



St Michael's
Grammar School

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Diversity
Opens Minds™

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



MRS FIONA MEAD
Chairman of the Board of Directors

2016 has been a very big year at St Michael's. A busy year. A challenging year. An exciting year. It's been a year of transformation, as we have embraced our new learning spaces in The Gipson Commons and grappled with what it means to become a truly integrated Kindergarten to Year 12 school. It's been a year of change for the Board as well, with some new faces around the table and a new Chairman.

We started 2016 with our new K–12 structure in place. I know the changes that have come with that have been exciting, but not without one or two challenges – not least of which is stopping ourselves referring to the Junior School and Senior School, which no longer exist.

This new organisational structure has already brought so many improvements to the way the School operates, including use of common language across the School, much clearer lines of communication between the School and parents, and significantly simplified relationships between parents, students and teachers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the School Leadership Team and all of our wonderful staff for the tireless work they have done to implement this major transformation. Thank you, also, to the community which has responded and adapted to this change so positively.

We also asked our staff and students to bring The Gipson Commons to life following its official opening in April – and bring it to life you have! It was so exciting to see the building emerge out of that massive hole in the ground, and then to see the completed building as the scaffolding came down.

However that proved little compared to the excitement of watching it evolve and watching our community evolve around it as we realised its potential. How wonderful it is to see the way our learning spaces are being used by all of our students from our youngest children in Margaret Thomas House to our almost adult Year 12 students, and to see so many different members of our community congregating in Dolly's Café throughout the day.

It is also extremely gratifying to be able to report that the School is in a strong financial position with healthy enrolments, a strong balance sheet and an optimistic future. We have been able to reduce the bank debt on The Gipson Commons more rapidly than we had expected, and these factors gave us the confidence to keep our fee increases for the 2017 school year to some of the lowest in our sector.

Being in a strong position financially has not stopped the Board from becoming very focused over the past few years on the ongoing sustainability of the independent school model. We are being asked to provide more and more for our community, but the quantum of funding is decreasing and will continue to decrease.

At St Michael's, where we value diversity so highly, we are concerned that if we are forced to continue with large fee rises every year then we will become increasingly unaffordable and lose the very diversity that makes this school such a special place.

We have, therefore, set up what we call our 'Innovation Think Tank'. This has been a forum in which we have embraced the incredible talent we have in the community, and set them to work to identify creative and innovative opportunities that are not only guided by our values, but which also broaden our income stream beyond government grants and fees.

I am so excited about this project, which I think can be transformational for the School. I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in this ground-breaking initiative so far, ably led by my fellow Director Andrew Eddy. You will be hearing a lot more about this as the thinking develops into tangible projects.

Turning now to the Board and the School's governance; I have no hesitation in claiming that the governance in place at St Michael's is absolutely best in class.

* Taken from Mrs Fiona Mead's Speech Night address on 13 December 2016

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

By Fiona Mead – continued

We have a strong, independent, skills-based Board, and each Director has been invited to join based on their background and experience and the contribution they can make to the School. We have a balanced mix of parents and non-parents, meaning we have strong independent oversight, but also a tangible connection to the School.

Our Committee structure is also governance at its finest. Our Finance and Risk Management Committee, and Facilities, Infrastructure and Technology Committee support the Board and assist the management team in performing their role by bringing expertise in their fields to the table. It was this strong and stable governance structure that allowed The Gipson Commons to be delivered on time and on budget. This strong and stable governance structure is also what will guide the School as we start to manage the transition to new leadership over the course of 2017.

Carefully planned leadership changes are a key element in maintaining a high-performance culture and stability within educational institutions, and a normal and natural part of any organisation.

Following the announcement in July that Simon Gipson would be leaving St Michael's at the end of 2017, the Board embarked on an extensive search for a new Head of the School. After an exhaustive process, and with much consultation between the Board and a wide range of exceptional candidates, St Michael's is delighted to welcome the appointment of Mrs Terrie Jones, who will commence as Head of the School on 1 January 2018.

Terrie will bring a wealth of expertise in education to St Michael's, and we will be very excited to welcome her at the end of 2017 as she prepares to take on the role in 2018. We are also blessed to have Simon at the School for another 12 months, in which time he will continue to lead and support the School in the many exciting new projects planned for 2017. The Board will continue to oversee St Michael's governance and, in partnership with Simon, will work with the School community in preparing for this exciting transition.

Opportunities for the St Michael's community to celebrate Simon's tenure and thank him formally for his dedication to St Michael's will take place in due course, along with the chance for staff, students and parents to meet Terrie. The School will continue to inform the community as it continues this important transition.

I would like to thank, on behalf of the School community, all our tireless volunteers – from the Parent Community Association and the Old Michaelian Committee, to the many parents who act as Class Representatives and in the many other ways to support St Michael's. Our volunteers truly help make St Michael's the school and the community that it is.

On your behalf, I also wish to thank my fellow Board members for all they have done during 2016, and recognise the stability and governance that has ensured an ongoing culture of excellence across the School. Particularly, I'd like to farewell and thank our two departing Board members – Mr Paul Orton, our former Chair; and Father Cary Mansell, whose deep commitment to the spiritual life of the School spanned more than 17 years.

We also welcomed Mr Jim Moser to the Board in 2016, and we are already reaping the rewards of his wealth of knowledge in the areas of digital marketing and customer experience. Thanks, also, to my Deputy Chair, Professor Gabriele Lakowski, who has been an endless source of support and wisdom over this busy year.

My first year as Chairman of the Board has proved a remarkable time of transition, challenge and reward. My passion for St Michael's, underpinned by our foundation, heritage, values and common purpose, continues to grow and evolve.

It makes me so proud when I read about the activities our students have embarked on in 2016, from Movember, to lemonade stands, to environmental action initiatives and everything in between. To me, these demonstrate so clearly how much we all live our School's values of dignity, respect, care and compassion. These values remain our visionary principles and are central to our progressive culture. And while St Michael's draws on and learns from the past, our focus is very much on the future.

