President’s Message

It is an immense privilege and honour to serve you as the new President of Anglican Schools Australia; a responsibility I take on with great determination and with an understanding of the serious requirements of the role.

FEATURE ARTICLES

- Korowa’s New ChapelHonours Former Bishop........ 8
- MGS’s Reconciliation Action Plan ......................17
- Global Opportunities For St Hilda’s Girls ............30
- Rwanda 2015 .................................................38
- The Laos Project ..............................................44
- Service Above Self..................................58
- Kambala Students Commit to Sustainable Projects .... 62
After 20 years working in Anglican schools, the last 15 of which have been as Principal of Overnewton Anglican Community College in Melbourne’s north-west, I am passionate about my commitment to the work of Anglican Schools Australia (ASA). ASA provides a stimulating and supportive network for principals, chaplains and staff and the Canberra conference was a great reminder of how powerful and beneficial this organisation can be.

In my formative years as a teacher I was fortunate to observe the importance of the relationship between the principal and chaplain at Wesley College, Melbourne.

We have three outstanding chaplains at Overnewton College, all of whom are employed as chaplains/priests, not as teachers. As Principal I enjoy the ability to have frank, sincere and faithful conversations with them that I could not have with other members of staff. The work our chaplains do to enhance the spiritual lives of children, staff and families confirms the importance of their role.

Diversity

As Anglican schools we educate and care for children, staff and families of all faiths, and of none. There is great diversity within and between our schools and we know that this is reflected across ASA’s membership. Our schools are diverse communities: by faith background; race; academic approach; the way we live and express our Anglicanism; and our responses to and support of the many challenges facing the young people in our care.

This diversity allows us to engage in fruitful discussions through which we find common points of connection. This is the great strength of our network.

As Bishop Stuart Robinson reminded us in Canberra, Jesus calls us to love … not to judge or direct, just to walk and sit with others and to love them where they are.

As we work together in our care, we are perfectly placed as Anglican schools to do just that, to love the children in our care as Jesus has commanded us to do.

Royal Commission

The ASA Management Committee recently submitted a response to Issues Paper 9 (Risk of child sexual abuse in schools) of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The deadline for submissions was very tight. The Committee endorsed the Commission’s concerns for the welfare of all children in our schools. We expressed concerns about the lack of a national body that registers teachers and therefore is in a position to pass consistent information about staff across state borders in an appropriate manner. Equal access to quality in-service training for all staff and board members in our schools was expressed as an important need too. We offered to provide further responses that were more representative of all of our schools should time be given again in the future.

Conference

The recent Canberra conference was another wonderful time of connection, collegiality, reflection, worship and learning.

We were challenged by the keynote speakers as they examined the theme, Emergence: Transforming The World Through Faith and Education. In the opening address, The Reverend Dr Sarah Bachelard explored ways in which Service Learning could be truly transformative. She invited us to consider how Anglican schools might give students opportunities ‘to accept their whole selves, not just their ideal selves’ and how they may be ‘allowed to fail as well as succeed’. Sarah believes true service ‘requires the cultivation of self-knowledge and authentic humility’. She asked us to consider how our students could be ‘deeply engaged’ in service programs, ‘yet neither overwhelmed and anxious, nor subtly arrogant and alienated by their experiences.’ She advocates service learning experiences that encourage students to ‘be with what is’ and ‘to listen’.

Next to the podium was Associate Professor Dr Rufus Black, Master of Ormond College at the University of Melbourne. Rufus Black is a strategic advisor, ethicist and theologian. He identified five forces of disruption that are reshaping the world of this generation – GEN E:

- Globalisation
- Digitalisation
- Digitalisation of the physical world
- Scarcity
- Other technological breakthroughs

His key message was, ‘We need to accelerate the development of the entrepreneurial skills of all members of GEN E.’

Others to inspire us were Stephen Harrison, Dan Haesler and The Reverend Gillian Moses. We delighted in listening to Nick Fan-Jones reminisce about his years playing for and captaining the Wallabies. He said it was the team’s focus on processes rather than on scoreboards that brought success, including a World Cup.

