

MNews > Celebrating 120 years
of learning

St Michael's Grammar School
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Our contributing writers



I've been writing stories and diary entries since I was four years old. I love writing because you take yourself on a journey to an imaginative world. I loved writing articles for *M News* and working with the fantastic team.

During the making of the magazine, I was able to interview students and staff, and I learnt a lot more about them and their passions. It was truly an amazing experience.

The thing I loved most was using descriptive and emotive words that set a scene for the reader so they knew what I was trying to say. The best thing about writing something that someone else will read is that they will hopefully enjoy it and think more about the topic and the issues. In this way, I've also had the satisfaction of contributing to the St Michael's community. It was such an honour!

Wilson Amos (5N)

As a young illiterate child, I would fill pages of lined pads with incomprehensible squiggly lines and dashes, yearning for the day I could go to school and learn to write letters and form sentences. Since then, along with music and theatre, I have always valued writing as a form of creative expression.

It has been a privilege to contribute my stories and ideas to *M News*, and to get a taste of journalism. Enjoy our work!

Tamara Cole (11S)

Writing has been a long-time passion of mine, and being able to work with professionals, get feedback on my writing and understand the process of publishing a piece of work has really helped me to understand more about writing and being a writer.

It's great to be writing for a platform that serves to inform and involve the St Michael's community, and to write about something that is important in my life. I'm very grateful to the *M News* team for being so devoted and hardworking, and allowing me to be a part of the process of creating this year's magazine.

Nina Irvine (11B)

When I was younger, I used to have trouble writing. I could never seem to get going and put my ideas onto the page. Last year, that started to change. It was like something had been unlocked in my brain and the words flowed freely.

This year, my involvement with *M News* has sparked a passion for writing, and I want to write all the time. I think it has helped me to be a better writer, too. I have really enjoyed writing for *M News* because writing articles that tell a story is different from creative writing in class, and it has given me the chance to think about different writing styles.

Being part of the editorial group, learning all the processes of putting a magazine together, and working towards getting something you have written published has been great.

Rosie McClements (5C)

Celebrating the past, building the future



From the Editor



Between the past and the future lies the present – the perpetually moving moment linking the two, constantly reminding us of where we came from and where we are going.

I am aware of this ever-present connection very strongly every time I am back in Poland, where I find myself relentlessly moving between past and future. One of my favourite places in Warsaw, my hometown, is a beautiful street called Nowy Świat (New World).

Full of noble mansions and palaces dating back to the 16th century, Nowy Świat became a major thoroughfare, and one of the most fashionable streets in Warsaw during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. There were also many important places of entertainment, hotels, cafes and pastry shops.

During the Warsaw Uprising (August – October 1944), Nowy Świat was almost completely destroyed. Barely any buildings survived. At war's end, it was decided to meticulously restore the street and its famous buildings.

I spent many hours there during my university days, eating doughnuts in Café Blikle – a favourite for Warsawians since 1869, and famous for once serving doughnuts to a young and sweet-toothed Charles de Gaulle, admiring the former home of revered writer and Anglophile Joseph Conrad, or reading on the steps of the Holy Cross Church, which boasts an urn containing the heart of Fryderyk Chopin.

It has always been – and still is – the 'place to be'. If you want to meet a friend you have not seen for years, stroll to the New World twice, and meet him for sure.

The street is now also beloved by the world's fashionistas, who frequently visit its top boutiques such as Burberry, Zegna and Escada.

Coleman Walk, a pathway which flows through the centre of St Michael's, may not be almost 500 years old, but it too has its rich history. I remember in 2000, when I worked in the office in what is now Elmwood, this path was simply a small walkway from the middle of the School to Hewison House. The main entry to the School was from Redan Street, and the Head's office was located in what is now the Senior School building. I often had lunch sitting in the small garden where the Sisters' Building now stands.

At the end of Coleman Walk, just opposite the current building site of The Commons, were temporary offices and classrooms, buzzing with students moving in and out.

Chapel Street became the main entry in late 2000, when Hewison House was converted to a business centre, instead of housing the classrooms. The Admissions room was there as well, hidden away behind Reception.

This edition of *M News* celebrates 120 years of St Michael's history ('Valuing our heritage and history', page 23). Intertwined with the past are many stories and achievements of students and teachers now enjoying the School ('Join the club!' on page 13, 'A feast of Drama and Dance at St Michael's' on page 27), and following in the footsteps of many who left St Michael's long ago ('Teaching across the generations' on page 42).

If you lean in carefully and look through the glass window in the hoarding at The Commons, you can almost touch the future of St Michael's. We all feel the buzz and excitement about the changes on the School's horizon – The Commons to be opened next year (see the latest images on page 10) and the new K–12 vision to be realised in 2016 ('Realigning St Michael's as an integrated K–12 school' on page 5).

I wonder what the School will be like in another 120 years!

Happy reading,

Mrs Bo Rutecki
*Director of Admissions
and Community Engagement*

A compelling vision



From the Chair of the Board



During our 120th anniversary year, we celebrate the vision of the Community of the Sisters of the Church, founders of St Michael's in 1895. The Sisters' strong conviction in the value of education still forms the core of St Michael's.

The Sisters' beliefs are embodied in the *Strategic Vision 2020*, a detailed plan for the School's future development. Approved and widely shared in 2013, the *Strategic Vision 2020* continues to shape the *St Michael's: Learning* framework.

The Strategic Vision 2020 has six core assumptions:

- An Anglican school
- education from Kindergarten to Year 12
- non-selective
- coeducational
- a single St Kilda campus
- enrolments between 1350 and 1400 students.

It is also a blueprint for:

- achieving excellence in teaching, learning and caring
- supporting the development of a highly skilled team of staff
- expanding the concept of contributing citizenship throughout the School community

- adopting a proactive approach to sustainability
- developing high-quality infrastructure and business practices to support innovative learning.

This is a roadmap to securing the School's financial position well into the future. Detailed planning and execution of the School's operations generates prudent surpluses by maintaining strong enrolments and building a philanthropic culture – both ambitious and highly achievable goals.

The Head of the School, Mr Simon Gipson, recently announced the K–12 educational and operational model, central to the *Strategic Vision 2020*. The K–12 future of St Michael's empowers students to pursue their chosen educational paths, explore their passions, and gain confidence in their strengths and talents.

The updated Masterplan

A key part of our *Strategic Vision 2020* is the Masterplan, which oversees the School's built environment and ensures that the School continues to chart a clear path to continuing prosperity. Detailed planning of our environment will guide St Michael's into the future.

Since the Board commenced discussions about the previous Masterplan in 2008–09, I am pleased to announce that the School has implemented many of its recommendations. The Masterplan's goals are regularly reviewed by the Board. Each project is crafted in response to feedback from parents, students and staff, focusing on positive educational outcomes, environmental responsibility, and financial sustainability.

The Masterplan recently guided the creation of The Commons. In August, the Board approved an updated Masterplan for the five to seven years following The Commons' early 2016 opening.

The Masterplan lays out the following goals:

- Creating active open spaces, including the Quad redevelopment. Continuing to expand and upgrade our environment is essential for student and staff wellbeing.
- Strengthening the School's real estate portfolio by facilitating the purchase of adjacent property – including St George's, our most recent acquisition. This ensures that St Michael's has ample space and resources to cater for future enrolments and facilities.
- Converting St George's into a major performing arts complex with tiered seating from 2016.
- Creating a professional sporting precinct, encompassing a pool, a gymnasium, a basketball stadium and a wellbeing centre. This 3–4 level complex will include a 50-metre pool and three competition basketball/netball courts.

While the updated Masterplan will guide St Michael's into an exciting future, these developments depend on the ongoing and increasing philanthropic support of the School community.

It is encouraging to see this ambitious Masterplan take vivid shape. Our next chapter promises to be filled with growth and opportunity.

Further details on the St Michael's *Strategic Vision 2020* can be found on the School website at www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/welcome/strategic-vision-2020/

Mr Paul Orton

Chair of the Board of Directors

Realigning St Michael's as an integrated K-12 school



From the Head of the School



St Michael's is in an advantageous position as a single-campus K-12 school nestled in inner-urban St Kilda. It is a compact educational village in which students and staff share an engaged learning community.

Yet until now, we have organised ourselves along traditional structures that owe more to the *Education Act of 1872* than contemporary understandings about young people's learning.

In the late 19th century, Victoria's progressive government introduced free, secular and compulsory education until age 12 – though provision was made within the *Education Act* for education until age 15. While there was a philosophical underpinning to the legislation, there was also a fundamental pragmatism that drove it – the rapidly developing industrial base of the young colony demanded workers with basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

Secondary schools only became prominent after World War II. Of the 60 Victorian government schools in 1936, only six catered for students over the age of 14. The vast majority of schools engaged in the latter stages of secondary education were in the independent sector.

A number of 'comprehensive' high schools were introduced after the war as demand for secondary education expanded, but the focus and mode of instruction was still decidedly different from the primary years.

The shortfalls of an educational structure that fundamentally divides primary and secondary schools are well-documented. It is well-understood that young people develop and learn at different rates – 12-year-olds do not all learn one way in December, then morph into different learners after a few warm summer days.

What we demand from schools has shifted far beyond turning out compliant, literate and numerate workers. Education has been transformed by rapid access to information. Teachers are no longer sole custodians of knowledge, and learning involves much more than regurgitating a narrow curriculum.

Research suggests that young people hit maturational milestones far earlier than they did a century ago, and there are also societal pressures to adopt adult behaviours at younger ages. Young people are arguably expected to be more socially cultured and academically mature than ever.

There is, therefore, a compelling need to reconceptualise young people's learning. Dissolving the false primary/secondary divide and recalibrating learning to reflect children's development is also necessary.

The 'middle years' focus led to many schools differentiating learning approaches between Years 4 and 9 – yet this was often another organisational device to segment large schools. Nonetheless, there is much research on the changes during children's transition to adolescence.

In 2009, this research led St Michael's to commission a review of Years 5 to 8, the 'middle years' of learning. This research governed key aspects of The Commons, the School's first purpose-built K-12 learning facility.

With this new integrated K-12 structure, St Michael's is ideally positioned to capitalise upon its strengths as a single-campus school.

Mr Simon Gipson
Head of the School



Being mindful matters

At St Michael's, we have dedicated programs to support the emotional, psychological and physical health of each member of our school. As a community, we practise healthy living and positive wellbeing in a variety of ways to ensure we get the best out of ourselves — we call this being mindful.

Mindfulness at St Michael's takes many forms from Kindergarten to Year 12. The junior years practise mindfulness immediately after lunch, usually autonomously. 'We commence assemblies with a mindfulness session, and discuss being in the right mind space for learning,' says Mr Tim Roberts, Director of Pastoral Care (Junior School). 'We talk about mindfully respecting the learning thresholds — being ready to enter a learning space, and being in the right mind space for learning.'

Transitioning from the playground into the classroom setting can be challenging for some children. To help overcome this, Preparatory students, for example, prepare for class by finding a quiet space. 'They look forward to letting their brains rejuvenate for the afternoon,' says Teacher Miss Dianne Busuttill. 'We teach children that mindfulness is about being fully engaged in each moment. It involves being aware of our experiences, including thought processes, bodily tension and emotions.'

Preparatory children engage in mindfulness activities including yoga, breathing exercises, listening to classical music or stories, and guided meditation. 'They recognise the importance of allowing time to relax their brain and improve their concentration,' Miss Busuttill adds.

Year 3 children are immersed in mindfulness throughout the week. 'The students maintain awareness of their thoughts, feelings, sensations, and environment,' explains Teacher Mr Mark Thompson. 'Mindfulness also involves acceptance of different mindsets — the class are aware there is no "right" or "wrong" way to think or feel in a given moment.'

Mindfulness in Year 3 focuses on tactile meditation, viewing paintings, sand drawing and mosaic wondering. 'The students discuss and organise team-based activities,' Mr Thompson says. 'These are shared with assemblies, harnessing autonomy and awareness of others. The students consider what mindfulness moments worked best, and what could be done differently.'

Mr Jim Garas practices mindfulness weekly with his Years 7 to 10 Science and Mathematics students, looking at brain function. 'This is based on the work of Andrew Fuller, a clinical psychologist who specialises in the wellbeing of young people and their families,' Mr Garas says. 'I explain the theory to the students, so they can be mindful of how brains memorise over protracted periods.' Mr Garas also plays Mozart so students can achieve 'flow', runs yoga sessions, and allows moments of 'organised chaos' during class. 'This keeps students mindful of how ideas erupt from moments of chaotic thinking,' he concludes.