MRS FIONA MEAD

Chairman of the Board of Directors

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



MR SIMON GIPSON
Head of the School

The 2016 school year marks my 17th as Head of St Michael's, and the 122nd in the School's history. We have so much to acknowledge and celebrate from the past 12 months: an extraordinary range of student achievement and attainment across a host of areas of learning, from mathematics to performing arts; sport to literature; outdoor education to the humanities; leadership to languages; science to citizenship.

Many of you, I am sure, are familiar with Homer's ancient story of The Odyssey, which relates Odysseus's perilous 10-year voyage across the Mediterranean back home to Ithaca after the fall of Troy. Throughout his journey, Odysseus encounters many trials and obstacles, including the twin threats of Scylla and Charybdis who sit on each side of a narrow waterway, and between whom he must safely guide his galley.

Scylla is a supernatural female creature, with 12 feet and six heads on long, snaky necks, each head having a triple row of shark-like teeth, while her loins are girdled by the heads of baying dogs. From her lair in a cave she devours whatever and whoever ventures within reach, including, as it so happens and most inconveniently, six of Odysseus's companions.

Charybdis, another sea monster, lurks under a fig tree a bowshot away on the opposite shore. Three times a day, Charybdis swallows a huge amount of water before belching it back out again, creating large whirlpools capable of dragging ships underwater.

Historians believe that Scylla and Charybdis embody the navigational challenge of the Straits of Messina, the narrow and difficult channel that separates Sicily and the toe of Italy. Scylla represents a rock or reef on one side of the channel; Charybdis a whirlpool on the other.

The reference to Scylla and Charybdis has now come to describe a challenging dilemma in which neither of the alternatives offer palatable outcomes.

Dealing with the dilemma comes by assiduously charting a safe passage through the centre, seeking to mitigate the damage done by Scylla but avoiding the whirlpool of Charybdis.

Similarly, as we consider the future of schools, we are faced with equally challenging waters in which educators have to delicately sail, navigating the stormy and reef-laden waters of competing possibilities, expectations and outcomes, and negotiating the whirlpools of spiralling government policy, curriculum dictate and compliance.

As we all know, our approach to learning continues to pivot too much on the importance of educational accountability and competition between schools, measured most frequently by narrow testing. This privileges a limited band of skills and content knowledge and forces a pedagogical focus on what is most easily assessed, not on what is of most value.

And, frequently, what we are taught is simply an end in itself with limited utility beyond the classroom. David Perkins, one of the founding members of Project Zero at the Graduate School of Education at Harvard, argues very much against this trend in curriculum in his recent work *Future Wise*, and stridently calls for what he describes as 'life-worthy' education – opportunities for learning that are relevant to a student's future.

To illustrate his perspective on the need for fundamental curriculum reform, Perkins often begins presentations by provocatively and mischievously asking the audience to raise their hands if they were taught quadratic equations at school.

* Taken from Mr Simon Gipson's Speech Night address on 13 December 2016

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

Inevitably, almost all hands go up. He then asks how many use quadratic equations now; most hands drop. He then asks those that are remaining to put their hands down if they are Maths teachers and engineers. Almost always after this, there are no hands raised.

I should note, Perkins is a Maths teacher by training, and is the last to contest the importance of teaching of complex concepts in Mathematics, but his point is obvious. Much of what we are asked to learn and expected to teach at schools has contestable relevance after school.

As educators, we need to ensure that what we teach, what our students learn, connects them to the world of their future.

Additionally, Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), argues that many of the skills taught in schools, those which are most easy to teach and to test, are also the skills that are easiest to digitise, automate and outsource. If we continue to focus on these skills alone, it therefore follows that we will only prepare our young people for imminent redundancy.

A limited approach to schools and schooling based on questionable curriculum relevance and restricted skill sets is perhaps the Scylla of our current dilemma.

And so, without doubt, education is no longer mainly about reproducing content knowledge; being effective and creative thinkers requires the ability to extrapolate from what we know and apply that to novel situations. To be innovative requires an understanding of what has been before – as T.S. Eliot would argue, you cannot be creative in the present unless you fully understand the canon of knowledge which precedes you; and, of course, being creative in the present allows you to shape the future.

Schools need to continue to teach skills and knowledge. But, whilst this is necessary, it is not sufficient. The world no longer rewards people for just what they know, but for what they can do with what they know.

It is the ability to work collaboratively within a team that is one of the most valued of contemporary work-based skills. As are the valuable attributes of grit, determination and self-motivation, all of which arise from opportunities to experience risk and failure.

Schools must also foster an understanding of what is required to live productively and positively in a community – those Aristotelian virtues, skills and attributes that cohere around notions of civic duty and responsibility. But we cannot shift to a curriculum that only focuses on these soft skills.

By contrast, we must be mindful of a totally personalised learning journey that focuses only on the perceived needs of the individual. And this is a journey that is frequently accompanied by a notion that our passage through learning should be easy, pitched to our preferences and always fun. This is the self-referential Charybdis of our challenging educational course.

This perspective on learning is often accompanied by the notion that all that is worthy of knowing is available on the internet. However, I do not believe that we can expect our students to replace structured learning and sequential skills-based understanding by simply expecting that they fossick for knowledge in the anarchy of the web. The late Michael Dertouzos, Director of the Laboratory for Computer Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) from 1974 until his death in 2001, raised his concern about the capacity of the internet to singularly replace schools and schooling back in the 1990s with a dismissive comment that it was a flawed assumption that if the technology was simply deployed en masse, 'a thousand educational flowers will bloom'.

Indeed, Ethan Zuckerman, another MIT academic (but contemporary) and self-proclaimed internet activist, argues against the received wisdom that in a world of infinite information we have the capacity to know everything. Instead, he declares that Google acts to bolster ignorance. 'We only search for things we already know,' he claims.

Similarly, he suggests that the tendency of our digital word is not to diversity and plurality, but to what he defines as homophily – that is, for people to search out and find others who think like they do, who reinforce similarly held ideologies and epistemologies, who hold similar worldviews.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

And of course, this homophily is further exacerbated by those subtle yet powerful algorithms that sift and sort our preferences and feed our interests, habits and foibles with increasing precision the more time we spend on the web. Regrettably, this just enables a continual refinement of our personal perspectives and prejudices. Digital narcissists, we peer admiringly at our increasingly well-defined online reflection.