Highlights of the social program were Walkley-award winning journalist Michael Bristeden’s ‘Welcome to Canberra’ at the Cocktail Party at the National Portrait Gallery and TV host and popular political commentator Annabel Crabb’s thoroughly entertaining speech at the Dinner in the Great Hall of Parliament House.

I have never left one of the 13 annual ASA conferences without feeling that ‘my soul had been fed’ and this I believe is because of the special nature that comes from a conference that gathers the spiritual leaders of our schools together in one space. The Canberra conference was no exception.

Our thanks must go to Fiona Godfrey and her extraordinary organising committee. It is the first time that the conference has been held in Canberra and the holding the conference in a region with few Anglican partner schools. Melbourne City will provide training and playing opportunities for Overnewton’s elite male and female soccer players.

In conclusion, let me again highlight the importance of the work of the Anglican Schools Commission Office in Western Australia. Without the support of The Reverend Peter Laurence and his terrific staff team, ASA would not be able to operate with the smooth efficiency that it does. We are indebted to them. Changes approved by our fee structure last year, as well as the strategic planning process that will begin later in the year, will ensure that the work of ASA continues to strengthen and grow.

The conference papers are available on the ASA website at: www.anglicanschoolsaustralia.edu.au.

Jim Laussen
**SCHOOL APPOINTMENTS**

**PRINCIPALS**
- Mr Dale Burden, St Peter’s School, Cambridge, New Zealand
- Mr Adam Heath, Ballarat Grammar, Ballarat, Victoria

**CHAPLAINS**
- The Reverend Heather Cetrangolo, Shelford Girls’ Grammar, Victoria
- The Reverend Helen Dwyer, Overnewton Girls’ School, Victoria
- The Reverend David Jones, Cathedral Anglican Community College, Victoria

**PRINCIPALS**
- Mrs Christine Jenkins, Korowa Anglican Girls’ School, Victoria
- Dr Peter Miller, All Saints’ College, Bathurst, New South Wales
- Dr Timothy Hawkes GAM, The King’s School, Parramatta, New South Wales

**RESIGNATIONS**

**PRINCIPALS**
- Ms Gillian Anstee, Lindisfarne Anglican Grammar School, New South Wales
- Dr Adam Grant, Trinity Grammar School, Victoria

**RETIREMENT**

**PRINCIPAL**
- Mrs Christine Jenkins, Korowa Anglican Girls’ School, Victoria

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**SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES**

**125TH ANNIVERSARY**
- Korowa Anglican Girls’ School, Victoria

**30TH ANNIVERSARY**
- Anglican Schools Commission (Inc.), Western Australia

**20TH ANNIVERSARY**
- Fraser Coast Anglican College, Queensland

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**SUGGESTED READING**

**Being Called: Scientific, Secular, and Sacred Perspectives** by David Bryce Yaden, Theo D. McCall and J. Harold Ellis, Editors.

**Preliminary Reviews**

“Being Called explores the uncharted scientific territory of how profound inner experiences can bring meaning and purpose. Eminent scientists and scholars share their own perspectives and offer insights on how to make sense of callings in our lives.”

Dr Adam Grant

“...This fascinating book sheds much-needed light on what it means to find a calling in life – an experience that, although timeless and universal, has not been understood well in human sciences. Through valuable insights from leaders in theology, philosophy, and contemporary psychology, the authors add greatly to our knowledge of this essential component of the examined life.”

Dr William Damon

Professor of Education at the Stanford Graduate School of Education and author of Good Work and the Path to Purpose.

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**DIOCESAN NEWS**

**Bishop John Harrower Retires**

The Right Reverend John Harrower GOM, the 11th Bishop of Tasmania, announced his retirement in May. He officially left his position on Saturday 12 September.

**Resignation Letter**

"... life brings the unexpected and so it is that God has led us [he and his wife Gaylene] to a new season to be with our sons and families in Melbourne".

"...There have been exciting times and there have been challenging times too.”