'Evidence shows that primary-aged children who practise meditation are more focused and resilient. As little as five minutes of meditation first thing in the morning or after lunch helps settle them down and improves concentration.'

— Dr Richard Chambers, Clinical Psychologist and Mindfulness Consultant



➤ *Simrenn McPherson, Olivia Costello, Tim Flynn and Sam Mulia (all 1B).*

Perhaps, though, the most important stage of a student's educational journey when a healthy mind is paramount is during their VCE years. Dr Amanda Samson, who was recently appointed Head of Wellbeing for 2016 and beyond, established the VCE Being Well Yoga Program in 2011. Senior School Teacher Ms Catherine Martin took over the weekly yoga sessions for our Year 11 and 12 students in 2014 as the program expanded. 'The VCE Being Well program now incorporates a range of activities and seminars designed to support students in their final years,' explains Dr Samson. 'This program sits within a broader school approach to mindfulness and wellbeing that will be further developed in the K-12 model in the future.'

The VCE Being Well Yoga Program, held each Wednesday during Commons, has gained great interest and participation over the past year. 'It is an extraordinary group to facilitate,' explains Ms Martin. 'Students come in with frenetic energy going in all directions and leave calm, centred and restored.'

The session runs for 30 minutes and includes five minutes of mindfulness, 20 minutes of yoga and five minutes of relaxation. 'Students who have been attending most of the year have expressed that they really treasure the time and the practice – some sessions have had 30 students in attendance!' Ms Martin says.

Mindfulness at St Michael's extends beyond our students. VIBE, a dedicated health and wellbeing program for staff, offers a range of different initiatives and programs each term to support both teaching and non-teaching staff in managing their own health and wellbeing.

Some initiatives include use of the School's gym and pool, discounted memberships at a nearby gym, tips and advice on staying healthy, discounted movie tickets, complimentary 10-minute massages and participation in the annual Global Corporate Challenge, with 77 staff members across the School joining the cause for 2015.

Health and Wellbeing Manager Mrs Jill Brennan, a registered nurse, says every person, regardless of age or lifestyle, should take time out of their week to relax and rejuvenate. As a society, we're just getting busier and busier,' she explains. 'Without even thinking of any medical or health benefits, being able to stop and reflect upon what you've done for the day is a good thing.'

*Ms Erin Bull
Communications Coordinator*

Let's talk about sex education

Learning at St Michael's is not just about English and Mathematics; it's also about life skills – including Sex Education. But what is Sex Education, and why do we need it? Contributing Writer Wilson Amos discussed this with Director of Pastoral Care (Junior School) Mr Tim Roberts.

When we heard we were going to learn Sex Ed, many students felt a little uncomfortable. But we learnt that Sex Ed is not just about sex – it focuses on values, decision-making, biology, emotions, gender identity, and sexual feelings.

Mr Roberts informed me that Sex Ed helps students in Years 4, 5 and 6 learn about what happens to our bodies during puberty so they are prepared for the social and emotional changes. 'I hope learning about sexual health will help students make healthy choices,' Mr Roberts says. 'The sexuality program is a great springboard for students to have further conversations with their parents.'

Mr Roberts says the program's sensitive aspects were all part of the learning. 'We have to be careful about what we talk about, as we often don't know students' backgrounds. Also, some students are unaware of the scientific terms for the anatomy ... this can be awkward.'

Encouragingly, although students might be a little uncomfortable in Year 4 Sex Ed, their confidence in this area had grown tremendously by Years 5 and 6. 'Students feel more open to ask difficult questions – and being informed means that they make better choices,' explains Mr Roberts.

*Wilson Amos (5N)
Contributing Writer*

➤ Did You Know...

According to the Victorian Department of Education, most young people (about 93 per cent) learn about sex and sexual health from school-based sexuality programs.

Source: www.education.vic.gov.au

What makes our Mathematics program different?

The traditional idea of teaching Mathematics goes something like this.

Students learn from a textbook. The work is delivered against a set of standards from the Australian Curriculum, not always taking students' existing knowledge into account. Limited space is given for students' feedback – and if they 'fail', they often beat themselves up about it.

Is it any wonder so many students don't like Maths?

At St Michael's, we take a different approach. We can gauge each student's ability far more accurately because we use pre- and post-testing to find out what they already know.

We do this for good reasons. If a student can work at a Year 9 level, they will get bored if taught Year 7 content. Conversely, students who aren't yet at a Year 7 level will find the work too difficult.

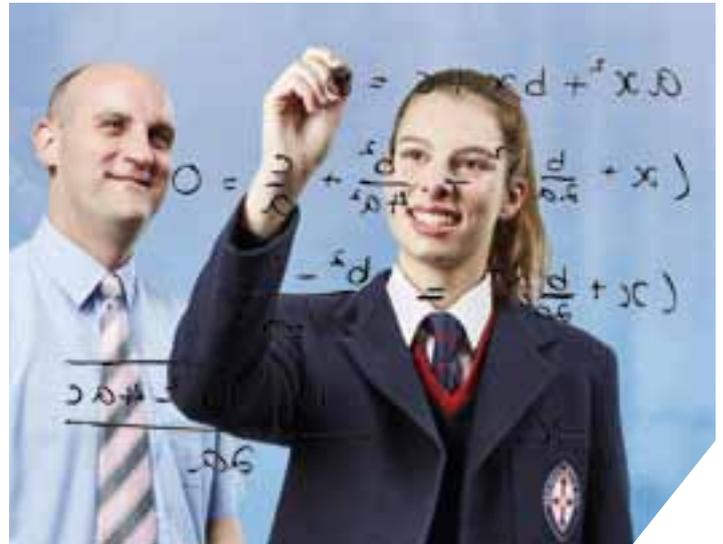
What do we test for?

The tests cover work from Year 6 to Year 10 standard. There are approximately 200 questions, and students have 75 minutes to get through as many as they can. As it is impossible for them to get 100 per cent, they can't fail. They understand that they're not being judged – the pre-test simply looks at what they don't yet know.

After students have done a pre-test on a particular topic (there are 11 sub-strands in the National Curriculum), we collate the results and place them into 'cognitive groupings' based on their level of understanding. In any topic, we can have up to three advanced groups if students show detailed understanding of harder content.

Even though a student might be in the Year 9 level group, we make sure they have filled their knowledge gaps from previous years. All students have gaps, and it's important to address them as soon as they're identified.

Each test yields different results. Teachers can see exactly what each student got wrong, and create a dedicated work scheme for that group. This differentiates the work for students, rather than teaching them what they already know.



> *Head of Mathematics Mr Darren Smyth with Desmia Damiris (9K).*

How is the course structured?

Teachers move through the work at a rate responsive to students. Instead of saying, 'You must complete these 18 chapters in the next month', we cover content directly relevant to them.

Students change teachers every five weeks. By the end of the year, teachers have worked with each student in that year level. This inclusive model of pastoral care rewards students for what they know, while giving them the tools to learn much more.

During their five weeks with each teacher, students spend four weeks being taught and one week doing something 'fun'.

In the program of activities, students can either put their learning into practice or do pre-learning for a new topic.

We then post-test the students at the end of the teaching cycle, when they are assessed on the gaps that have been filled in their knowledge and understanding.

Mathematics at St Michael's, then, is as much about growth as it is about grades. Placing students at the centre of their own learning enables us to gain vital information, fill gaps, and give every child the chance to succeed at a pace tailored to their abilities.

Mr Darren Smyth
Head of Mathematics

The Commons

After 16 months of construction, including the demolition of Vicars Foote Hall and the ongoing development of the School's new \$20 million building, the countdown is on for the official opening of The Commons, set to take place on 22 April 2016.

It's been an exciting time for our School community, and we look forward to the completion of our new K-12 facility. In the meantime, see the progress in these latest external images and artist impressions.



Thank you for supporting our school



In 2015, thanks to the generosity of our community, we have raised more than \$160,000 for St Michael's Grammar School. We take this opportunity to give our sincere thanks to the following people for their kind contributions:

- Mr P Abramson and Ms J Nadler
- Dr N Adams and Dr E Pemberton
- Mr J Armstrong and Ms R Constable
- Mr C Astill and Ms J Saragozza
- Mrs D Atkins
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- Mr P and Mrs S Conley
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- Mr J Di Natale and Ms C Giramondo
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- Ms F Etheridge and Mr R O'Flaherty
- Mrs N Evans
- Mr S Finch and Ms M Machin-Finch
- Ms M Fogarty and Mr A Palmer
- Mr M and Mrs A Forbes
- Mrs L Gale
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- Mr S Hill
- Mrs M Hinton
- Mr N and Mrs M Holliday
- Mr D Hose and Ms J Pask
- Mr M and Mrs D Hudson
- Ms J Hunt
- Mr R and Mrs R Huntington
- Mr C Iarussi and Ms F Strang
- Ms R Jack and Mr M Kennedy
- Mr D Jones
- Mrs A Kehagias
- Mr C Kehagias
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- Mrs J O'Brien
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- Ms D Pallozzi
- Ms K Papamarkos and Mr M Rowe
- Ms K Phillips
- Mr M and Mrs W Pollock
- Mr J and Mrs J Prescott
- Mr J and Mrs J Preston
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- Mr V and Mrs D Zimbardi
- Anonymous – 8



Join the club!

Throughout their educational journey, many students look for an outlet to give themselves a break from the hustle and bustle of school life. Some find relief in sport or exercise, while others prefer quieter and less physical activities like music or reading.

At St Michael's, students can participate in a range of student-run groups and activities outside of class time to feed their particular interests and, perhaps more importantly, as additional learning opportunities to improve their studies.

In the junior years, students can get Mad about Tuesday, enjoy a friendly game in Chess Club with fellow enthusiasts, utilise their artistic skills in Art Club or enjoy favourite novels in Book Club.



Mad About Tuesday has been running for the past five years, and was initiated by staff to

provide some structure that supported children who may find socialising in the schoolyard a bit overwhelming at times.

'We were trying to add some different experiences to lunchtimes that encouraged socialisation, but was an alternative to the hectic pace of outside experiences,' explains Director of Additional Learning Needs (Junior School) Ms Kate Hopkins, who coordinates the group.

'It's an opportunity for children to bring along something they're "mad about" to share with others. It's open to all year levels but mostly attracts children from Years 1-3.'

Mad about Tuesday sees a variety of special items brought to the School. 'Children bring toys or objects of personal interest,' Ms Hopkins adds. 'There are fads and phases – for example, loom bands were popular for a while and football cards are always popular in winter.'



'I like coming to Mad about Tuesday because you can see people's toys that you don't have.' – Prep student



Chess Club is another popular activity among many of our junior students, including Wilson Amos (5N). 'I love chess,' he says. 'Whether you can already play or are wanting to learn, Chess Club gives you that opportunity. I've also heard that some successful chess players have said that chess is like life, which I agree with, because it's full of decisions and involves predicting smart moves.'

Director of Pastoral Care (Junior School) Mr Tim Roberts, who manages the program, concurs. 'Chess is a strategic game that involves decision making, forward planning as well as the use of rules and regulations,' he explains. 'In life, we have to make decisions, develop plans for the future and follow rules and regulations. In this way, chess and life have many similarities.'



➤ *Tanish Bedi, Caitlin Mok, Sacha Amodeo, Angus Watson and Claudia Sacks (all 4P).*



Book Club – established in early 2015 and coordinated by Teachers Mrs Elizabeth McBride and Miss Sue Macdonald – is a fortnightly group for students in Years 3–6 to share their enthusiasm for authors, books, graphic novels, fanzines, writing, poetry and reading. ‘The inspiration behind the club was to tap into our junior students’ love of reading and writing, to offer them a fun way to discuss books and different ways to start writing, and to share their creative efforts,’ Miss Macdonald says. ‘When we started, most children were happier with the reading and discussion side, but Mrs McBride introduced them to a collaborative story-writing website and now we have a group of keen writers.’



The number of clubs is even broader in the senior years. Since its inception in 2009, Write Club has provided an opportunity for students interested in writing to put pen to paper and discuss novels, poetry, screenwriting, songs, blurbs and more. ‘It’s a space to experiment with writing styles and learn more about the craft,’ says Head of Library Mr Ed Kostraby.

‘It’s an opportunity to show what a student has done and share it, providing an avenue for self-expression.’ The group, which meets each fortnight, also welcomes established writers – including children’s author George Ivanoff in 2014 – or representatives from the publishing industry to discuss their professions and experiences with the students.