In considering the demands of the future, Andreas Schleicher also argues that the workforce can no longer be divided into specialists and generalists.

Specialists, he suggests, have deep skills and narrow scope, giving them expertise that is recognised by peers but not valued outside of their domain.

Generalists have broad scope but shallow skills.

What counts increasingly are what he describes as versatilists, those who are able to apply depth of skill to a progressively widening suite of situations and experiences, gaining new competencies, and building relationships and new roles. Versatilists are capable of constantly adapting and also of learning and growing, of positioning and repositioning themselves in a rapidly changing world.

Our job as educators in the 21st century is thus to chart that narrow and difficult passage that balances the Scylla of a retrospective, narrow curriculum that emphasises what can be simply tested, and the Charybdis of a focus on an open-ended, individualised approach that neglects the importance of collaborative learning and foundational skills and knowledge. In this way, we may educate our young people to effectively live their lives forward as versatilists, able to adroitly navigate the challenges as together we sail to their future Ithaca, not the fallen Troy of our past.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

K-1 QUADRANT

One of our goals for 2016 was to build a sense of belonging; to offer the children new and significant possibilities for discovering their potential, and to deepen connections and foster reciprocity. I believe that we in the K-1 Quadrant have done a tremendous job in realising this goal.

‘What is unique about human learning is its dedications to possibility. When we human beings learn, the act of learning carries us beyond what we have encountered and propels us into the realm of the possible. The human learning process is not simply about acquiring knowledge about what we have encountered. It is dedicated to “going beyond the information given”. There is no other species on the face of the earth so dedicated to the pursuit of the possible.’ – Jerome Bruner, NYU

We continue to encourage children to go beyond the immediate and into the realm of the possible.

At St Michael’s, we have a very strong and rich image of the child. Children have the right to be recognised as subjects of individual, legal, civil and social rights; as constructors of their own experience, and thus active participants in the organisation of their identities, abilities and autonomy, through relationships and interaction with their peers, with adults, with ideas, with objects, and with real and imaginary events. Through both small and large group experiences, children discuss, express, debate, theorise, reflect upon and investigate their thoughts and ideas. Children’s voices are respected, and their knowledge and understanding flourishes through interactions with their peers, teachers and environment.

The children in Botanica Group demonstrated a strong affinity to nature and construction. These interests and strengths have formed a foundation for their investigation into Nature’s Architects, a research project into the ways in which things are constructed in nature. The ideas behind this investigation stem from a movement called ‘Biomimicry’ – the examination of nature, its models, systems and processes.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

Floris Group has been exploring 'clouds', and has used many different languages to search for deeper meaning. In Term 2, the educators offered the children a creative dance provocation where the children could celebrate their learning to date. It enabled them to express their musical and movement-based ideas.

This year, the children in Silvae Group explored and investigated skeletons. Their wonderings began when one of the children shared their experience of going to hospital to have an x-ray. Many children began to research animals of interest, using many of their hundred languages to share their findings and knowledge, including drawing, painting, block and box construction, and clay.

The children in Arbor Group have been researching cultural backgrounds, heritage and identity, and exploring ideas about diversity. This research has promoted concepts surrounding cultural competence, while developing a positive outlook towards cultural diversity and identities.

One of the year's first highlights for our Preparatory children was the 'Through Prep Eyes' event. The children shared their learning experiences with their families, displaying their love of learning across the specialist areas. In Preparatory, the children also embraced the world of literature. Generated from their enjoyment when listening to stories, their developing reading skills and the opportunity to share their favourite characters in the Book Week Parade, the children became avid readers, authors and illustrators.

One of the many highlights in Year 1 included spending the day at Cooper's Settlement to enrich students' understanding of a working farm. Their 'From Farm to Table' inquiry investigates the idea that food originates from many sources. This excursion was followed by a Grow Zone Day, where the children delighted in bringing their favourite vegetable to share before making vegetable soup.

Reflecting on the above, we can see that learning in the junior years is full of wonder and possibility. We have also encountered many wonderful events that have united our community.

Our specialist information evening, the Write to Read parent learning evening, the K-1 Appreciative Inquiry discussion, parent/student/teacher conversations, Through Prep Eyes, Grow Zone Days, the Arbor and Silvae Dinner Party, Literacy and Numeracy Morning, the Early Years Swimming Carnival, Parent Representative breakfasts and many others have strengthened our home-school partnerships.

'The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences.' – Loris Malaguzzi

This year has provided us with many experiences that have enriched our thinking and opened possibilities. The journey we have taken this year has been an extraordinary one, and I would like to thank you all for the part you have played.

2-5 QUADRANT

The focus of the Year 2-5 Quadrant is learning to be a student. We teach students how to become autonomous learners, and to take responsibility for their own learning by developing research and thinking skills. These skills are developed and practised during our Transdisciplinary Investigations, where students seek answers to questions posed by themselves or their teachers.

Students make use of a variety of resources to research and present their findings. Parents and friends share their expertise with students, enhancing strong home-school partnerships. At the conclusion, we celebrate learning by sharing students' discoveries.

The Year 2 'Build it Up' investigation focuses on the design and building of structures. The investigation culminated in students creating a 'Mini Melbourne', with various structures: a suspension bridge, skyscraper, church and train station. Each structure was then assembled around the 'Yarra River'.

Year 3 students celebrated an inspirational journey. During their inquiry 'A Patchwork of Landscapes', students investigated and researched Australia, then journeyed to Japan and Africa. The students researched African animal habitats and created an animal safari for parents and friends to learn about their animal.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

In the Year 4 'Investigation into Living Things', each student chose an animal to research and create a mask of. They looked closely at the animal's features, and attempted to replicate them in three dimensions. It was great to see students incorporating what they understood of their animal, using skills from subject areas such as Art and Maths.

In the Year 5 'Energy Investigation', students researched how electricity is generated, used this knowledge to design simple and complex circuits, and produced a poster explaining energy production. Students also worked with Ms Emma Phillips, Assistant Head of Learning Systems, on a STEM-based activity using the Chibitronics program to design closed and parallel circuits. The students presented their work to students, staff and parents.