The most significant issue he has had to deal with is sexual abuse at the hands of priests. He said he had taken this issue very seriously from the moment he had taken office.

"The tragedy of child sexual abuse called from us heartfelt commitments to survivors of abuse. I thank God that this Synod (Missionary Diocese of Tasmania) acted to establish the Pastoral Support and Assistance Scheme in 2003. I am thankful that our State and Federal Governments are acting decisively in this most important issue in our life as a nation.

In 2002, at a Synod media interview, I called for a Royal Commission into child sexual abuse in our nation. The scandal was overwhelming me, our diocesan leadership and, as I became increasingly aware, the wider community. I groaned under the inadequate response that a sincere organization could muster. We desperately needed the resources of the state and nation with their investigative, legislative and penal powers. My call for a state legislated Working with Children Card was finally answered this year. I thank the Tasmanian Government for the Working with Vulnerable People Card. We await the report of the Royal Commission to improve our response to child sexual abuse, including educational programmes and training for a culture of safety for children and the vulnerable.”

Bishop Harrower was born in Melbourne and studied chemical engineering and economic policy at Melbourne University. He worked as a petroleum engineer with Mobil Oil from 1970-72 before joining the Industries Assistance Commission, where he became a Director leading research into the impact of technological and demographic change on Australia’s industrial structure.

A change in direction stemming from an invitation to work as a university lay chaplain took him to St Andrew’s Hall (Melbourne), the Church Missionary Society training college between 1977 and 1979. The family lived in Argentina for nine-years, from 1979 to 1988. It was here that John was ordained a deacon in 1984 and a priest in 1986.

In the early 1990s he was appointed Vicar of St Paul’s, Mount Waverley followed by Vicar of the new parish of St Barnabas. In 1994 he was appointed archdeacon in the Melbourne Diocese. He was ordained Bishop of Tasmania in July 2000.

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**Editor’s Note**

Anglican Schools Australia invites principals, chaplains, teachers as well as chairs, governors and friends of Anglican schools to submit articles for publication in ASA News. We are particularly interested in publishing articles about school Religious Studies, Service Learning and Indigenous programs. Articles of approximately 1000 words in length, together with a selection of high quality digital images, are to be emailed to whillman@asc.wa.edu.au. Submissions are published at the discretion of the editor.
St Hilda’s School is a P-12 Anglican Day and Boarding School located on the Gold Coast of Queensland. It is committed to excellence in the education of girls and to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for children and young people.

Applicants are invited to apply for the permanent, full time position of:

**Chaplain**

The Chaplain’s role is significant in the operation of the School and he/she will be responsible to work with the Head of School to nurture the faith development of the girls within the School and to work alongside the staff and community to foster Anglican spirituality.

The School wishes to appoint an ordained Anglican priest to the position of full time Chaplain to commence Term 1, 2016.

It is expected that the Chaplain will be able to teach Religious Education as well as to officiate at Chapel services.

The successful applicant must be:

- available for appointment in accordance with the terms of the Archbishop of Brisbane
- hold or be eligible to apply for a Suitability Card
- able to support the Anglican ethos of the St Hilda’s School
- willing to give permission for the School to submit his/ her name for screening with the Anglican Church’s Professional Standards Register.

On-line Application Forms and information about St Hilda’s School can be found on www.sthildas.qld.edu.au. Any questions about the position should be directed to the Head of School (07) 5577 7205.

Applications should be submitted as soon as possible.
Korowa’s New Chapel Honours Former Bishop

Lucinda Bertram

Korowa’s New Chapel Honours Former Bishop

Lucinda Bertram, Communications Manager at Melbourne’s Korowa Anglican Girls’ School, writes about the school’s chapel which was opened and dedicated in June of this year – the year in which the school is celebrating its 125th Anniversary. Lucinda notes that the chapel will be a place for reflection, worship and discovering the spiritual. She also writes about the school’s Religious Education program, which is a compulsory element of the curriculum for all girls in Prep to Year 12.