Annabelle Pearson (7H) is a keen participant of Write Club. ‘I remember being in Year 5 and looking at posters for Write Club, and instantly being captivated by the idea that I could go to a place where I could freely express my ideas and talk about my love of books,’ she recalls. ‘When I began in the Senior School, I knew straight away that Write Club was something I wanted to be part of. It provides a great creative writing outlet for all ages.’



Members of the Senior School’s science club, COSMOS (Collective of St Michael’s Outstanding Scientists), learn from one another and get

hands-on experience conducting less traditional science experiments, as they pursue their thirst for knowledge and explore the natural world. Launched in 2011, the club is a self-motivated, student-run, project-oriented group, which meets regularly throughout the year, researching physics, chemistry, biology and human psychology.

At the beginning of each year, COSMOS leaders investigate experiments and activities which fire their scientific imaginations and foster genuine communication and conversation between students. A highlight on the COSMOS calendar is the School’s annual Science Week, where the group comes together to facilitate joint activities, events and competitions for the whole School to enjoy, as well as visiting scientists including Catriona McPhee, an entomologist with Museum Victoria, in 2013, and Mars One candidate Dianne McGrath earlier this year, which attracted interest from about 150 students.

'COSMOS allows us to do experiments such as butane bubbles (lighting bubbles of butane on a person's hand) and sparkler explosions,' explains COSMOS Co-Captain Zara Falkiner-Rose (12H).



An expansion of COSMOS is the Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) Club, which meets each Thursday. 'D&D itself combines role-playing with turn-based tactical combat,' explains Zoltan Ward (12M), St Michael's D&D Captain. 'Our D&D Club emphasises teamwork and fellowship.'

Students share their knowledge of the game and benefit from each other's gaming skills, with experienced and new players welcome. 'I enjoy meeting people who are interested in learning about D&D and other roleplaying games,' Zoltan says.



This year saw the inception of the Agora (Humanities) Club. 'Students create different scenarios, allocate different countries to participants, then decide how they'll react to whatever crisis they come up with,' explains Acting Head of Humanities Miss Stephanie Price. 'It was interesting to hear their opinions – the zombie crisis was quite funny.'

The students receive a fact file for their country, then take up a stance to defend. Previously they examined Aids epidemic management. 'There were a couple of countries whose healthcare and education was so low that the students said: "Aids is obviously a huge issue, but as the average life expectancy for our country is 35, we want to focus on those health concerns"', Miss Price recalls.



Another well-attended group is the Philosophy Club, which meets each week for a conversation on a topic chosen by Club Captain Aaron Sarandopoulos (12K). 'No discussion is off limits,' he says. 'Philosophy Club offers intellectual conversations, and is a versatile place where individuals can open their mind.'



> Senior School Teacher Mrs Wendy Batt conducts a science experiment with a member of COSMOS.

Humanities and Body, Mind & Spirit Teacher Mr Lucas McGauran helps facilitate the club. 'The group is mainly student-run, but during the weeks I attend, I go into more depth so the students have something to work on,' he explains.

'Some topics reliably create controversy – religion and ethics get people involved, which is great,' adds Mr McGauran. 'We discussed capital punishment when the two Australians were executed in Bali, but that's a bit of a dead-end in Australia, because there aren't many arguing for it.'

'We discussed the different factors involved. Not just "Should the death penalty exist?," but "Should these two be killed for their crimes?" and "What should Australia do regarding Indonesia?" This provided more scope than a straight: "Is capital punishment morally acceptable?''



Other clubs include the Art Club and the Movie Club – a casual get-together during Monday

lunchtimes for students to enjoy a film. Whatever their interest or skill, there's a club or group for students in all year levels to enjoy – and an opportunity to take their mind off more formal studies, if only for a brief while.

Ms Erin Bull
Communications Coordinator

with Wilson Amos (5N) and Tamara Cole (11S)
Contributing Writers

A moment with...

St Michael's Co-Captains and Co-Vice Captains



➤ Clockwise from top: Anna Stewart (12H), Coco Sowada (12B), Gabriel Phillips (12M), James Crozier (12H), Julian Mihal (12H) and Clare Niere (12B).

Each year, 16 Year 12 students are elected as School Prefects, but what is it exactly that they do? Contributing Writers **Nina Irvine** and **Tamara Cole** asked 2015 Co-Vice Captains and Prefects James Crozier (12H) and Coco Sowada (12B).

What is your role?

- J: We organise fundraising events and bring issues to the Head of the School, aiming to make a positive difference.
- C: It's about representing the student body and giving them opportunities.

What inspired you to apply for a leadership position?

- J: Enabling others to achieve. I've been at St Michael's for 15 years, since 3-Year-Old Kinder, so giving back was important.
- C: When I was in Year 7, Lane Barrett (OM 2010) was Breen House Captain. She once said to me: 'If you're not a House Captain, I'll be surprised!' I wanted to inspire students like she did.

Who do you remember as an important or inspiring leader?

- J: Max Walter (OM 2012) – I was the Year 7–9 Captain, and he was School Co-Captain. He also mentored us, excelled academically, and socialised in the one year.
- C: The whole 2012 leadership team. They accomplished everything they set out to do, including making incredible educational videos.

What is the source of your group's effectiveness?

- C: Everyone on the team was really grateful to be there. We all wanted to work hard to show we deserved the position.

Merry Month of May proved to be a great success; perhaps the most successful MMM ever?

- J: Particularly the One Girl campaign, consisting of Anna Stewart (School Co-Captain), Coco (Co-Vice Captain), Sami Hassoun (Kilburn Co-Captain) and Betha Westall, who were unbelievably motivated.
- C: We wanted to beat the previous year's fundraising record for Below the Line. We raised just over \$18,000 – about \$1000 more than last year!

What do you love about leading at St Michael's?

- J: Raising \$18,000, being part of a successful mentoring program – moments like that.
- C: Allowing people's voices to be heard.

Do you have any words of wisdom for younger students who are considering leadership?

- J: It's difficult – but the rewards are great. I've walked in the Anzac Day Parade, helped raise \$18,000 for charity, and much more.
- C: Just go for it!

Shaping the Humanities in Australia – Mr Gerry Martin



➤ *Mr Gerry Martin. Photo courtesy of The Weekly Review.*

Mr Gerry Martin, Head of Humanities at St Michael's Grammar School, has an instrumental role in designing the new VCE History Curriculum Study Design and the Foundation to Year 10 Victorian Humanities Curriculum. He discusses his role in the new Australian curriculum, and what he sees as the most important skills for student development.

Mr Martin, who also serves as Vice President of the History Teachers Association of Victoria, has been instrumental in developing how History is taught. He was assigned to create a new VCE History Study Design and rewrite the key skills for the Australian History Curriculum (Foundation to Year 10).

The new curriculum represents a significant departure from the current design, released back in 2003. 'Extensive research around education and thinking in the Humanities has been conducted since then,' says Mr Martin. 'Working on this new curriculum, along with the revised History: Revolutions course design, has given me a great opportunity to incorporate the results of my Master's research.'

As a member of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority's History Expert Review Panel, Mr Martin incorporated his insights into the curriculum. 'My research identified weaknesses of the current Foundation to Year 10 History Curriculum, and I was subsequently commissioned by the VCAA to rewrite the VCE Revolutions Study Design and all F–10 skills,' he explains. 'Many of my recommendations now form the basis of the new curriculum.'

Mr Martin also designed and collated the Extended Investigation, a cross-curriculum subject that will be introduced at St Michael's next year. 'The Extended Investigation helps students develop research skills that will set them up for university,' he points out. 'Targeting high-achieving students, it goes above and beyond the regular curriculum.'

The Extended Investigation centres on practical skills. 'Students doing this unit have to develop their own research proposal, decide on a methodology, and oversee the whole process.'

St Michael's is currently the only independent school offering this innovative subject. 'The Extended Investigation will appeal to high-achieving students,' Mr Martin observes. 'We're also offering a Year 10 elective, so teachers from those classes can team-teach Year 10 and Year 12 students.'

'The aim is to promote increased understanding of research methods, with the teacher as a guide or facilitator,' says Mr Martin. 'It is about students learning to become autonomous learners. In the long term, I'm hoping that students may team up with specialist mentors outside the School.'

Mr Martin's efforts in the area have been noticed. He was appointed to act in the role of Curriculum Manager (History and Civics) with the VCAA for Semester 2, 2015. We look forward to his return to St Michael's in 2016.

Dr Timothy Roberts
Communications Officer

When younger meets older

How a new initiative is bridging the gap between our junior and senior students



➤ Gabriel Phillips (12M) spends time with Henry Evans and Emese Barron (both 3T) as part of the VCE Mentor Program.

A new program which sees students from Years 11 and 12 spend time with their younger peers is proving to be a great success at St Michael's Grammar School.

Co-Vice Captains of the School and Prefects Clare Niere (12B) and James Crozier (12H) were among a group of students who initiated the VCE Mentor Program at the start of 2015, in a bid to bridge the gap between junior and senior students, and support junior students with their transition into the senior years.

Clare says her motivation to become a mentor stemmed from personal experience, when she moved from Year 6 to Year 7. 'I wanted to help the younger children feel comfortable around senior students in the hope that this would ease their own transition,' she explains.

'Knowing I could mentor them was a great opportunity.'

The student-run program, with support from teaching staff, is held on Thursday mornings during the senior students' study period.

During this time, about 40 students in Years 11 and 12 pair up and, on a two-week rotation, visit Years 2–5 classes to help the students with whatever it is they're currently learning – be it Mathematics, Science, Sport or otherwise. Not only does the program benefit the younger children, it also provides senior students with a productive break from their VCE studies.

'The teachers have said it's been really helpful,' says James. 'The children will ask us questions about what it's like in the Senior School, so it's good that we can give them an insight into that. To know that, being in Year 12, we're having a bit of an impact on the next generation of senior students is rewarding.'

'Personally, I find it to be a relaxing break from the constant work of Year 12, and knowing that you are helping children learn or even brighten up their day makes the program very worthwhile,' Clare says.



'All the mentors are fun to have around and are really nice.' – Elizabeth Sullivan (5C)



> *Clare Niere (12B) and Maya O'Connor work together on a research project.*

'On a larger scale, the main benefit is for the younger children and introducing them to their older peers, so when they make the transition into the Senior School they are stepping into an environment less intimidating, there are some familiar faces for them, and they can feel more confident and comfortable entering a new area of the School.'

Ensuring the program's longevity is another crucial element. 'One of our initial aims was to make sure this program was sustainable,' Clare explains.

'I think this aspect is very important in order to achieve an integrated school community, and that's why so many Year 11 students are involved in the program so they can carry it on next year.'

Ms Erin Bull
Communications Coordinator
with **Wilson Amos (5N) and**
Rosie McClements (5C)
Contributing Writers

What it means to be a mentor

Oscar Wilde once said: 'With age, comes wisdom'. I do not have any younger siblings, so on a general basis, I do not interact with kids younger than me a lot of the time.

Hence, being surrounded by an entire horde of nine-year-olds brings with it many surprises. Suddenly I am aware of my age. I become acutely aware of my maturity and experience. Being only 17, I am sure my friends see me as no wiser or older than anyone else. Yet, from the eyes of a nine-year-old, I am a representation of age and maturity. Oscar Wilde's famous quote kicks in. With age really does come wisdom – at least in this case, from the youngsters' perspective.

The VCE Mentor Program aims to cultivate a cohesive relationship across the junior and senior students. The senior students spend time with the younger kids; playing, helping and teaching, whether in the classroom or on the sports field.

I am involved with Year 4 students during their sport classes. Together with other Year 11 and 12 students, we encourage, high-five and chat with the younger kids as they run laps of the oval or do sprint relays.

We also lend a hand to whatever sport they are playing, be it basketball, hockey or soccer games. Some of the kids are shyer than others, but the majority are keen to engage in conversation. As they pause to take a breath at the end of their run, or as we play hit-to-hit with the hockey sticks, they talk about themselves and ask about the upper years of secondary school.

They talk innocently and free of judgement, after running wildly across the oval. It is a liberating refresher from the focus and preoccupation of VCE classes, and from the textbooks and constant stream of out-of-class work.

For me, it serves as a welcome reminder as it pulls me back down to earth, putting things in perspective, and urges me to let the playfulness and childish energy be part of my work and learning.

Above all, it is good fun for both the younger and older students – and that's what matters.

Tamara Cole (11S)
Contributing Writer

Read all about it... on the web

For the full stories, go to www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/news/mnews



As part of the North Melbourne Football Club's initiative to promote healthy living, and in conjunction with St Michael's Health and Physical Education program, players Jack Ziebell, Scott McMahon, Luke McDonald and Daniel Currie spent time with Year 1 and 2 students on 18 March to teach them basic AFL skills and how to lead an active life.