National Literacy and Numeracy Week, an Australian government initiative to promote literacy and numeracy, was held from 29 August to 4 September. This year, parents in Years K–5 participated in a variety of literacy and numeracy activities with their children. Parents and students created dioramas based on a scene from a novel, solved multiplication questions, wrote poetry and played place value bingo, among other activities. The students enjoyed teaching their visitors new or long-forgotten literacy and numeracy skills.

During our Write to Read Parent Workshop, teachers outlined our new approach to teaching spelling, reading and writing. Parents took on the role of students, participating in a variety of activities to help them understand what their children were learning. They discovered that the children visit the 'Land of Language' daily to remember codes and rules that help us spell and read English words. This workshop gave parents confidence to better assist their child with reading and writing at home.

We again participated in the annual Mathematics Association of Victoria's Maths Games Day. St Michael's fielded four teams of four; two from Year 4 and two from Year 5. The competition consisted of team problem-solving, individual mental arithmetic and individual games.

All our teams did St Michael's proud with their attitude and performances – congratulations to our competitors: Maya Chaudhri (4K), Saffron Patel (4J), Alessandro Tamo (4K), Charlie Pritchard (4K), Eva Kenwood (4J), Max Simpson (4AK), Jude Leyton

Barkla (4AK), Jessica Crook (4AK), Asher Pang (5T), Eleanor Watson (5A), Layne Bergmann (5T), Alec Carey (5C), Nick Costa (5C), Maya Sombekke (5A), Olive Johnson (5A) and Sophia Bell (5C).

One Year 5 team did extremely well, and won the day. Congratulations to Asher, Eleanor, Layne and Alec for a wonderful achievement. We will definitely participate again next year.

6–9 QUADRANT

As students head towards their final primary years of schooling and enter adolescence, they are still intensely curious learners. For many, this curiosity begins to turn inward as they explore who they are and try on different identities. We continue to offer a range of experiences to equip students with the skills, self-awareness and resilience they need in the later stages of schooling.

As educators, it is exciting to see students explore a range of environments and activities and develop their interests. Our Year 6–9 students have had opportunities to explore places as close as our beautiful new Food and Technology kitchen in The Gipson Commons all the way to Notre Dame Cathedral on the European Choir Tour. Our Year 6 students learnt about developing countries during their Engineers Without Borders incursion, while our Year 9 students battled the elements on Exodus.

Many of our Year 6–9 students were lucky enough to experience working in professional performance venues such as Gasworks Theatre and Deakin Edge, while we had finalists head to Swinburne University's Advanced Manufacturing and Design Centre for the finals of the So You Think You Can Design competition.

Our own school grounds became a hive of activity during rehearsals for the House Aerobics competition. It was wonderful to see students so enthusiastic! Our Year 8 students had an opportunity to explore the refurbished Design and Technology Centre, and the Year 9 Food Technology classes became 'MasterChefs', inviting staff into the kitchen to taste their canapé creations. Our Year 6–9 students embraced opportunities to create, explore and immerse themselves in an array of learning environments.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

At this age, it is very important that students have opportunities to take risks, and to do so safely. Each student's 'comfort zone' is different. Many students spent their first time away from home for four nights on Year 7 Exodus, again held at Iluka, Shoreham. Our Outdoor Education Program continues to give students latitude to take risks and extend themselves.

For other students, risk-taking happens on the stage. Once again, our Year 6 Musical was a lovely display of the students' talent and ability to shine under pressure, with many cast members stepping onto the stage for the first time in *Cinderella Jr*. Students witnessed and participated in many exciting events, including public speaking in House Debating, singing solos in House Music, and giving speeches or performances. Risk-taking enables our young people to celebrate success and build resilience.

One benefit of our K–12 structure is the opportunities for connections across year levels. This year, there have been two highlights in this regard. In Terms 2 and 3, we began the Connections Project, a mentor-style program between students in Years 6 and 9 with an academic and relationship focus. One day per week during Commons, selected Year 9 students attended the Year 6 classrooms and worked alongside their younger peers. Three-and-a-half years into their middle years journey, the Year 9 students demonstrated knowledge and enthusiasm in specific subject areas. In turn, they benefited from working alongside Year 6 students with a natural sense of inquiry and love of learning.

Similarly, the beautiful art display in the Vicars Foote Gallery of The Gipson Commons in Term 3 showcased the talent and empathy of students from Years 5–8. 'Bookmarks for Asylum' raised awareness of the plight of asylum seekers, with students working together to educate themselves and others through art.

Each year, a group of Year 5 and 6 students take part in the Australasian Problem Solving Mathematical Olympiads, which consist of five competitions held between May and September. Schools from across Australia, New Zealand and neighbouring countries take part. The competition encourages students to develop important mathematical problem-solving skills in an enjoyable and supportive environment.

This year, we had 30 competitors take part, with students obtaining excellent results and receiving certificates and trophies for their achievements. Congratulations to Liam Whitehouse, Harley Thompson and Annelies Van Haaps (all 6SP), who led the results for Year 6. Their brains were truly working mathematically, and they worked their way through some challenging questions to come out near the top of this year's cohort.

In 2016, our learning environments, along with our opportunities to take risks and form connections with others, have been the highlights of the 6–9 Quadrant. These experiences contribute to the wellbeing of our students and to their sense of achievement and engagement.

10–12 QUADRANT

Years 10–12 at St Michael's fosters students' imagination while building their confidence, enabling them to make positive choices about their learning now and into the future. The St Michael's curriculum tests students' boundaries of resilience, perseverance and creativity – all vital traits for successful adults in the 21st century. This broad focus exemplifies the leadership and independence we foster in our students as they take on the challenges of adulthood.

As students commence their final years at St Michael's, we also acknowledge the significant learning, emotional and physical shifts they experience.

Students often seek more autonomy during this time, which in turn requires the capability and maturity to manage adult situations. We would thus like every student in Years 10–12 to develop the skills to make informed choices, ready to emerge as adults after VCE.

To reflect this growing sense of independence, our students need the autonomy to choose subjects that they are interested in and are good at. Our Year 10 students can choose from 18 electives, with programs consistently linking learning with real-world problem-solving. Supported by specialist teachers, learning mentors, careers advisors and tutors, students learn to self-manage, achieve balance and practice mindfulness.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

At St Michael's, learning is consistently embedded in practice. Year 10 students have the opportunity to immerse themselves in a two-week learning experience – for example, studying marine biodiversity on the Great Barrier Reef or working with a non-government organisation in Cambodia.