Korowa has a long association with the Anglican Church. It was formally inaugurated as a member of Association of Church of England Girls’ Schools in 1920, becoming Korowa Church of England Girls’ School. In 1982, when the Diocese of Melbourne adopted the title Anglican instead of Church of England, the school became Korowa Anglican Girls’ School. Whilst Korowa is an Anglican school, girls of all religious traditions are welcome. Moreover, their beliefs, perspectives and distinctive cultural identities are embraced and respected.

Opening and Dedication of the Chapel

Korowa Anglican Girls’ School in Glen Iris celebrated the opening and dedication of its new chapel on Tuesday 16 June with students, staff and friends. The chapel was dedicated by The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier, Primate of Australia and Archbishop of Melbourne, and is named the John Wilson Memorial Chapel in honour of John Wilson, former Bishop of the Southern Region of the Melbourne Diocese and Chair of Korowa School Council from 1986 to 2001.

Mrs Christine Jenkins, Principal of Korowa says, “Bishop John Wilson contributed to the governance of Korowa for many years and supported the spiritual thread woven into the fabric of our programs. It is only fitting that our new chapel is named in memory of him. It will be a quiet place of reflection, a place to discover the spiritual, and a place to celebrate and sing.”

Alice Donnan, Year 12 student and House Captain for Akehurst, said: “The new chapel is much nicer and spacious. It also suits the House service much better, given that it is a chapel and is therefore a more appropriate setting.”

Alice reflects, “When I moved to Korowa I had not had much involvement with religion but I have really appreciated the reflection that attending an Anglican school brings with it. It is a comforting constant at a time when my life is changing rapidly.”

Community Services and Events

The Chapel will be available for the Korowa community to use for quiet reflection or events such as weddings and other church services. Revd Raike says, “The first baptism has already been booked and we have begun...
planning the ceremony. I hope many past students or those with a connection to Korowa will consider using the chapel. The school’s manicured gardens create a stunning backdrop for family photos after the ceremony.”

Korowa’s alumni network is strong and many students retain strong ties with the school after they have graduated. The stained glass windows were donated by the Korovian Club, Korowa’s past students association, and enrich the space with a meditative quality.

**Religious Education**

Religious Education in the Anglican tradition is a compulsory component of the curriculum at Korowa for all students from Prep to Year 12. In the early years, the focus of Religious Education is on Christian values and what it means to be a good citizen. In Year 6, the students explore foundational myths and stories, epic poetry and evocative imagery in the Old Testament. Year 7 focuses on the New Testament with particular reflection on the portrayal of Jesus and His teachings. In Year 8 students embark on a virtual pilgrimage to Israel, following “In the Steps of Jesus”. The students engage with archaeological perspectives, biblical referencing, geographical and cultural features in conjunction with a wide range of Internet resources alongside a complementary study of the Gospel of St Luke. Creative expression through the use of technology facilitates the development of personal and collective images of God and an understanding of the Christian narratives.

In Senior School, an introduction to world religions is undertaken through a semester of Comparative Religion at Year 9. Students study the beliefs and practices of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, exploring the experience and spirituality expressed through symbol and ritual at sacred destinations around the world. Excursions to the Jewish Museum, the Melbourne Immigration Museum, mosques and temples take place on a regular basis.

VCE Religion and Society Unit 2 Ethics is compulsory at Year 10. This unit opens discussion with Socratic Circles and uses the principles of Aristotelian Virtue Ethics and Jesus Love Ethic as a lens to view global issues and ethical debates. Each area of study focuses on developing decision-making skills, and building communication skills for negotiation, conflict resolution and advocacy.

The VCE Study of Unit 2 Ethics offers opportunities to discuss contemporary social justice issues, whilst developing an understanding of the values and beliefs underpinning a wide range of religious perspectives. Students select personal, social and global ethical issues to examine which interest them. Examples include gender equality, extreme poverty, human rights, asylum seekers, racism, climate change, animal rights, terrorism and war. They examine the concepts of ‘Ethics and Morality’ and consider the implications of actions in the face of challenge, reflecting on personal decision making and values. The VCCA Study, Religion and Society Units 3 and 4 is offered at Korowa. The subject canvasses the search for meaning across time and cultures, investigating the ways in which humanity has sought to understand the how and why of existence. It explores the interaction of religious traditions and the societies of which they are a part. Students study historical and contemporary challenges, reviewing and assessing problems arising from social and technological change. The focus is on leadership inspired by the gospel and imbued with spirit of Christian humanism and a creative sense of civic duty.