Earlier this year in Term 1, Year 7 students were addressed by Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Bill Nicholson about a range of issues, including land, language and history.

On 6 March, Senior School Music students had the pleasure of attending a performance and workshop in St George's from Ensemble Nobiles, a highly acclaimed male choir group from Leipzig, Germany. During the workshop, Ensemble Nobiles did a warm-up and several exercises with the students, covering overtone spectrum, ensemble balance and acoustic spectrum. A final performance of the piece followed, with a Q&A session about the ensemble's history concluding the workshop.



An innovative desk and drafting table designed and constructed by Sam Prosser-Roberts (OM 2014) was this year selected for the Top Designs section of the VCE Season of Excellence. From a field of 1500 applicants, Sam's piece was one of 110 objects chosen for this prestigious exhibition.

Author and St Michael's parent Ms Chrissie Perry visited St Michael's junior students in February to launch her new book series, *Penelope Perfect*, including the first exciting volume, *Project Best Friend*.



The WonTok Poverty Conference, a joint initiative by the Anglican Board of Mission Australia and the Uniting Church, was this year hosted by St Michael's Grammar School. The conference was attended by students from Anglican schools across Victoria, including 16 from St Michael's, to discuss key ideas around worldwide poverty and development.





In Term 3, two teams of four Year 4 students competed in the Mathematics Association of Victoria Year 4 Games Day with impressive results. The students competed in activities such as problem solving and strategic games, against 29 teams from other schools across the state.

What's it like to play the lead role in one of the 20th century's greatest shows? To find out, St Michael's Communications Officer Dr Timothy Roberts sat down with Maddy Marks (12H) following her knockout performance as the irrepressible Reno Sweeney in one of Cole Porter's best-loved musicals, *Anything Goes*.



The Year 5 Maths Enrichment students had the perfect opportunity in June to practise their programming skills, when they received an unusual assignment from Head of Learning Systems Mr David Howard. Their task was to make a small spherical object – a 'Sphero' – roll across the room and come to a complete stop on a bullseye.



Old Michaelians Bridgette Dunn and Alastair Weng were among hundreds of 2014 graduates from across Victoria to receive a Premier's VCE Award this year. The ceremony is an annual event which recognises students who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in the Victorian Certificate of Education.

Students in Year 6 took to the stage in September to perform in the 2015 Year 6 Musical, *Seussical Jr*. Just weeks before opening night, *M News* Contributing Writer Wilson Amos (5N) caught up with Director of Music (Junior School) Miss Grace Nicastro to find out exactly what goes into producing such a play.



At the beginning of Term 2, students in the VCE Geography class were given a valuable perspective on the subject, after taking part in some impressive excursions to locations including Barmah National Park in the Hume region of Victoria and Melbourne's Docklands.



The annual 12 exhibition was held in October at Brightspace Gallery, representing all students studying VCE Art, Studio Arts, Visual Communication Design, and Design and Technology in 2015. Calum Kenihan (12S) was awarded the prize for his remarkable video piece, *Trust in Unity* (2015), which focused on natural and artificial light.



Valuing our heritage and history

Celebrating 120 years of learning

Our story started in 1895, when an enterprising group of nuns from the Community of the Sisters of the Church travelled to Australia from England, determined to found a collection of schools that embodied their rigorous educational standards and compassionate values.

The Sisters opened the Church of England Day School (as St Michael's was first known) in St Kilda, with five girls and three infants enrolled. The word soon spread about the Sisters' work, and enrolments swelled to 73 by the end of the year. This set the stage for the School's sustained growth, and enrolments have continued to climb each decade.

Performing Arts was the School's signature strength from the beginning – the first 'Entertainment' program was staged that very first year, featuring such quirky items as *Miss Farley's Waxworks* and a play titled *Queen of Hearts*. St Michael's has been a bastion of the Performing Arts ever since.



➤ *Outside Marlon House (1899).*

The School's rapid growth brought in increased funding, with the first School Hall being constructed in 1899 – we have been growing since before Australia's Federation!

In 1904, boarding facilities opened in Marlon House, the beginning of a 70-year tradition. Throughout the decades, these proved attractive to many families from country Victoria.

Another crucial St Michael's event was the creation of the original four Houses in the early 1920s, beginning the School's rise as a formidable sporting force. The 1925 Interschool Swimming Sports was the first of many victories, and the House system forms the backbone of St Michael's to this day.



'St Michael's has been an enormous part of my life, and I was so proud to be invited onto the inaugural School Council. I thought: "The School gave me so much, here's my chance to give something back." I've been part of St Michael's for 74 years.' – Dr Jan Gordon-Clark, OM 1952 and founding Board member



➤ *Fencers in action (1938).*



➤ *The library was a popular place for girls (1952).*

The outbreak of WWII in 1939 came to affect daily life at St Michael's. The School uniform was simplified due to a shortage of materials, and students were eager to help the war effort. During 1942, St Michael's students even 'did their bit' by making camouflage netting.

Growth continued throughout this turbulent historical period. By the war's conclusion in 1945, the School's Golden Jubilee Year, enrolments stood at 497. The Headmistress was Mrs May Vicars Foote, who remained an indispensable member of staff for more than 40 years.

Two of the decade's highlights lay in unexpected places – including the newly crowned Queen Elizabeth II's visit to Australia in 1954, when the Queen and the Prince waved to a group of St Michael's girls watching from the sidelines of Chapel Street. Two years later, our very own Faith Leech (OM 1958) won swimming gold and bronze in the Melbourne Olympics at the tender age of 15.

The world changed irreversibly during the 1960s, and St Michael's changed with it. Infrastructure was updated, with a brand-new Senior School complex opening in 1968. This decade was also the 'golden period' of Sister Scholastica, Principal from 1963–66, 1967–68, and 1971–72.



➤ *Sister Audrey, The Most Revd. Sir Frank Woods, Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, Sister Scholastica and Mrs Margaret Thomas (1973).*

Two other illustrious figures also ran St Michael's during the '60s: Mrs Dorothy Benson (1963–65) and Mrs Margaret Thomas (1965–79). Today's campus has buildings named after all three women. The decade concluded with the 1969 Moon Landing – one of history's most impressive technical feats, watched avidly on one of the School's two black-and-white TVs.

The 1970s was the end of an era, as the Sisters handed over the running of St Michael's to professional administrators. The first computer was introduced in 1976 – the size of a piano, with the power of a calculator. Coeducation in the Junior School began in 1977, with the Senior School following shortly after.



> *Science classroom (1968).*

Today, an even gender balance and a positive coeducational culture are major strengths of St Michael's.

Headmaster Mr ARC Hewison's two-decade tenure saw dramatically increased enrolments in the 1980s, with major expansion in Drama, Design and Technology, Information Technology, and Outdoor Education. In this era of jumbo mobile phones and faxes, St Michael's purchased its first laptop.

Mr Simon Gipson was appointed Head of the School after the millennium ticked over in 2000, initiating a strong period of growth. A firm believer in student-centred learning, Mr Gipson has taken major steps to integrate the learning program right across the junior and senior years.

During this period, the School has implemented a complete overhaul of student assessment and reporting. Technology has been expertly harnessed to take learning beyond the classroom, while the St Michael's online communications portal has connected teachers, students and parents.

Mr Gipson has also initiated strong investment in staff training and leadership skills. The School's professional development program involves all teaching and non-teaching staff, significantly enhancing the culture of engagement and academic excellence.

Under Mr Gipson's leadership, St Michael's has received widespread recognition as an innovative and sustainable independent school. Strong partnerships have been forged with local and international communities, supporting the School's reputation as a globally focused institution.

Several major building developments have been initiated and completed during Mr Gipson's tenure, including the Community of the Sisters of the Church Learning Centre (the Sisters' Building), Wilma Hannah Hall, the Allan Pizzey Building, the Chapel of St Michael and All Angels, and The Commons. These projects have bolstered the School's position as an educational and technological hub.

St Michael's has received many prestigious awards, including the Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation in 2014 and 2015, first prize for its Scholarship Program at the 2014 Educate Plus Biennial International Conference, and finalist for Best Health and Wellbeing Strategy at the 2013 Australian HR Awards.



> *Mr ARC Hewison AM was Headmaster of St Michael's from 1980–1999.*

Mr Gipson's role as an exemplary educational leader has been honoured with a series of prestigious awards. He received the Headley Beare Educator of the Year award from the Australian Council for Educational Leaders in 2009, became Australia's first school principal to receive the Lynda Gratton Business Leader of the Year Award in 2012, and was subsequently a finalist as HR Champion CEO in the 2013 Australian HR Awards.

Mr Gipson was appointed a National Fellow of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders in 2013 and a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators in 2014.

Today, St Michael's is widely recognised as a centre of academic, cultural and sporting excellence. Yet while the School has grown beyond what the Sisters could have imagined, we proudly retain their values of dignity, respect, care and compassion.



A feast of Drama and Dance at St Michael's

St Michael's is known throughout Australia as a Performing Arts powerhouse – the School has produced an enviable collection of dancers, actors and other stars of stage and screen. So, what makes St Michael's such an effective springboard for emerging talent?

'Performing Arts at St Michael's is defined by a comprehensive level of immersion in the arts,' says Ms Annie Fiume, Director of Dance and Drama. 'Our aspiring actors, singers and other stage professionals are tutored and mentored in every aspect of performance, displayed in our fantastic productions.'

The School's Performing Arts program is often compared to that of a professional theatre. Unmatched in ambition, St Michael's stages eight or nine major productions annually, an ambitious schedule which allows for a far greater range of material across many genres. Students take on a unique series of personal and creative challenges to extend their abilities.



> Junior School students enjoy weekly dance classes with Miss Amelia Jones.

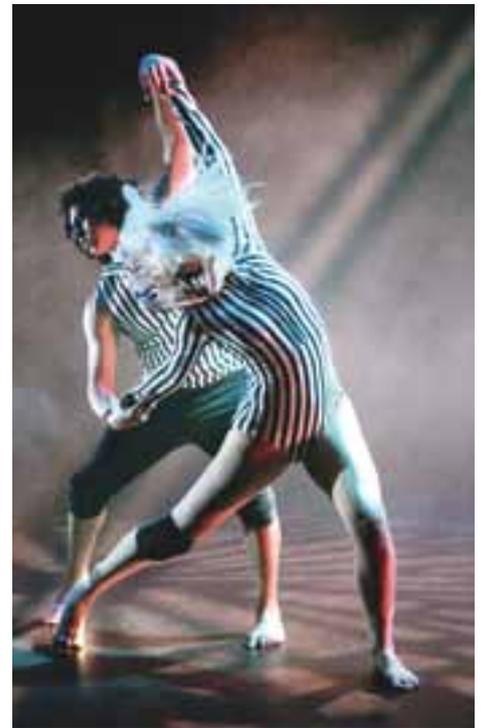
An explosion of styles

Each item of the Dance curriculum bursts with energy. 'Many people are attracted to St Michael's for our Dance program, especially those with a theatre or performance background,' says Senior School Teacher Miss Amelia Jones, who has worked extensively as a professional dancer. 'We offer comprehensive depth of experience in a variety of styles.'

This wealth of skills comes to life in the Dance Project, a vibrant annual anthology of shorter pieces. More than 80 students from Years 7 to 12 auditioned for this year's production, where they worked with a group of professional choreographers.

Returning to the familiar surroundings of our Drama Studio, the Dance Project featured six pieces linked by an intriguing theme, *Sixth Sense* – a multi-faceted exploration of entering a spiritual dimension. The students were inspired by contributing to this ambitious anthology piece.

The Dance Project has a unique structure and feel. 'Each of the six pieces embodied a specific style – contemporary, lyrical and hip-hop,' Miss Jones points out. 'Last year's Dance Project, *Rose and Thorn*, was a detailed study in contrasting movement and emotion; and the previous year's, *Arcadia*, featured four distinct narratives, styles and protagonists.'



> The 2014 Dance Project was a detailed study in contrasting movement and emotion.

With 40 people involved in this year's massive show, the Dance Project's reputation is spreading. 'Our contemporary pieces are "in synch" with Melbourne's professional scene, making the Dance Project more like a company show than a school concert,' says Miss Jones.

Professional learning environments

Dance and Drama students at St Michael's learn directly from elite performers. Earlier this year, Charmene Yap and Sam Young-Wright of the Sydney Dance Company ran an intensive workshop – including a composition task where each student had to embody an emotion through dance.

Students also choreographed a routine in pairs – without speaking. One created a movement, their partner added another, until a work had been painstakingly constructed from scratch for immediate performance.