The Outdoor Education Program in Years 10–12 further cultivates responsibility and challenge. Opportunities include the Year 10 'solo' experience, where students experience 24 hours alone in the wilderness (within earshot of a teacher, of course), to the Year 11 Kosi to the Coast Expedition – the pinnacle of the Outdoor Education Program, where students spend 20 days hiking, rafting and cycling from Mt Kosciusko to the Victorian coastline.

In their final two years at St Michael's, our students further prepare for their future. The Year 12 '100 Days to Success' program marks the final stage of VCE preparation, providing students with targeted and detailed feedback as they cross the finish line.

Our co-curricular program features a range of activities, including many productions as part of the Years 10–12 Performing Arts Festival. There are also abundant opportunities for students to become engaged in sporting competitions, including House carnivals. St Michael's competes annually in the Association of Coeducational Schools (ACS) – this year has brought a number of triumphs during both summer and winter seasons, with St Michael's winning 10 out of 20 grand finals and taking out the Aggregate Winner title at the ACS Athletics Carnival.

St Michael's students also contribute to wider society by participating in community action programs with impressive results – during this year's Merry Month of May fundraiser, for example, they raised a total of \$31,000 for charity.

St Michael's offers a broad and diverse range of VCE studies – 37 in Units 1 & 2 and 40 in Units 3 & 4. VCE students develop mature and collaborative relationships with their teachers, who inspire and motivate them to excel.

The quality teaching and autonomy of choice given to our students is key to the success of our academic program.

ENROLMENTS AND ATTENDANCE

- On average, 1306 students were enrolled at St Michael's in 2016, including 466 in Years K–6 and 840 in Years 7–12.
- Gender ratios across the whole school were 53% boys and 47% girls.
- The average student attendance rate for each year level (excluding students in Margaret Thomas House, our early learning centre) was:

Year level	Attendance rate
Preparatory	96.67%
1	98.42%
2	97.35%
3	98.22%
4	98.23%
5	98.12%
6	95.34%
7	95.49%
8	95.17%
9	95.05%
10	93.21%
11	91.62%
12	93.07%

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: NAPLAN

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

In 2016, St Michael's performed consistently above the state mean (average) in all 20 of the NAPLAN testing areas, as the scores shown in the following graphs indicate. (Scores for 2015 are also given for the purpose of comparison.)

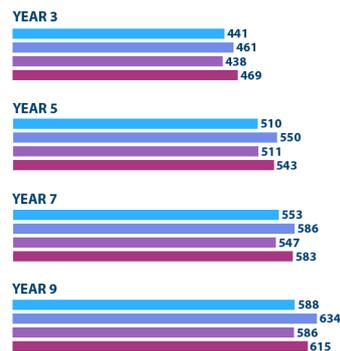
LITERACY AND NUMERACY BENCHMARKS

This table shows the proportion of St Michael's students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 who met the NAPLAN benchmarks in reading, writing, spelling and numeracy in 2016, together with the percentage change in this data from 2015.

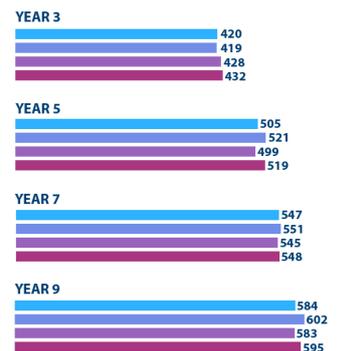
Note: the NAPLAN benchmarks represent the 'minimum suggested standard' in the five assessment areas, while the graphs to the right show average achievement.

	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
Reading	100% (+5%)	100% (+1%)	98% (-1%)	100% (-)
Writing	100% (-)	97% (-2%)	97% (-1%)	96% (-1%)
Spelling	98% (+3%)	100% (+1%)	97% (-1%)	98% (-)
Grammar & Punctuation	100% (-)	99% (-)	99% (-)	98% (-1%)
Numeracy	100% (+3%)	100% (+1%)	99% (-1%)	100% (-)

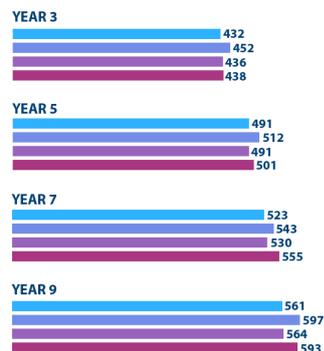
READING STANDARDS



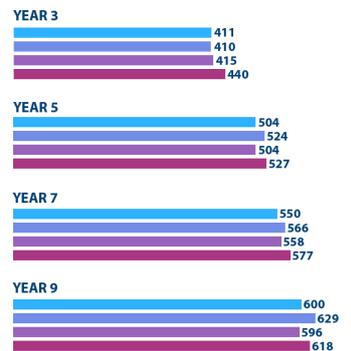
SPELLING STANDARDS



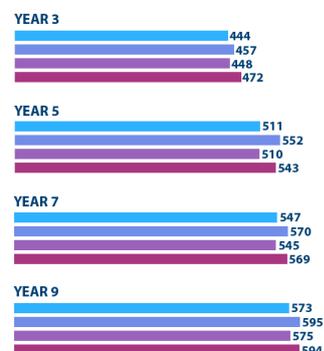
WRITING STANDARDS



NUMERACY STANDARDS



GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION STANDARDS



■ 2015 STATE MEAN
 ■ 2015 ST MICHAEL'S MEAN
 ■ 2016 STATE MEAN
 ■ 2016 ST MICHAEL'S MEAN

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

VCE RESULTS – CLASS OF 2016

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

St Michael's students have achieved another outstanding academic year, following the release of their Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) results on 12 December 2016. Of the Class of 2016, 144 undertook the full VCE and 137 applied for an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

In 2016:

- 52% of students received an ATAR score of 80 or higher
- 34% of students received an ATAR score of 90 or higher
- 15% of students received an ATAR score of 95 or higher
- 2% of students received an ATAR score of 98 or higher
- 16% of students received a study score of 40 or above
- 99% of students who applied for an ATAR were offered first-round higher education places.