Mrs Hale, Head of Religious Education and Social Service, emphasises that “Korowa’s robust Social Service program runs alongside all levels of RE, encouraging faith in action as an integral part of the school ethos in the Anglican Tradition.”
Sherril Molloy is the Executive Director of the Anglican Schools Commission (ASC), Queensland. She is a commercial lawyer, who is deeply involved in the Church. Last year Sherril completed her term on Diocesan Council and the Legal Committee. Sherril was a Diocesan representative to General Synod and a member of the Diocesan Audit and Risk Committee. She has also served as Chair of Council at St Hilda’s School, Southport. The Archbishop of Brisbane recently appointed Sherril to the position of Queensland Representative to the ASA Management Committee. Here Sherril writes about the significant gains the ASC has made in the area of child protection.

The Anglican Schools Commission (ASC) in Brisbane is an integral part of the Diocese, rather than a separate corporation, with responsibility for 11 diocesan-owned schools and relationships with another nine schools with differing governance structures.

We are a small unit with eight staff who consider ourselves privileged to work in the area of education, supporting principals, business managers and other staff to achieve the vision each of them has for schools within the Diocese. It is particularly exciting to identify practical ways to support schools while working to fulfil the Christian mission of the school.

As is the case with all Anglican schools, the issue of child protection is of paramount importance.

The ASC has had significant gains in this area and, in November, appointed retired Detective Inspector Marlene Norris as a dedicated child protection support officer to assist in the provision of policy and professional development modules for staff, governing bodies and student protection officers.

It was important to ASC that support would be provided to staff to guide them through the new framework and, while this role was a newly-created role recognising needs within schools, it soon became apparent that support was needed beyond the school perimeter.

Many of you would know Stephen Harrison who is the Director of Mission in our office. At the ASA Conference in Canberra, Stephen mentioned that one of the shifts occurring in the Christian mission of Anglican schools is towards schools connecting more strongly with families.

This is evidenced in early adopter schools employing community chaplains who focus on wider communities, including parents, and on the development of projects and programs designed to support families in nurturing their children.

Part of our strategic plan is to develop environments to enable children and families to flourish whilst at the same time fulfilling our Christian mission and our schools are increasingly seeing the proactive roles they can play in teaching and supporting parents as they raise children. We are sure that as the world continues to develop children will embrace change well before their parents, and parents will need support to keep their children safe whilst engaging in natural exploration and development.

With this as our focus the ASC sought cyber-safety resources for parents and carers of children in Anglican schools. Whilst we found many parents and carers were not alert to the risks to children posed by the internet, we also recognised the importance of being able to embrace the many wonderful features of the internet that enrich our experiences and knowledge.

Our cyber safety course was developed by a person with five years’ experience as a covert operative in the Queensland Police Service working in a highly-specialised branch that investigates child exploitation and abuse.

There are four different courses from Prep to Year 12 with age-specific content, tips, scenarios, software examples and resources that can be downloaded. Each course informs parents and caregivers about the real dangers of the internet and equips them to reduce the risks for their children. Other ways we protect students are through regularly updated policies and procedures; a risk management strategy and review tools; staff training material; and relevant resources.

Every Anglican school now has at least two Student Protection Officers, who are staff members, responsible for student safety. In addition, all school employees are required to undertake annual training in child protection. We have a range of policies designed to prohibit the exploitation of the special position of trust and authority between employees or volunteers and students.