After watching the Sydney Dance Company's *Frame of Mind* at The Arts Centre the following day, the Dance class questioned the performers about dancing professionally. 'Watching *Frame of Mind* inspired us to create our own works,' says Claudia Conley (12K).

Many students extend their connection with the School far beyond VCE, returning to run masterclasses or assist in other ways. 'Many professionals generously share their expertise or run workshops on specialised topics,' says Miss Jones.

The depth of experience of our Dance and Drama staff is truly impressive. Several have been involved with major companies – including Broadway Dance Centre in New York (Miss Jones), Melbourne Playback Theatre Company (Ms Fiume), the Melbourne Theatre Company (Senior School Teacher Ms Anne Browning) and Malthouse Theatre (Senior School Teacher Mrs Sarah Merry).



➤ Julian Mihal and Anna Stewart (both 12H) perform in *The Dinner Table*.



➤ Students take to the stage for the 2015 House Drama festival.

Student-driven productions

When a dedicated group of young people are given the freedom to work together on a creative piece, amazing things happen.

It's all about fostering productive interactions. The inclusive curriculum encourages students to create expansive, diverse and enduring works by collaborating with others from a range of year levels. 'Our student-centred curriculum enables younger students to learn from and challenge older ones, while the more senior students develop mentoring experience,' says Miss Jones.

'The entire Year 9 class collaborates on a piece to be performed at the end of semester, with each student choosing an on-stage or backstage role,' says Ms Fiume.

'Students write the script, rig the lighting, design the sets and costumes, and do all the acting and directing. They collaborate beautifully, and I was rapt by the younger students' professionalism.'

The annual Student Production gives students the chance to have their own vision realised on the stage. After students submit their ideas, teachers choose the best work for performance. This year's piece – *The Dinner Table*, an uncompromising vision of a family's breakdown written by Maverick Newman (12H) – electrified audiences. 'Stephen Sondheim said: "Art, in itself, is an attempt to bring order out of chaos" – a quote I understand better since writing and co-directing *The Dinner Table*,' says Maverick.

The Dinner Table evolved from Maverick's own experiences (with considerable poetic licence, he points out). 'In 2013, I started plotting a play about the life of a fractured family,' he remembers.



➤ Bailey Nathan-Park (11S), Emma Coulter (7S) and Peni Waqairatu (11M) rehearse for this year's Dance Project.

'I explained the idea to Ms Fiume, who went out of her way to help.' Maverick was mentored in the writing process by William Hannagan-McKinna (OM 2009), who assisted with a second draft of the script. With Co-Directors Lydia Ganci and Elle Marioli (both 12B), along with a talented cast and crew, Maverick led a moving production.

The School's confidence in students is demonstrated on Dance Performance Night, with a smorgasbord of solo performances showcasing student choreography each semester. Created by Miss Jones in 2014, the evening gives students even more opportunities to express their creativity and command the stage.

Seeing the creative output of their elders realised on stage has an impressive effect on many younger students. 'After attending each Dance Performance Night, many are inspired to ask whether they can incorporate their own choreography into the next show,' says Miss Jones.

In only its second year, Dance Performance Night has snowballed into a major production, with 23 student-choreographed pieces performed in front of a full house every night. 'Students appreciate the chance to utilise their creativity, and their parents are rapt to see them express themselves,' says Miss Jones. 'It's inspiring to see creative partnerships develop across year levels – for instance, Charlie Wood (8M) and Ben Carter (12B) collaborated on a tap routine.'

Improvisational opportunities

The strong improvisational component of the Drama curriculum encompasses several programs and events – including the Year 9 Theatresports program and the Year 10 improvisation class, where students eagerly throw themselves into a series of outrageous and exuberant activities.

The chaos is controlled by Ms Fiume, whose extensive background in various forms of performance theatre has given her a deep knowledge of the form's unique potential.

As well as immersing themselves in the practical side of improvisation, students learn about the history of this exuberant theatrical form. 'The class studies the dawn of improvisation with the *Commedia del Arte* in 16th-century Italy, followed by Augustus Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed*,' Ms Fiume points out.

'By charting improvisation's evolution as an art form, students learn to view their own efforts in historical context.'

There is an improvisation 'exam', of sorts, but it's unlike any other exam you've heard of. 'Students do long-form comedic improvisation in a similar style to the Melbourne Improvisers Collective,' says Ms Fiume. 'The final exam in the Year 10 elective is completely performance-based, and the students love it.'

In Semester 2, students prepare for VCE Theatre Studies or Drama. 'They can do a monologue and a performance if they choose,' Ms Fiume adds. 'As Drama and Theatre Studies are so different, we give students a taste of each so they can make a more informed choice.'



➤ Senior students will travel to New York in 2016 as part of a performing arts tour.

Special events

There are also opportunities to travel and perform internationally. Next year sees the inaugural Performing Arts Tour to New York, where a team of students will visit one of the world's renowned locations for the performing arts.

The program will include a mix of master classes and workshops in drama, dance and musical theatre, as well as an opportunity to attend performances on Broadway and time spent sightseeing.

Head of Performing Arts/Director of Music (Years 7–12) Dr Chris McGillen said choosing New York as a destination for a musical tour was an easy decision. 'I made contact with a number of agencies who specialised in performing arts tours, and after a selection process we determined a partner for this inaugural tour.'

Dr McGillen says the experience gained by the students during the tour will be invaluable. 'Like any overseas program, the students will grow in so many ways – from travelling overseas without family support, through to the connections they will make with performers and teachers in New York.'

'The students and staff will be staying on Manhattan Island and will be immersed in a city experience,' Dr McGillen explains. 'A number of staff and students have made the trip to New York for further study; New York is still the epicentre for all things creative. We hope the tour will become a regular biennial part of the overseas programs.'

Closer to home, there's an annual opportunity for students to witness the diversity of the art world at the Adelaide Festival, where students experience avant-garde theatre pieces within a vibrant city setting. After immersing themselves in a wide selection of performances, they return to Melbourne invigorated and inspired.

The pace is unrelenting from the very beginning, and it doesn't let up. 'The Adelaide Festival becomes a competition for students to see as many shows as they can, as they charge through the city from show to show,' Ms Fiume observes. 'We trust them, and they always act responsibly.'

The Arrival

What happens when you give two groups of students a much-loved children's book, and ask them to bring their vision to life on stage? This year, two groups of Year 9 Drama students had the chance to find out. Each was given full creative control over a production of *The Arrival*, a modern classic of children's literature.

'We gave students practical experience in virtually everything – acting, dancing, music, set design, sound design, costumes and lighting,' says Performing Arts Teacher Miss Natalie Calia.

After workshopping ideas, students put their skills into practice. As the source material contains no dialogue, each production rested on students' choices of direction, images and performance.

The Arrival presented an ideal platform for experimentation. Each student chose their role in the production, developed the script and characters, and supervised the entire show.

Participation doubled from last year's inaugural event. (In a novel twist, neither class saw the other's work until performance night.) 'The classes approached *The Arrival* in radically different ways,' says Miss Calia. 'One class performed the text as a war story, while the other narrated three characters' arrival in a new environment. It was fascinating to see how differently each class interpreted the book.'

Each setting was unique. 'One class kept sets to a minimum, incorporating projection into their visual scheme,' Miss Calia recalls. 'The other incorporated sets constructed for a previous production, and focused on using available space effectively to avoid moving bulky props between scenes.'

This diverse approach paid creative dividends, creating two markedly different productions that respected the original text while expressing the students' imaginative vision.



➤ Gary Abrahams from Red Stitch Actors Theatre directed *The Flock* and *the Nest* in 2014.

Notable collaborations

Creative partnerships extend beyond the School walls, as students have the chance to collaborate with renowned external companies.

One memorable opportunity arrived in 2014 with *The Flock and the Nest*, an ensemble drama written for St Michael's with Red Stitch Actors Theatre. 'Working with professional actors and Director Gary Abrahams was a great opportunity for the students, who produced incredible work with four Red Stitch members on stage,' Ms Fiume recalls.

Mr Abrahams returned this year to collaborate with Mr Scott Crozier on *Spring Awakening*, a controversial early 20th century play about repression's destructive effects on individuals. Mr Abrahams described *Spring Awakening* as encompassing 'the full breadth of human complexity – the cruel and the kind, the base and the sublime.'

The St Michael's students thrived on the challenging source material that stretched them to the limit, producing a mature and affecting interpretation of this confronting work.



➤ *The controversial play, Spring Awakening, was performed well by St Michael's students under the direction of Gary Abrahams and Scott Crozier.*

Year 5 gets its groove on!

Year 5 Dance is one of three choices in Year 5 Performing Arts, and is taught and choreographed by Miss Amelia Jones.

Dance is different from anything else the students do in their normal school day. They learn things they may never have done before, such as stag jumps, barrel rolls and incorporating props into dance. 'If you are inexperienced, you don't feel left out because there are people of all abilities,' says Neisha Biviano (5C).

Students learn a variety of dance styles, including contemporary, jazz and modern. Everyone enjoys learning the dances and exploring new ground. Miss Jones says she relishes the time spent teaching her students, and loves that all of them are passionate about dance.

The students dance to music of different beats and tempos, working with Miss Jones to create choreography suited to each song. At the end of the class, Miss Jones lets them go off into groups and choreograph additional moves to add to the end of the dance, then each group performs their piece. 'I like the routines,' says Darcy Bryce (5C). 'There's great music, and we can make up our own choreography.' 'I like the music, because it's pop and not songs we don't know,' adds Millie Stock (5C).

At the end of the year, everyone performs at the Spring Concert, presenting the dance they have been working on in Performing Arts. 'That's when the hard work shines through,' says Miss Jones.

Rosie McClements (5C)
Contributing Writer

Prominent alumni

Many of our recent graduates are pursuing careers in the Performing Arts.



Madaleine Armstrong (OM 2014)

Madaleine has recently begun a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance at the Victorian College of the Arts – a stunning achievement for a new graduate. 'I was thinking of taking a gap year, but going to the VCA open day completely changed my mind,' she remembers.

Madaleine hopes to be a choreographer. 'I could work in Australia, go overseas or start my own company,' she says. 'I often choreographed works at St Michael's, including *Lord of the Flies*. It was great working on these exciting projects.'



Nell Douglas (OM 2013)

Nell recently began studying at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in a new course, Performance Making, which trains performers to work in Australia's performing arts scene.

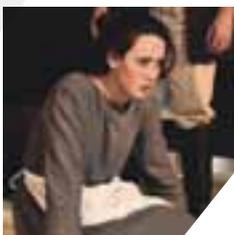
Nell was in many St Michael's productions. '*The Wedding Singer* was heaps of fun, and I'm still proud of my role in *Dancing at Lughnasa*,' she says. 'I learned so much from Ms Fiume and Ms Merry on directing, teaching and collaborating!'



Ruby Rees (OM 2013)

Ruby has just begun her first year living and studying in Manhattan at the Herbert Berghof Studio. (She recently starred in the Herbert Berghof Theatre's *Design for Living*.)

St Michael's was the perfect school for someone of Ruby's diverse interests. 'In Year 12, I co-directed *Neighbourhood Watch* with Ruby Stewart (OM 2013). I'm planning to direct, even if I return to it later.'



Natalie Templeton (OM 2011)

Natalie recently starred in Malvern Theatre Company's acclaimed production of *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller's allegorical play about the Salem Witch Trials – a role which she had previously played at St Michael's.

'To be immersed in this world was draining, but I adore being able to search my soul with the support of a great cast and director,' Natalie says. 'My next aim is to work in film – my dream medium.'



Chris Roberts (OM 2003)

Chris completed a Bachelor of Dramatic Art at the Victorian College of the Arts before embarking to London. His one-man play, *Dead Royal*, enjoyed a triumphant West End premiere and toured the Brisbane Festival in 2015.

At St Michael's, Chris remembers starring in the pitch-black *Sweeney Todd*. 'It's ridiculous that a bunch of 17-year-olds could pull off such a demanding work,' he says.



Jessica Sofarnos (OM 2012)

After arriving at St Michael's in Year 8, Jessica took a central role in performing arts. 'I was involved in several plays – including *West Side Story*, which was an amazing show to be a part of.' She also won the 2012 Music Theatre Guild of Victoria Junior Female in a Supporting Role award for her performance as Anita in the show.

Jessica trained at the Broadway Dance Centre for three months, and has been at MDX Performing Arts School in Melbourne for 12 years.