2016 has been a magnificent year in VCE performances at St Michael's with a range of student achievement. It is also a testament to the wonderful work by our teaching staff, who continue to go above and beyond in supporting every student during their VCE studies.

Of particular note this year is the strong scores achieved across a range of studies, including study scores of 40 and above for 52% of our Physical Education students, 50% of our Dance and Food Technology students, 42% of our Biology students, 40% of our Italian students, and more than a quarter of our History – Revolutions and Music Performance students.

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

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

We congratulate our Dux of the School, Ben Richards (12B), who achieved an ATAR of 99.60.

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

- English – Callum McDonald (12M)
- Mathematical Methods – Tanat Tippinyu (11K).

Each year, St Michael's students continue to show passion and diversity in the fields of further study they choose to pursue.

The graduate year of 2016 was no exception, with the courses chosen including a variety of single and double degrees. Some students also chose to defer to either do a GAP year, travel or enter into the work force.

TERTIARY OFFERS BY COURSE TYPE 2016

Course type	No. of offers
Society and Culture	49
Creative Arts	25
Management and Commerce	24
Science, Architecture and Building	10
Engineering	9
Health	6
Information Technology	6
Education	3
Agriculture and Environment	2

TERTIARY OFFERS BY DESTINATION 2016

Destinations	No. of offers
RMIT	36
University of Melbourne	35
Monash University	24
Swinburne University	17
Deakin University	11

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

OUR COMMUNITY

St Michael's Community Engagement programs inform and educate students, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.

In 2016, the School supported World Vision, Cancer Council, Asylum Seekers Resource Centre and Sacred Heart Mission, raising a significant amount of money during each Community Action Day. We also organised something needed for each charity (including items for the ASRC Food Bank), while the student leaders visited Sacred Heart Mission for a guided tour and collected bathroom items for its patrons.

Another goal was to continue developing 'Faith in Action' – evident with Pay a Sack Forward, the Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund, Wontok (poverty and development awareness), the Cambodia Immersion Program and volunteer work at Sacred Heart Mission.

A special Term 3 project assisted the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, donating more than 2000 books and creating bookmarks. Other events included Pyjama Day, Crazy Hair Day and Ice-Cream Day.

The Years 7–9 Action Team was involved in regular community action, assisting children in Margaret Thomas House with gymnastics, PMP, swimming programs and the 40 Hour Famine.

The Environmental Action Group (EAG) and Environmental Defenders hosted Environmental Action Day, where students paid \$4 to blend pedal-powered frozen fruit slushies. There was also lights out during Commons and a successful second-hand clothing stall. Money was donated to the Thin Green Line foundation, while remaining clothing and food was donated to Sacred Heart Mission.

Students worked with the School's cleaning company to improve recycling bins, and the EAG cared for the Octavius Brown Kitchen Garden. In Semester 2, students considered how to reduce paper usage.

During the Merry Month of May, Year 12 leaders organised events in support of four charities – the Robert Connor Dawes Foundation, One Girl, Haven Foundation and Leukaemia Foundation. Following the 'Shave for a Cure' promotion, the team was awarded national and state winners for the greatest amount raised by a school. Throughout the month, St Michael's raised more than \$30,000.

WE THANK OUR DONORS

St Michael's is enormously grateful for the generosity of those in our community who contributed to the vitality and financial sustainability of the School throughout 2016, including:

14th/32nd Australian Infantry Battalion (A.I.F.) Association
Mr J Armstrong and Ms R Constable
Mr G Beissel
Bellwether Foundation Pty Ltd
Dr M Bonazzi
Mr B and Mrs A Boyaci
Mr S Burchartz and Ms C Triolo
Mr J Colville and Ms K Napier-Colville
Mr D Coxhell and Ms M Eisen
Mrs K Dunne
Ms R Dunne
Mr M and Mrs D Grima
Mr G Grollo and Mr D Tomsic
Hanlon Foundation
Ms F Hogg
Mr R and Mrs V Hornsey
Mr C and Mrs J Hosie
Mr M Kennedy and Ms R Jack
Mr S and Ms M Howard
Mr D and Ms J Lamont
Mr A and Dr R Mittal
Mr J and Ms M Peck
Mr J and Mrs J Prescott
Mr B Redmond
Dr P Rong
Mr G and Mrs F Snell
Mr G and Mrs K van Wyngaarden
Anonymous – 2

Every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this list.

If an error has occurred, please accept our apologies and email community@stmichaels.vic.edu.au

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

ENGAGEMENT AND MARKETING

It's been another big year for the Engagement and Marketing Department.

We welcomed our new Director of Engagement and Marketing, Vanessa Hannan, who is seeking to revamp the Engagement and Marketing team in 2017.

This year's promising initiatives include our new 'Diversity Opens Minds' campaign, a new digital advertising range, and a vibrant new community newsletter. In partnership with digital agency KOJO, the School launched a new website with a fresh layout for prospective parents.

In response to St Michael's new K-12 structure, we have worked closely with the four new Directors of Learning. We considered how to smooth new students' transition; sought Directors' expertise on gender and year level capacity; discussed new programs and events; and aimed to make these visible to parents. The Directors of Learning were also available on School tours with prospective parents.

M News magazine received recognition for its quality content and creative design after being nominated in the Educate Plus Awards' Alumni and/or Community Relations Publication category. Despite not taking home the win, we were proud to be one of three finalists from schools across Australia and New Zealand.

We now have more than 3500 Facebook followers, approximately 820 Twitter followers, and more than 750 on LinkedIn. The Communications team assisted with many events, including Old Michaelian Reunions, the Geoffrey Ryan Cup and the Netball Night Match.

In 2016, eight Open Mornings were held, with approximately 470 families in attendance across the year. In addition to the School's scheduled Open Mornings, more than 180 private tours were also conducted. The School continues to improve the content and format of Open Mornings to meet the expectations of prospective parents, including incorporating specialised K-1 Open Mornings for prospective parents, targeting areas in need of enrolments.

The Scholarships Program was extensively revamped, including the launch of the Judith Whitworth Scholarship for Girls in Science and Maths, designed to boost girls' participation in these core areas.

