were married on 20 September at Tuck's Ridge Winery in Red Hill; and Junior School Teacher Ms Dawn Tan and her husband, Darren Lee, were wed on 20 September at the Collingwood Children's Farm in Abbotsford, Melbourne.