Dr Timothy Roberts
Communications Officer



> *Walt Isaacson rehearses with his dance partner at Ballet Theatre Australia. Photo courtesy of Ron Fung Photography.*

Dancing his way to New York

Since graduating, Walt Isaacson (OM 2013) has been training in classical ballet full time at Ballet Theatre Australia. He is currently at the Bolshoi Ballet Academy's summer intensive in New York.

Walt started dancing after performing in the Dance Project in Year 7. 'I'd never even done a class before that, but I was still able to dance in the performance,' he remembers. 'I think that really grew my passion, and I decided to start ballet the next year. I'd always wanted to dance, but that welcoming introduction really helped me.'

'Again in Year 10 in *Venus and Adonis*, I got to dance with some of the older male dancers at the School like Harrison Ritchie-Jones and Sean Whitford (both OM 2011),' Walt continues.

'That year, I had actually quit ballet for a few months and that experience kept me going – being able to do that with them was really inspiring.'

When asked what made him want to dance, Walt says: 'I like the fact that it combines physicality and musicality to create emotion.' Having been a devoted musician for many years, Walt was a mainstay in the Grigoryan Orchestra's first desk cellos. 'I think I'm also attracted to it because it's such a big challenge,' he comments. 'It's definitely something that hasn't come naturally to me, but it's taught me how to persevere. The more I struggle, the more I want to achieve.'

Having only been dancing for a few years, Walt was given a solo in the Dance Project when he was in Year 11. It was another key event that inspired him to dance professionally. 'It was a really big boost, and I felt like they took a risk with choosing me,' he remembers. 'St Michael's allowed me to dance by instilling confidence in me through those performances.'

Nina Irvine (11B)
Contributing Writer

A moment with... Amelia Swinn



> *Amelia Swinn (5K) donated more than \$500 in birthday money to local charity St Kilda Mums.*

Amelia Swinn (5K) is an inspiring girl with a big heart. For the past two years, she has been spending some Sundays and school holidays getting to know the people in her local community and helping families in need.

Amelia and her mum, Jenna Webb, volunteer at St Kilda Mums, a not-for-profit organisation which supports children and parents experiencing hardship by collecting donations of cots, blankets, nursery equipment, prams, baby toys and more.

It also helps to ensure a sustainable environment by recycling clothes and other used goods.

'It all started when I went to help my mum during the school holidays,' Amelia says. 'I had to sort out and pack donations, but I started to learn more about what the organisation does and I was keen to keep coming back.'

Thinking of a way Amelia could do more for St Kilda Mums, she decided that instead of receiving presents for her birthday this year, she would ask her guests to donate a small amount of money to St Kilda Mums. She was amazed to realise they raised a total of \$522.00 – enough to purchase three brand new cots! Some of Amelia's friends have now been inspired to start helping at the centre as well.

To learn more about St Kilda Mums or how you can help, visit www.stkildamums.org

Rosie McClements (5C)
Contributing Writer

Double victory for our senior Football and Netball teams

The annual sporting calendar at St Michael's offers an abundance of opportunities for our students to represent their school in a host of sports. Two of the major events each year include the annual Geoffrey Ryan Cup and the Netball Night Match, which sees our 1st XVIII Football and 1st VII Netball teams go up against Westbourne Grammar.

This year, St Michael's was successful in both retaining the Geoffrey Ryan Cup and taking out the Netball match – a double victory for our school. The teams' coaches reflected on the two nail-biting matches.

The cup stays put at St Michael's – Mr David Kennedy, Coach

When I spoke to Louis Walter (11M) after our win over Westbourne, he was overcome by emotion. While others were loud and boisterous, Louis remained more subdued. Relief was the overwhelming vibe he resonated. The job was done and the outcome had been achieved.

When I first met the boys in March and asked them what their expectations were for the season ahead, almost all of them suggested they wanted to win the coveted 'night game'. Above all, even including a premiership, this was the one they wanted to win.

We crafted a game plan based more on effort than execution. The boys worked tirelessly to improve their defensive attributes. Intensity and endeavour were now central themes within the group. Until the Geoffrey Ryan Cup, the group had come close, but not yet fully clicked.

But at this match, the boys got it right. Their work rate was outstanding and their ability to rise to the occasion was simply amazing. Our leaders set the standard and some less-recognisable figures impacted in ways unseen until that night. It was a spirited win from a side that categorically refused to come second.

Final score: St Michael's Grammar School 9. 6. 60 def. Westbourne Grammar 6. 9. 45



➤ The 1st XVIII Football Team defeated Westbourne to retain the Geoffrey Ryan Cup.



➤ The St Michael's 1st VII Netball Team was victorious over Westbourne in this year's night match.

Nothing but net – Mrs Alexandra Fegan, Coach

St Michael's 1st VII Girls Netball Team was crowned champions of the annual Netball Night Match, with a convincing victory over the home side.

After attending the pre-match function and being presented to the guests, the girls quickly refocused and completed a sharp warm-up before the official opening of Westbourne's new outdoor netball facility by Melbourne Vixens Coach Simone McKinnis.

The first quarter was played at a fast pace. St Michael's was able to make the most of their opportunities, taking a 10-goal lead into quarter time. Strong work in defence forced Westbourne into several turnovers which were quickly capitalised on, giving our goalers ample scoring opportunities.

Westbourne rallied for a brief comeback in the third quarter, but the St Michael's players were quick to stabilise, and at three-quarter time our lead of 10 goals had been maintained. The last quarter was dominated by St Michael's, putting us in complete control to finish the game with a 16-goal win.

Final score: St Michael's Grammar School 60 def. Westbourne Grammar 44

St Michael's awarded for quality and excellence



St Michael's Grammar School has this year been recognised for its quality and excellence in teaching, learning and caring with a host of awards – something we, as a school community, are extremely proud of.

Head on the Hot List

Head of the School Mr Simon Gipson was this year featured as one of Australia's most innovative and influential education leaders in *The Educator* magazine's 2015 'Hot List'. The list, published in May, includes education practitioners who have 'embarked on significant projects, spearheaded innovative initiatives, or pushed the field of education into fresh and exciting new areas.'

Mr Gipson, who was the only Victorian Principal and one of just two independent school Heads in the country to be listed, said he was 'pleasantly surprised' to be featured.

Achieving in the outdoors

Director of Outdoor Education Ms Debi Slinger was recognised for her work in the outdoor education industry after receiving the Hewison Award – Partnership & Innovation at the Hewison Golden Backpackers Celebration Night Ball earlier this year.

The award, given to Ms Slinger on 30 May at the Alexandra Town Hall, is presented to someone from the Outdoor Education Group (OEG) who 'has built goodwill, forged lasting connections and supported the creation of new opportunities to work towards achieving OEG's mission and to increase participation; or created a new way of simplifying business infrastructure/support systems; someone who is creative, a lateral thinker, an excellent communicator and relationship builder.'

Ms Slinger described the award as a surprise. 'The most enjoyable part of working in this industry is watching young people participate in challenging experiences outdoors which powerfully impact upon their intellectual, physical, spiritual and social development,' she says. 'This contributes to their personal growth and social awareness, and develops skills for life and the world of work.'

Ms Slinger also acknowledged her colleagues, Mr Tim Grutzner and Mr Chris Wilson, after receiving the award. 'To have a school like St Michael's which is supportive of the Outdoor Education program, one which is admired throughout the industry as a leader in program design and delivery, is a wonderful thing.'

An eye for innovation

With only a few months until the completion of The Commons, St Michael's was announced in September as part of *The Educator* magazine's 2015 Innovative Schools list in light of the School's soon-to-be-completed building.

The Australia-wide publication received 177 entries from schools across the country, with submissions detailing the diverse approaches that schools are taking to the concept of innovation.

St Michael's was awarded for its advanced \$20 million K–12 teaching and learning facility, set to open in early 2016. Mr Gipson described the award as a 'rewarding acknowledgement of the work done by a significant number of school staff and external consultants in designing a building with 21st century learning in mind'.

'Young people today need to learn how they best learn; they need to be adaptive and flexible in their thinking; they need to have structured access to a range of technologies; and they need to have learning spaces that enable this,' Mr Gipson said.

Recognition for gender equality

For the fourth consecutive year, St Michael's has been awarded the Workplace Gender Equality Agency Employer of Choice for Gender Equality (EOCGE) citation (previously known as the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace citation in 2012–13). Announced in November, the citation recognises employer commitment and best practice in promoting gender equality in Australian workplaces. Each year, the criteria is strengthened to ensure it is in line with evidence about how change is achieved, putting organisations at the frontline of action on gender equality.

People and Strategy Manager Ms Timea Toth said St Michael's is known for its innovation and creativity, 'so when it comes to flexible work options for both male and female staff, we think outside the square and look for solutions.'

'Gender equality is an important societal issue on a number of levels, and awareness is the key to achieving this,' Ms Toth adds. 'We are proud of our focus on gender equality, despite the perception of schools as being female-based workplaces. Many of the organisations that receive this citation are large companies with significant resources, so we are honoured to be included in this illustrious group.'

Ms Erin Bull
Communications Coordinator

Sharing the gifts of teaching

With such a nurturing School culture at St Michael's, it's no wonder many of our students have gone on to become teachers.

Old Michaelians and staff members – both current and former – share their views on teaching and learning at St Michael's and elsewhere.

Drawing on their own life experiences, they explain what St Michael's means to them – and how the teachers inspired them to go into this profession.

Ellen Steele (OM 2003)

Teaching was a natural choice for Ellen, who always enjoyed working with children. Having completed her Bachelor of Education at the University of Melbourne, she began teaching in Melbourne primary schools.

Ready for a change after four years, Ellen applied for a teaching position in a remote Australian community with her husband, Dan. It was the beginning of a unique teaching experience.

The couple was offered jobs in Bidyadanga, an Aboriginal community of around 1000 people, 180km south of Broome. Once there, Ellen's eyes were opened to a new way of life. 'During my time at Bidyadanga, we built relationships with local community members and learned about Bidyadanga's five unique language groups,' she recalls.

In addition to the cultural opportunities, Ellen was given a unique chance to experience the community from an insider's perspective. 'I discovered real four-wheel-driving, explored amazing sights in the Kimberley, and learned how to catch fish, stingrays and reef sharks,' Ellen remembers. 'I was also lucky enough to witness Lore ceremonies and a traditional corroboree.'



➤ *Ellen Steele spent two years teaching children in a remote Aboriginal community south of Broome.*

Ellen found her time at Bidyadanga deeply fulfilling. 'One of the most rewarding things about teaching is being able to use your skills to improve someone's life, and it was amazing to see the progress of students in Bidyadanga over the two years I taught them,' she reflects. 'Students who initially had difficulty sharing more than a few sentences or writing more than one idea were able to write whole stories and speak confidently by the end of my time there.'

Effective teachers can expertly convey knowledge to a wide variety of people, and it was at St Michael's that Ellen began developing the skills she has drawn on throughout her teaching career. Serving as Year 12 Debating Captain and House Captain were particular highlights for her, both positions which included extensive opportunities to work with younger students.

Ellen's positive learning experiences at St Michael's had a significant impact on her decision to pursue teaching as a career. 'The pastoral care I received at St Michael's still stands out as exceptional all these years later,' she reflects.

'The care and concern displayed by my teachers – particularly my Heads of House, such as Mr Sampson and Mrs McGregor – is something that I now try to demonstrate with my own students.'

Now working back in Melbourne, Ellen is currently a Grade 2 Teacher and Team Leader at Footscray Primary, a Vietnamese bilingual school, where she continues to make a difference.

Meg Hewett (OM 2001)

For the past five years, Meg has lived and taught in the remote Australian community of Nganmariyanga. When asked about the part of her job she values most, Meg singles out 'building strong relationships with children, parents and the wider community, which takes time and care.'

For Meg and her husband Joe, adjusting to life in remote Australia required a simplified way of life. 'Yet while this remoteness can be isolating at times, it is also liberating,' she reflects.

Throughout their time at Nganmariyanga, Meg and Joe have been embraced by the community. 'Our children have formed many special friendships, both young and old,' she says. 'They have their freedom, a love of the environment, and an understanding of a unique language and way of life. We take an interest in the lives of other children and families, fish at the billabong together, share campfire chats, and cheer on the sidelines of the footy field.'



➤ *Meg Hewett and her family have adjusted to life in remote Australia well.*

Central to Meg's teaching practice is a desire for change. 'The gap in educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians is well-documented, and motivated us to contribute to a positive experience for the children of Nganmariyanga,' she explains. 'We are inspired by parents and families who desperately want their children to find opportunity and fulfilment through education.'

Studying at St Michael's gave Meg a unique perspective on the importance of compassion. 'I was lucky to have been a part of St Michael's, a school that embraces difference,' she observes.