We have become inflexible about basic protective behaviours. Staff and volunteers are not permitted to transport students without the consent of a parent or carer, and without informing the principal. Staff and volunteers may not visit a student at his or her home, or invite a student to their homes, without the knowledge and consent of the parent or carer and the principal. School workers may not repeatedly be alone with a student, or develop an intimate relationship incompatible with the professional relationship, or engage in inappropriate correspondence, or telephone calls, or emails or text messages, or gift giving. We are headed in the right direction but the Anglican Schools Commission (Qld), like many other organisations, is awaiting outcomes and guidance from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse.
TAS Introduces Co-education Across the Board

Tim Hughes

Tim Hughes, Media Manager at The Armidale School in northern NSW, writes about the School’s strategic decision to become fully co-educational from the beginning of 2016. He comments on the detailed research and analysis the School undertook prior to the Board reaching this decision. Tim also explains how TAS is promoting the introduction of girls as day and boarding students in the Senior School.

Research and Analysis

While it was unexpected by families, the School Board’s announcement to the school community in January that it was embarking on a two-month consultation process, followed more than two years of analysis, research and external review of independent education in the region, nationally, and overseas.

The research included a detailed analysis of Australia’s independent school sector by TAS Headmaster Murray Guest, who also spent a term last year on sabbatical in the United Kingdom, visiting eight co-educational schools that had all been established as single sex institutions.

Pedagogically, he found there was no conclusive evidence that single sex education is “better” than co-educational. “What makes a ‘good’ school is more about the quality and innovation of the teaching, the values, culture and tone of the school; having viable cohort numbers to provide social stability and offering; and having access to excellent resources. There are good single sex schools and good co-educational schools, but what makes a school ‘good’ is whether it is single sex or co-ed,” his research found.

Secondly, the worldwide trend toward co-education continues unabated. In the UK there are currently 24 boys only boarding schools and 48 girls only boarding schools compared to 257 co-educational boarding schools. In Australia not one single sex boys’ boarding school has been founded since Canberra Grammar School in 1929.

At a national level Armidale is the only regional city in Australia that does not have an independent, co-educational secondary offering for families, despite the fact that 85 per cent of all Australian independent schools are co-educational. Armidale was also found to be an anomaly on another front, being home to Australia’s smallest independent boys’ and girls’ single sex boarding schools.

Co-education will Enable Growth

The long-term environment of independent schooling in the New England region of northern NSW has been of interest to the TAS Board for a number of years.

Declining terms of trade in the agricultural sector which provides the majority of enrolments and Armidale’s unchanging population of around 25,000, have placed enrolment pressures on all three independent schools. That said, the fact that boarding numbers at TAS (210) were the highest since 1994 and the total secondary enrolment is the highest since 1997, placed the School in a position of strength rather than weakness for such a major strategic change. Contrarily, it then prompted the question from some in the school community: Why does the School need to make such a change when it is clearly continuing to do well?

“Moving to full co-education will allow TAS to grow and prosper into the future, and in doing so, enable the School to further develop and offer specialisation in our academic programs and expand our co-curricular, outdoor adventure and service opportunities,” Murray Guest believes.

“Co-education is not an end in itself, but a means by which we can enable this growth to occur. This is not at the expense of the School’s culture or values, but is all about maintaining what is best about TAS and offering that to secondary girl students as boarders and day students, just as we have done through history for boys.”

Community Consultation

During the two-month consultative period, 23 meetings were held with parents, Old Boys, staff and students across NSW and in Brisbane; there was consultation with the Anglican Diocese of Armidale; stakeholders were encouraged to send written submissions to a specially designated email address; and an online survey was sent to more than 4,500 stakeholders.

Importantly, key stakeholders such as the Old Boys’ Union, P&F and TAS Foundation all separately expressed their support for the Board to make whatever decision its Directors felt was right for the long-term future of the school.

As expected, the full range of opinion was received from across the school community.

“It was clear from the survey that while the majority are in support of the decision, others are concerned by change. Those in support expressed the opinion that their sons, and for some their daughters now as well, will benefit academically and socially. In the words of one mother who spoke to the media: ‘It is the all round curriculum – academic, sports and other activities – that led us to TAS in the first place, not the fact it was an all boys’ school. But meeting girls is a pretty normal thing to do at 15. The real world is co-educational and I think it’s healthy for a school to be co-educational. I don’t think my son is at all concerned at the change.’