The Parents and Friends Association underwent a major restructure during 2016, and is now known as the Parent Community Association (PCA). A Steering Group was appointed to aid restructuring, and Lela McGregor, Mark McGahan and Meredith Miles were appointed the new PCA President and two Vice Presidents respectively.

PEOPLE AND STRATEGY

The People and Strategy Department's primary focus for 2016 has been the Leading to Learn project, which saw the introduction of the K-12 structure at the start of the year. The team has been supporting the transition process, working with key stakeholders to develop the K-12 structure in Performing Arts, Sport, and Health and Physical Education.

There has been a continued emphasis on workforce planning through Project 2020, which has been particularly focused on succession planning throughout 2016.

VIBE, the School's health and wellbeing initiative, continues to support our staff. For the third year in a row, we have participated in the Global Corporate Challenge, a health initiative to encourage people to take 10,000 steps a day over 100 days. The School offers an employee assistance program and other activities and health promotions.

Ziebell, the School's internal professional learning program, and St Michael's coaching framework have also continued to run successfully throughout 2016.

St Michael's has a key strategic aim to be an endorsed employer of choice and an exemplary professional learning organisation.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

The School's focus on its people is a key factor for success, as research shows this has the greatest impact on student outcomes. The School has four key achievement areas in relation to our people:

- Proactive and innovative management of current and future staffing requirements to optimise individual, team and organisational strengths.
- The provision of responsive and meaningful terms and conditions of employment which clearly reflect the value of staff and appropriately reward and recognise quality.
- A holistic growth, development and wellbeing framework for all staff to optimise their strengths and ability to contribute positively and productively to the St Michael's community.
- Recognition of learning and achievements.

In 2016:

- Approximately 50% of staff (teaching and educational support) held Bachelor Degrees, 24% held Master's Degrees and 12% held other higher education qualifications.
- The Staff Engagement Survey ran for a fourth year in 2016, with staff participation of 71% and an engagement rating of 72% – well above the global average of around 60%.
- Approximately 77% of the teaching staff were retained from 2015 to 2016, while the overall retention rate for staff was 80%.

PROPERTY AND MAINTENANCE

2016 was a highly productive year. The biggest news was the completion and official opening in Term 1 of The Gipson Commons, the most extensive building project in our School's history. The Gipson Commons has become an integral part of the School's built environment, receiving extensive media coverage.

In September, the building received the Excellence in Timber Design award in the Timber Panels category at the 2016 Australian Timber Design Awards, and was a finalist in the 2016 Victorian Premier's Design Awards. (Winners were to be announced in early 2017.)

There were also many smaller projects, including landscaping the gardens, installation of the Redan Street cricket nets, and the creation of a new and larger oval. A Year 2 playground was constructed in the 2–5 Quadrant, and the School is planning playgrounds and facilities in Margaret Thomas House.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGIES

Planning has commenced on the installation of a Research and Development Room – a classroom dedicated to road-testing new technologies to be rolled out throughout St Michael's. The contents will be rejuvenated every 12–18 months, and our classrooms are also being refreshed to incorporate the latest AV and IT facilities.

Virtual mailout systems and communications will be evaluated during 2017 to streamline communications between parents and students.

We are also working to implement Microsoft BI Analytics. This will enable us to better facilitate our resources by providing the School with key pieces of data, helping to ensure all processes are optimised.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

FINANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

In 2016, we delivered an outstanding \$20-million state-of-the-art teaching and learning facility, The Gipson Commons, on time and under budget.

This is a significant achievement in the delivery of the St Michael's key strategic objective whilst maintaining the operational performance of the School.

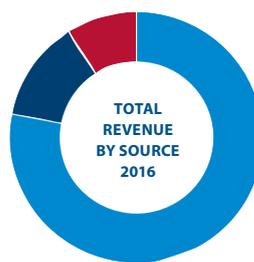
St Michael's has also continued to remain in a sound financial position, despite facing industry-wide challenges, mainly the continuing economic downturn, the decreasing affordability of school fees and the rising costs in educational provision.

Maintaining our sound financial position will continue to underpin the delivery of the School's strategic objectives into the future.

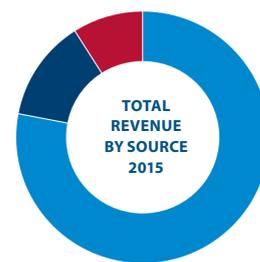
Key areas of focus in 2016 included:

- Reviewing the change of fee payments to direct debit which will commence in October 2017
- Successful closure of the staff Defined Benefit Settlement
- Development of external think tanks with Board members and external experts, aiming to decrease reliance on government funding
- Completion of the review of the Child Safe Standards which will be incorporated into the School in 2017
- Development of the online training system for staff, emergency management and occupational health and safety.

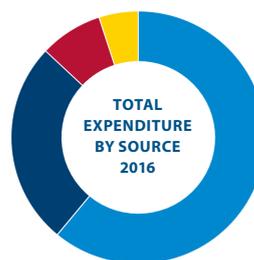
The School is very proud of its accomplishments and will continue to build on these in the years to come.



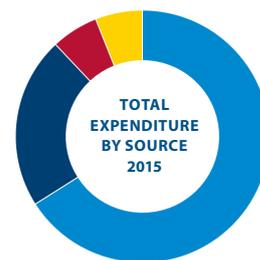
Government grants... 13%
Fees, levies & charges... 78%
Other income... 9%



Government grants... 13%
Fees, levies & charges... 79%
Other income... 8%



Building & property... 5%
Depreciation... 8%
Personnel... 61%
Other expenses... 26%



Building & property... 6%
Depreciation... 6%
Personnel... 66%
Other expenses... 22%

2016 AND 2015 FINANCIALS

	2016 \$	2015 \$
Revenue	41,320,026	39,294,342
Employee benefit expenses	24,374,058	23,208,135
Depreciation & amortisation expenses	3,042,273	2,032,373
Property and rental expenses	1,998,096	1,996,002
Educational services expenses	2,517,708	1,906,544
Administration expenses	1,080,647	1,142,675
Marketing expenses	809,199	755,439
Travel and vehicle expenses	1,076,944	1,057,466
Finance costs	878,075	484,853
Other personnel expenses	384,987	332,133
Other expenses*	4,254,313	2,824,708
Surplus before tax	903,726	3,554,014
Surplus for the year	903,726	3,554,014

* It is noted that the 2016 "Other expenses" included a one-off non-cash item of \$1.235 million as a result of the Defined Benefit Settlement. Therefore the actual operating surplus for 2016 was approximately \$2.14 million.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

THANKING OUR COMMUNITY

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

I would like to recognise the committed and enterprising endeavours of all members of the School who have tirelessly worked with us as volunteers to ensure that we sustain our connected community: from coordinating the Twilight Music Festival, to supporting drama productions, to assisting in the sporting program, through to running social events – like the mammoth Trivia Night and the year level functions. Thank you all for your energy, effort and support.