'As students, we were encouraged to look outside of our own fortunate lives to appreciate different cultures and backgrounds.'

Many St Michael's teachers inspired Meg on her journey, but one stands out. 'I admire Kobayashi Sensei's dedication to our Japanese language group, led by her focus and work ethic,' she says. 'Kobayashi supported me when I graduated as a Japanese teacher, particularly when teaching VCE for the first time.'

When asked to single out a career highlight, Meg hesitates. 'It's hard to pinpoint one – there are so many of each day in teaching!' she says. 'As a LOTE/TESOL teacher, watching students communicate and interact with others in another language is incredibly motivating – whether that's in the context of Melbourne LOTE context, on exchange in Japan, or in remote Northern Territory. The buzz that students feel, formed by making connections with others, makes language such a powerful tool.'

Dedicated, adventurous teachers like Ellen and Meg are changing students' lives for the better.

A wider world of experience

Many St Michael's staff have sought to widen their perspective through travel. Two of these are Ms Jennifer Wenlock and Dr Amanda Samson, who share their experiences of teaching abroad.



➤ Ms Jennifer Wenlock. Photo courtesy of The Weekly Review.

A passion for travel

Ms Jennifer Wenlock, English Teacher at St Michael's, has been greatly enriched by her time teaching and travelling. 'After teaching in Australia for nine years, it was time to try something different – so I decided to challenge myself by heading overseas,' she says.

In her first stint abroad, Ms Wenlock taught in Istanbul at the British International School. 'Learning the International Baccalaureate curriculum was a significant challenge,' she remembers. 'I received professional development during my first year, which was a steep learning curve – but definitely worth it.'

Teaching in Istanbul for three years, Ms Wenlock rapidly developed her skills and experience. 'Teaching the British curriculum's IGCSE and the International Baccalaureate's IB Programme was quite daunting, but there was a high degree of collegiality with the other overseas teachers.'

Ms Wenlock returned to Melbourne and took up a six-month placement at St Michael's, before moving back overseas to teach at the International School of Tanganyika in Tanzania.

'Once again, I taught the IB Diploma Programme to Year 11 and 12 students, as well as the Middle Years Programme. Professional development continued, with workshops held in Tanzania and Morocco. Our annual camps were spent in environments of incredible natural beauty ... where risk management procedures were a must!'

Yet it was Ms Wenlock's third overseas experience – teaching at the Western Academy of Beijing – that spurred her interest in the middle years. 'In Beijing, I specialised in teaching the Middle Years Programme of the IB,' she recalls.

'I really enjoyed working there – the children were wonderful and the facilities were superb. Attending the National Middle Years Association in Houston, Texas, was a real highlight, where I discovered more about specialist teaching methodologies for middle years learners.'

In Beijing, Ms Wenlock learned a wealth of useful skills. 'The experience overseas taught me how to be flexible, work as part of a team, and get fully on board with projects,' she says. 'The programs and school environment were vibrant and meaningful, and many leadership opportunities presented themselves.'

The many responsibilities Ms Wenlock was given during that time developed her resilience, flexibility, and adaptability. 'I was keen to return to St Michael's after fondly remembering my six months here in 2001,' she says. 'It was great to return to the School where so many changes were taking place.'

Her overseas experiences were inspirational. 'The students I taught were strongly connected with issues, environment and culture,' she confirms. 'For example, one Scandinavian girl I taught was highly switched on and connected with the local community – even as a Year 7. She went on to study at a university in the US, focusing on global initiatives.'

The students' qualities deeply impressed Ms Wenlock. 'I'm in awe of their strong sense of compassion and awareness,' she says. 'Tanzania, Istanbul and Beijing weren't necessarily "home" to these students in the traditional sense, but they were prepared to travel anywhere in the world and make their mark. As "third culture" kids, they understood that they could adapt, learn, make friends and make a difference wherever they were.'



> *The modern city skyline of Beijing, China.*

The strong sense of community endures long after the School year has finished. 'The students meet up in various parts of the world, and have many opportunities to reconnect,' Ms Wenlock reflects. 'If any of my former students called me now, I'd be happy to have dinner with them and catch up on what they have gone on to do, study and achieve.'

These rich connections span the globe. 'Two-and-a-half years ago, I was in the outer suburbs of Rome catching up with a girl I had taught in Istanbul,' Ms Wenlock remembers. 'A group of girls walked past, then turned back and said: "Miss Wenlock?"'

It turns out I had taught them in Beijing – so a reunion with a former student from one international school was joined by several former students from another! It was a freak occurrence ... but wonderful.'

The challenges of teaching overseas are considerable, but the rewards are amazing. 'Being flexible and adaptable is the key,' Ms Wenlock reflects. 'In the first six months, you're learning the language and setting things up – but the school becomes your point of reference and your home, even more than the apartment you live in. I still miss that, even though I've been home for six years.'

With The Commons due to open at the beginning of 2016, Ms Wenlock has a unique chance to apply her skills. 'In many ways, The Commons reminds me of my teaching experience in Beijing,' she says. 'Like The Commons, the Western Academy of Beijing was a beautiful space,' she reflects.

'The learning environment went far beyond the four walls, and the students' respect for their school was visible throughout the corridors and classrooms.'

An expanded mindset

Dr Amanda Samson has had a varied and interesting career. 'As I moved towards the end of my Bachelor of Education, my Italian professor handed me a novel that ignited my passion for the study of language,' she says. 'This book was the first step of the journey towards my research in psycholinguistics that took me to Italy, through a philosophical investigation of difference, and finally to a Doctorate in Italian Studies.'



➤ *Dr Amanda Samson, a teacher at St Michael's for the past five years, has had a diverse career.*

During her research, Dr Samson became passionate about the way in which language is related to the construction of gender. 'My research focused on the compulsory years of education and how the books children read, the scenarios which present maths problems, the language used to describe human evolution and the stories we tell about the human journey through time, all come together to create a picture of who we are,' she explains.

Moving with her family to London towards the end of her Doctorate, Dr Samson had the great fortune to work with renowned feminist Dr Shere Hite. 'We spent hours discussing sexuality, gender, families and the role of women and men in society,' she remembers.

During these years, Dr Samson read many philosophers who pondered language, gender and identity.

'Two quotes particularly resonated with me: the one by Wittgenstein, (following page) on how the language we use is interdependent with the world we perceive; and one by Italian feminist philosopher Carla Lonzi: "Equality is what is offered as legal rights to colonized people." As someone interested in social justice and the recognition of difference, these ideas have shaped my life.'

While in London, Dr Samson became increasingly interested in educational and pastoral care issues. As Director of Student Wellbeing at the College of Osteopaths, Middlesex University, then as Coordinator of a Blended Learning program at the University of Bedfordshire, she taught people returning to education after having negative experiences as teenagers.

'I began working with adults of all ages who were either beginning study in their 20s or taking the brave step of retraining for a career that aligned more closely with their passion, and found it really interesting to see how they responded to the challenge of starting again,' Dr Samson reflects. 'As educators know, a journey of learning is also a journey of self-discovery.'

'When we choose to return to study, as opposed to being required to, there are often many parallel shifts occurring in our lives.'



'The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.'

— Ludwig Wittgenstein

'Working with these women and men, I was intrigued how stepping back into a classroom was, for many, like stepping back in time,' Dr Samson continues. 'They revisited, and often reverted to, the adolescent and accompanying trauma that had forced many to abandon education in their teens. Making that reaction, those emotions and the behaviour explicit to them enabled many to move on from the obstacles that had negatively influenced their sense of identity.'

While in London, Dr Samson also undertook a Postgraduate Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling and worked at St Thomas' Hospital. 'Returning to Melbourne in 2009, I thought counselling and psychology were likely to shape the next steps on my own journey,' she recalls. 'Students and education, however, kept calling to me. I began to look for ways where I could make a difference earlier on.'



> *The city skyline of London, England.*

At St Michael's, Dr Samson is able to make great use of her talents. 'Working at St Michael's is a perfect fit,' she says. 'I am able to teach Italian, the language of my heart; and I have the great fortune to teach English Language, which is all about language and identity. Best of all, working in an educational environment that not only prioritises pastoral care but also seeks to excel enables me to continue my own interest in how education, language and psychology shape adolescence – and the ways we can seek to support and engage students on their own journeys.'

The future holds a great deal of promise. 'To teach well, I believe, we must always be learning, and this year I began a Master's in Education Management,' Dr Samson says. 'I am very excited to move into the position of Head of Wellbeing K–12 next year, and looking forward to the next evolution – or is that revolution? – in the way we educate for the future.'

Both of these St Michael's staff members have learned a lot from their time overseas – and St Michael's students are now reaping the benefits of their enriched view of life.

Teaching across the generations



➤ *Jeremy and John Elton have worked at St Michael's for a combined 24 years.*

Father and son – John and Jeremy Elton

Mathematics Teacher Jeremy Elton has been with St Michael's for some time – but he's not the only Elton to make his mark on the School. His father, John, taught History at St Michael's for 18 years ... and his mother Pamela is a St Michael's veteran too, having taught Mathematics here in 1992. Clearly, the Eltons have St Michael's in their blood.

John began his 18-year tenure at St Michael's back in 1993, shortly after the Elton family's move to Australia from Canada. 'Dad was a Head of House during his time here, which spanned from the Hewison years right through to the Gipson years,' says Jeremy.

They say that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, but teaching was the last thing on Jeremy's mind in his earlier days. 'Like many people, I didn't want to follow in my parents' footsteps,' he says. 'I grew up thinking that teaching was the last thing in the world I want to do.'

Fortunately for St Michael's, Jeremy had a change of heart during his final year of university. 'I began teaching tutorials, and really enjoyed passing on ideas to the students,' he remembers. 'I weighed up my career options when I finished my course, and decided that I quite liked the idea of teaching.'

To some, what happened next might seem like a quirk of fate. 'My dad told me that there was a position available at St Michael's, and I applied,' Jeremy recalls. 'It was almost as if the stars were aligning – lo and behold, we worked at St Michael's for several years together, and even car pooled daily!'

Working alongside his father was a boon. 'I learned a massive amount in those first few years,' Jeremy reflects. 'It was invaluable discussing work with my dad, a veteran of the profession. We spent a great deal of time debriefing on the drive home, discussing what went well and what could be improved. Although he taught Humanities and I teach Maths, there was a lot of shared knowledge.'

To this day, John retains a connection with St Michael's. 'Dad always spoke highly of the School, and still enquires after people,' Jeremy comments. 'As former Kilburn Head of House, he often asks me questions such as: "How did Kilburn go with the Cross Country?"'

Swiftly becoming a teaching veteran himself, Jeremy has grown into the role. 'As both my parents were teachers, I was fully aware of what I was getting myself into,' he says. 'There's always a lot of work to be done at St Michael's, but it's very rewarding. If I didn't want to be busy, I wouldn't be here.'

For his part, John looks back fondly at the three years spent teaching with his son – but he also remembers how long it took people to catch on. 'There were many good aspects, and some quite amusing ones,' he remembers. 'I was asked wide-eyed questions, such as: "Did you know there's another Mr Elton here today?" At least two years later, I was still having staff members asking me if Jeremy was related!'

Like Jeremy, John looks back fondly at the daily drive. 'This was our major chance to share experiences,' he says. 'We never had exactly the same classes, but we shared perspectives and considered strategies – particularly with shared students who struggled with Humanities but excelled at Maths, or vice-versa. I still enjoy the odd time when I drive Jeremy to St Michael's as I like keeping in touch with the School through him.'

A family tradition continues – Adam, Tom and Geoffrey Lane

The Lane family's strong connection with St Michael's continues through Mr Adam Lane, Out of School Care Assistant and Learning Assistant in the Junior School, as well as Junior and Senior School Sporting Coach. He explains the central role of St Michael's in his family's life.

'My mum's aunts (Rita and Valma, who was a Prefect) were at St Michael's when it was run by the Sisters of the Church,' Mr Lane says. 'My nephew, Jack Jansson, was a student in the Junior School, and my dad, Geoffrey Lane, had worked here for almost a decade when I became involved in the sporting program. I ring him each night – in some ways, it's like he's still working here.'

The Lane connection deepened when Mr Lane's eldest brother Tom began at St Michael's. 'He taught Senior English, and was Acting Head of Breen, then Hughes (Valma's House),' Adam reflects. 'Tom worked at St Michael's for six years (including a two-year stint as Staff Association President).'