Those in opposition have been those most passionately supportive of the School and committed to what it offers their sons now and in a sense their opposition is an affirmation for what the School already does, and will continue to do.”

In addition to the greater opportunities and sustainability afforded by growth, there is a belief that the presence of girls in the classroom lifts the academic performance of boys, who will also gain new insights and understandings. Boys and girls will also be able to participate together in more co-curricular activities,
allowing them to establish normal friendships that will better prepare them for life beyond school. For our families – particularly our boarding families who may live a long way from Armidale – the decision to go co-ed makes TAS a single family destination for brothers and sisters.”

Planning for a Co-educational TAS

After considering all of the feedback, the Board made its decision on 31 March.

The School’s Executive then ramped up planning what a co-educational TAS would ‘look like’ with respect to the academic curriculum, pastoral care, boarding, co-curricular life, leadership service and adventure programs and facilities.

It wasn’t as if TAS was starting girls from scratch. In addition to the co-ed Junior School, senior girls have participated in a range of academic and co-curricular programs at TAS for decades. Indeed, in each of the last four years approximately 50 girls have studied a range of senior secondary subjects at TAS as part of an arrangement with other schools.

A pressing need with respect to facilities, is the requirement of additional classrooms. Furthermore, a large woodworking room (a former gymnasium) will be transformed into a senior social and study space. Building work has begun on expanding one boarding house to free up another that will be refurbished for girl boarders. (In time we expect to build a new girls’ boarding facility on campus.) TAS is thankful to a number of existing co-educational schools who have been generous with their time and wisdom through the planning stage.

Promoting Co-education at TAS

Meanwhile, the School engaged the services of an advertising agency to create a marketing campaign, across television, print and other platforms, visualising the future of TAS. The result was encapsulated in the slogan ‘TAS – The one for all’. The message that TAS is open for business for secondary girls was taken to various education expos, trade shows and information sessions in centres large and small.

TAS also held a successful Co-education Expo, at which prospective families of both girls and boys had the opportunity to ask key staff from across the school about their areas of responsibility. Attendees heard about our implementation plans, witnessed the unveiling of the new girls’ uniform and toured the School. Following the Expo, TAS hosted a Girls’ Day In, which was an informal lunch for girls and their families to come together in a relaxed setting to learn more about each other. A number of Girls’ Experience Days have been programmed for Term 4.

A Sense of Excitement

At this stage of the year it is too early to confirm the number of enrolments of secondary school girls for 2016. What we can confirm is that interest in the option has been most encouraging. TAS recognises that there will be some withdrawals because of the decision to introduce co-education in the secondary school, but these are expected to be few. By and large, there is a sense of excitement and anticipation about the School’s future for TAS.

The change has not just been historic for TAS; as the first member of the NSW GPS to go co-ed, it prompted widespread media interest and commentary on single-sex versus co-education in national mainstream and online media. Perhaps the sense of anticipation is best expressed by a ‘tweet’ from ABC Radio broadcaster and member of the Chaser team Dom Jackson:

“Congrats to The Armidale School on becoming co-ed. Y’know, like the world is.”

LEFT: The Armidale School in northern NSW will be opening its gates to secondary school girl students from 2016.

RIGHT: Girls at TAS will take part in the School’s renown outdoor education program.
Melbourne Grammar School’s Reconciliation Action Plan

Natalie Charles

Natalie Charles, Director of Staff Development and Head of Melbourne Grammar School’s (MGS) Indigenous Programme explains how the School is refining its Reconciliation Action Plan. She notes that this year the School re-established its student MGS Reconciliation Committee and formed an Indigenous Steering Committee comprising “the Headmaster and members of the wider school community who have experience and expertise in Indigenous education and a good MGS community network to assist with philanthropic initiatives and efforts”. In addition, Natalie comments on the School’s Reconciliation Week activities and Indigenous Bursary Programme.