This year we have also witnessed the launch of a refocused Parent Community Association (PCA), whose aim is to build a strong partnership between families and the School by fostering a vibrant parent community through fundraising, events, support and friendship. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the team who will lead the PCA in 2017, and who were elected in December: Mrs Lela McGregor, President; and Mr Mark McGahan and Mrs Meredith Miles, Vice Presidents.

I wish to thank, too, the members of our Old Michaelian Committee who have provided many opportunities for our alumni to maintain their connection with the School, from reunions to the wonderful work of the Archives Committee in preserving our past in the Sandra Matheson Archives.

I continue to hold the view that those schools that are well-governed will be best positioned to navigate the challenging dilemmas of the next decade. We are fortunate to have such a committed Board who gives so generously of their time and expertise to ensure that the School is rigorously governed and financially robust. Despite the demands of their professional lives beyond St Michael's, they have provided unqualified support and guidance.

I am deeply grateful for the work of all Board members, especially the Chairman, Mrs Fiona Mead. Fiona has assumed the role at a time of significant transition as we have shifted to become a genuine K-12 school and opened a transformational teaching and learning facility in the centre of the campus. At the same time, as Chairman, Fiona has also had to manage the complex process of leadership change as I look to conclude my time as Head of the School in 2017. Fiona has done all this adeptly, effectively and well to ensure that we are well-positioned not just for 2017, but the years beyond.

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

I would like to acknowledge the dedicated engagement of the School Leadership Team – Mr Gerard Houlihan, Deputy Head of the School; Mrs Annabelle Knight, Associate Head (Innovation and Learning); Mr Tim Dorning, Associate Head (Teaching and Learning), Ms Clare Murphy, Director of People and Strategy; Ms Vanessa Hannan, Director of Engagement and Marketing; and Mr Scott Feehan, Director of Business. They are a diverse and talented collaborative group who share a passionate commitment to teaching and learning at St Michael's.

I should note that on 1 December, Clare Murphy was named the Dave Ulrich HR Leader of the Year at the annual Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI) Awards. This is the most prestigious of the AHRI awards, and is a fitting acknowledgement of Clare's leading approaches in ensuring that St Michael's continues to be an employer of choice.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

By Simon Gipson – continued

Scott Feehan leaves us in early 2017 to assume the role of Chief Commercial Officer at another educational institution. During his five-year tenure at St Michael's, Scott has had a comprehensive impact across a range of areas from Finance to ICT to Property, and has brought an entrepreneurial flair and commercial edge that has benefited the School significantly. On behalf of the School, I would like to thank Scott for his energy, endeavor and enterprise, qualities from which we have all benefited.

Although Mr Malcolm Fraser will not formally retire from the School until the middle of next year, he will be on long service leave in 2017, and so 2016 marks his final time at the School after 35 years of dedicated service to St Michael's in a variety of roles – Science and Biology teacher, Head of Mitre House, and Dean of Curriculum. I would like to acknowledge Malcolm's extraordinary and lengthy involvement with teaching and learning at St Michael's, and publicly thank him for his unstinting commitment to the students in his charge. Naturally, we all wish you well in your retirement, Malcolm.

I also take this opportunity to thank the other members of staff who conclude their time with us in 2016. I hope that your experiences at St Michael's have been professionally rich and personally rewarding, and wish you well in the next stage of your careers.

And so we reach the end of the 2016 school year and look to all that 2017 holds for the St Michael's community. For me personally, it will mark my final year at St Michael's and, as such, a series of 'lasts'.

I look forward to seeing you again next year as we experience the continuing development of the ever-evolving St Michael's story.

MR SIMON GIPSON

Head of the School



OUR LEADERS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



MR PAUL ORTON
Chairman of the Board
Commenced 26 April 2007
Resigned 26 April 2016



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



MRS FIONA MEAD
Chairman of the Board
(Elected 26 April 2016)
Commenced 28 April 2014



MS ALANA KILLEN
Commenced 27 April 2015



PROF GABRIELE LAKOWSKI
Deputy Chairman of the Board
Commenced 22 November 2000



THE REVD FR CARY MANSELL
Marlton Advisory Committee
Commenced 28 October 2013
Resigned 23 April 2016



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



MR JIM MOSER
Marlton Advisory Committee
Commenced 26 April 2016



MR SIMON GIPSON
Head of the School
Commenced 1 January 2000

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM*



MR SIMON GIPSON
Head of the School
Commenced 1 January 2000



MR SCOTT FEEHAN
Director of Business
Commenced 19 March 2012
Resigned 14 February 2017



MR GERARD HOULIHAN
Deputy Head of the School
Commenced 1 January 2001



MS VANESSA HANNAN
Director of Engagement
and Marketing
Commenced 8 August 2016



MRS ANNABELLE KNIGHT
Associate Head (Learning
and Innovation)
Commenced 29 January 2002



MS CLARE MURPHY
Director of People and Strategy
Commenced 24 March 2010



MR TIM DORNING
Associate Head (Teaching
and Learning)
Commenced 28 January 2003



MRS BO RUTECKI
Director of Admissions and
Community Engagement
Commenced 25 July 2011
Resigned 1 April 2016

* Renamed School Executive on 23 February 2017



St Michael's
Grammar School

Diversity
Opens Minds™

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Melbourne Victoria Australia 3182

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CRICOS Provider 00345G