➤ *Adam, Tom and Geoffrey Lane have all taught at St Michael's at one time or another.*

Adam still feels the family connection. 'Dad's love of working with staff, students and parents has been passed on, and I feel great empathy with St Michael's,' he says. 'Dad was made a Life Member of St Michael's after 16 years of teaching – one of only 10. When Dad retired, he and Mum did VCE Examination at St Michael's – so during examinations, Mum (Mary), Dad, Tom and I were all working at the School.'

Next year, Mr Lane will match his father's record of service. 'I've been here for 15 years myself,' he says. 'Having my Dad and brother work at St Michael's at the same time as me has been rewarding, as we enjoy the same satisfaction, passion and respect for this vocation.'

'Dad often says that while we help plant the seed, we don't always see the full-grown tree,' Mr Lane continues. 'It's a great feeling to have been part of that growth the three of us have shared in the School's spirit.'

Family connections are central to Mr Lane's life. 'My aunts' memories have been passed on to Dad, Tom and me,' says Mr Lane. 'The spirit is still there, and I am glad I have had the opportunity to share it with my dad and my big brother, as well as with the staff and students with whom we have been involved. I am sure the Sisters and Tony Hewison look down with great pride at St Michael's. The three Lanes hope we have played a part in continuing their dream.'

'I am very grateful to have been able to share the story of my family's involvement with St Michael's, as it has generated the love, support, and inspiration one can gain from a family. (It doesn't mean we agree all the time!)

Dr Timothy Roberts
Communications Officer

Connections

News from Old Michaelians, parents and staff

Old Michaelian news

Oliver 'Ollie' Paterson (OM 2008) was invited to perform alongside musical group The Light Trio on 11 September as part of a series of concerts called Peace Lounge. As the group's support act, Ollie performed a 50-minute solo guitar set which explored his research project, *Tone, Texture and Technique*. Ollie is currently completing an Honours Degree in Music Performance at the University of Melbourne's Victorian College of the Arts, having graduated with the highest mark for his instrument in 2013 at the University of Melbourne's Sir Zelman Cohen School of Music.



➤ *Alex McDiarmid (OM 2012).*

In mid-2015, **Alex McDiarmid (OM 2012)** published his first book, *Harry* – part of the *Stuff Happens* series by Penguin Books.

In late April and early May, **Natalie Templeton (OM 2011)** starred in the Malvern Theatre Company's production of *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller's allegorical play about the Salem Witch Trials.

We congratulate last year's graduating students **Alastair Weng** and **Bridgette Dunn (both OM 2014)** for receiving a Premier's VCE Award in June for their respective studies in English Language and Legal Studies.



➤ *Bridgette Dunn and Alastair Weng (both OM 2014).*

Earlier this year, musician **Chris Watts (OM 2010)** was among a group of Australian up-and-coming performers to make the shortlist for MTV's latest show *MTV Brand New* with his latest single, *Broken Bones*. The show was filmed in Sydney, with Chris's spot running on MTV Australia and New Zealand weekly from 6 July to 13 September.

We congratulate **Matthew Dunn (OM 1987)** on the birth of his second daughter, Grace Katie, born on 17 June.



➤ *Matthew Dunn (OM 1987) with his new daughter, Grace Katie.*

For more information on our Old Michaelians, visit www.stmichaels.vic.edu.au/news/old-michaelian-news

If you have any information on past students that you wish to share, please email community@stmichaels.vic.edu.au

Staff news



➤ *Brian Berry has achieved great success representing Victoria in Table Tennis.*

Senior Table Tennis Coach

Mr Brian Berry triumphed in the Victorian Veterans Table Tennis Championship event, held in July at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre, where he won gold in the over-50s men's singles for the 10th time in his career, and in the over-60s men's singles for the third time. He went on to represent Victoria at the Australian Veterans Table Tennis Championships.

Head of Humanities Mr Gerry

Martin was this year appointed to act in the role of Curriculum Manager (History and Civics) with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) for Semester 2.

Ms Debryn Habecker, Administrative Assistant – Junior School (Reception), has received the Bridge Consulting Recognition Award, which is given to employees who are nominated by their supervisor for delivering high performance and efficiency, and having a positive workplace impact.

In April, **Director of Learning (Years 6–8) Mr Ash Abdou** was part of a dedicated group of cyclists who rode from Adelaide to Melbourne in support of the Lilyroo Fund – an organisation established last year by **Teaching and Learning Officer Mrs Kristie Lockyer** and her husband, Pete, following the death of their baby daughter, Lily, after she was born prematurely in March 2014.

The Lilyroo Ride was a week-long, 1156km charity bicycle tour from the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide to the Royal Women's Hospital in Melbourne, for which the group has raised more than \$200,000 for its Newborn Intensive and Special Care (NISC) unit. **Old Michaelian Kate Powell** and **Head of Health and Physical Education Mrs Laura Munro** were also part of the ride as members of the support group.



> *Kate Powell (OM 2010), Kristie Lockyer, Ash Abdou and Laura Munro were all part of the Lilyroo Ride from Adelaide to Melbourne.*

Proposals and wedding bells



> *Corey Hall and Grace Nicastro are getting married.*

St Michael's warmly congratulates **Director of Music (Junior School) Miss Grace Nicastro** and **Music Tutor Mr Corey Hall**, who celebrated their engagement to each other late last year on 30 November; and **People and Strategy Manager Ms Timea Toth**, whose partner, Tim Caldwell, popped the question on 3 April.

Maintenance Officer Mr Ben Wilderink and his wife, Jade Haar, were married on 17 September at Mills Reef Winery in Tauranga, New Zealand.

Junior School Teacher Mr Thomas Bergin and his wife, Mary Damic, were married on 26 September at Sandringham Yacht Club.

People and Strategy Manager Ms Timea Toth and her husband Tim Caldwell, were married on 13 November in Kew.



> *Newlyweds Elthea and David Haywood.*

Music Teacher Mr David Haywood and his wife, Elthea Lacorte Carillo, were wed on 7 April at Santa Ana Church in Davao City, Philippines.



> *Husband and wife Shannan and Andrew Bruce.*

Junior School Teacher Ms Shannan Graney and her husband, Andrew Bruce, said 'I do' on 28 March at St Peter's Anglican Church in Robe, South Australia, followed by a cocktail reception on Robe foreshore. St Michael's own **Fr Kenyon McKie** travelled from Melbourne to SA to officiate the nuptials!

Theatre Technician Ms Susan Handasyde and her husband, Damien Baksheev, were wed on 25 January at the Russian Orthodox Church in Brunswick East, followed by a reception at Studley Park Boathouse in Kew.



> *Just married: Lee and Emma Gorner.*

Staff Administration Assistant Mr Lee Gorner and his wife, Emma Stevens, tied the knot on 23 June on a beach in Mauritius.

Baby joy

In 2015, St Michael's had a number of new additions to our community, with more than a dozen staff members welcoming a new baby boy or girl to their family. They included:

Junior School Teacher Mrs Kim O'Grady and her husband, Huw – a baby girl, Amelia Alice, born on 17 March.

Project Manager Mrs Loren Livingston and her husband, Andrew – a baby boy, Zac, born on 23 April.

Database Developer Mr Han Zhang and his wife, Miao Yu – a baby boy, Lucas, born on 2 May.

Senior School Teacher Ms Jessica Ebejer and her husband, Chris – a baby girl, Juliana Olivia, born on 9 June.

Junior School Teacher Mrs Catherine Berry and her husband, Jacob – a baby boy, William Benjamin, born on 14 June.

Teaching and Learning Officer Mrs Kristie Lockyer and her husband, Pete – a baby girl, Phoebe Liliana, born on 19 June.

Junior School Teacher Mrs Morgan Lacey and her husband, Edward – a baby boy, Patrick Ryan, born on 4 July.

Director of People and Strategy Ms Clare Murphy and her husband, Shannon – a baby girl, Olivia Grace, born on 10 July.



➤ *Amelia Rose Leach.*

Personal Assistant to the Associate Head of the School/Head of Junior School Ms Nicole Leach and her partner, Grant – a baby girl, Amelia Rose, born on 3 July.



➤ *Mrs Shalini Jordan with her son, James Patrick.*

Communications Officer Mrs Shalini Jordan and her husband, Michael – a baby boy, James Patrick, born on 28 July.

Junior School Teacher Mrs Hilary Davidson and her husband, Tony – a baby girl, Wilhelmina, born on 17 September.

Junior School Teacher Ms Amelia Otto and her husband, Brent – a baby girl, Charlotte, born on 14 October.

Junior School Teacher Miss Kirsty Hamson – a baby girl, Daisy Suzie, born on 15 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.

Old Michaelian Ms Betty Stewart (peer year unknown) died on 25 December 2014.

Mary-Anne McKeon (OM 1975) died on 14 January 2015.

Mrs Anne Gourlay (nee Murdoch) died in January 2015. Mrs Gourlay was a member of the St Michael's Grammar School Council from 1977, retiring in 1980 when she and her family moved to Manila. She was also a member of the School's Building Appeal Committee and the Parents and Friends Committee. Her daughter, Monique (OM 1984), is a former student of St Michael's.

Mr James Loong, husband of **Mrs June Loong, Personal Assistant to the Head of Teaching and Learning**, died on 19 March 2015 from cancer.

Mr Christopher Nicola (OM 2007) died on 22 March 2015.

Ms Edith Chinn (OM 1956) died in May 2015.

Mrs Betty May (nee Clymo) (OM 1948) died on 16 July 2015.



> *Mrs Sandra Matheson.*

After courageously living with terminal illness for the past two years, and doing so with dignity and grace, former staff member **Mrs Sandra Matheson** died on the morning of Monday 14 September.

Sandra began her employment with St Michael's Grammar School in January 1976 as a member of the administration staff, a position she held for almost 40 years.

Sandra was Secretary to the then-Headmistress, Mrs Margaret Thomas, from 1976–79, and to the School's former Headmaster, Mr Tony Hewison, from 1980–1999. From 2000 until she left the School in September 2013, Sandra was the Personal Assistant to Head of the School, Mr Simon Gipson.

In 2014, Sandra was awarded the School's highest accolade, the St Michael and All Angels Medal, at Speech Night for her many years of service to the School. It was also announced last year that the archives space in The Commons building will be named in her honour. The Sandra Matheson Prize for English, established in late 2014, will be awarded for the first time at this year's Speech Night.

Sandra made an incredible contribution to the School, and she will be deeply missed by many in our community.

Ms Kate Louise Campbell (OM 1992) died on 4 August 2015. During her final year of schooling at St Michael's, Ms Campbell was a Hughes House Co-Captain. She is survived by her two sons.

Mr Karl Edward Munzel (OM 1986) died on 27 August 2015, aged 47, after a long battle with a rare form of cancer.



> *Sister Scholastica CSC, centre, celebrates her 100th birthday with the School's then Senior Chaplain Fr Cary Mansell and Head of the School Mr Simon Gipson.*

Sister Scholastica CSC died on 16 February 2015 in England, UK. Sister Scholastica (or 'Schol' as she was affectionately known) became Sister-in-Charge at St Michael's in 1960 and served as Provincial Superior of the Community of the Sisters of the Church in Australia until 1971. Schol was Principal of St Michael's for three periods from 1963–66, 1967–68 and 1971–72, and was the last Sister-Principal of the School.

Schol's contribution to the life of St Michael's was significant, particularly during the difficult period of the 1960s and 70s. She played a central role in the School's building program during that period, with the acquisition of the Redan Street frontage properties and the construction of the main Senior School and Vicars Foote Hall buildings. Schol was also one of the members of the Community of the Sisters of the Church who was involved in the establishment of the company of St Michael's Grammar School in December 1984. The Community thereby relinquished residual rights of ownership and made a gift of the School.

Schol celebrated the 75th anniversary of her Profession on 21 January 2012 and her 100th birthday on 3 February 2012. Her life was dedicated to living out God's love in the world through her Life Vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. St Michael's is fortunate to have played a small part in her long ministry.

Schol is held in great affection and respect by Old Michaelians, their parents and former members of staff, who remember her particularly as a capable manager, inspiring colleague, good listener, problem solver, fair judge and loving friend.

The Scholastica Building, which was named in Sister Scholastica's honour by the Honourable Jeffrey Kennett, MLA, Premier of Victoria, in the School's centenary year on 24 March 1994, ensures that she will always be remembered by the St Michael's community. Of course, Schol also lends her name to the School's online learning platform. There is no doubt that Schol is one of the heroes of the St Michael's story. Those who enjoy St Michael's today owe much to her vision and service.



CELEBRATING 120 YEARS OF LEARNING
120 years

This year, St Michael's is celebrating the
120th anniversary of its founding by the Community
of the Sisters of the Church.

1895–2015





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