Reconciliation Action Plan

The Melbourne Grammar School Reconciliation Committee is in the process of refining our school’s Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to facilitate this process, the students and staff are utilising Reconciliation Australia’s Narrarrannawalk: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning framework, which is an online tool aimed at assisting school’s in developing their RAPs and to find meaningful ways to increase respect; reduce prejudice; and strengthen relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Structures and Committees

The MGS Reconciliation Committee were established in 2015 as part of the Student Committee structure at Melbourne Grammar School. The committee has 14 members, three of whom identify as Indigenous students, and is formed through an application process where students must demonstrate their suitability for selection. The Committee meets a number of times each term and this year has been charged with three main priorities: the re-establishment of the Committee and the development of its vision and purpose; the organisation of our annual celebration of Reconciliation Week at MGS, and the ongoing development of the MGS Reconciliation Action Plan. In addition to this, Melbourne Grammar has also established an Indigenous Steering Committee comprised of the Headmaster and members of the wider school community who have experience and expertise in Indigenous education and a good MGS community network to assist with philanthropic initiatives and efforts. The Committee was established to provide strategic direction, advice and guidance to the School and those charged with delivering the programme. Through its experience in philanthropy and interest in providing access to a first rate education for Indigenous Australians, the committee seeks to be a pro-active voice offering advocacy across the School at the highest levels.

Reconciliation Week

Jacob Cubis, Chairman of the committee and a Larakia man from the Northern Territory delivered a personal reflection at the Reconciliation-themed Assembly on his experience as a proud Indigenous Australian and one of ten Indigenous students in Years 9-12, currently enrolled at MGS. His message to the boys was one of legacy and lineage and it went like this: “My brother Matt is an Old Melburnian who graduated in 2012 and my Aunt Wendy’s artwork hangs in the Barak Gallery. This school, steeped as it is in history and community, has an Indigenous story to tell and the creation of this Committee is an important way of inviting you to take this story as your own so that you might learn more about each other from each other”. He went on to introduce the Committee members and to articulate their long-term aims of finding “meaningful ways to increase understanding, reduce prejudice, and strengthen relationships so that we all have a better sense of what it means to be Australian.”

The next day, a select group of footballers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, departed for the Worawa Reconciliation Sports Carnival held at Worawa Aboriginal College in Healesville. The Melbourne Grammar boys were able to come away with a convincing win over a strong opposition to retain the trophy but the victory was secondary to the spirit of joy in which the game was played.

On Wednesday, a day of activities included a special guest, Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin, a Senior Wurundjeri Elder and patron of the MGS Reconciliation Committee.

Indigenous Bursary Programme

Since its establishment in 2006, the Indigenous Bursary Programme has evolved and grown with a constant enrolment of between 8-10 students but the School hopes to reach a critical mass of being 12-15 students in the next two years. We actively seek to ensure that the cohort reflects a geographic balance between those from regional Victoria and those from up North so that opportunities and access are available in equal measure to both.
Bridging the Gap

Michael Giles

Michael Giles, Head of School at Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School, writes about the School’s Indigenous Scholarship Programme, which is in its second year of operation. He says the School is ‘energised’ by the programme’s potential.

Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School (BCGS) is committed to ‘bridging the gap’ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. While we recognise that Indigenous people suffer significant disadvantage with respect to educational opportunities, we know that specifically tailored educational programmes can enhance social and economic outcomes for Indigenous students. In 2014 we introduced our Indigenous Scholarship Programme, a collaboration between Goomburrup Aboriginal Corporation, the longest running Aboriginal Corporation in Bunbury (established in 1971) and the School, to enhance educational opportunities for Indigenous students.

At the beginning of the school year BCGS brought together members of the Goomburrup Aboriginal Corporation, the Head of School, School Executive, students from Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School and the media to promote and celebrate the programme and its recipients. Special Guest, The Hon Peter Collier, Minister for Education and Aboriginal Affairs, presented scholarship recipients Maddison Bedford (2014), Brodie McCreanor (2015) and Brodi Eli (2015) with certificates in recognition of their awards. He spoke about the importance of providing educational opportunities to Indigenous students.

Working with Goomburrup Aboriginal Corporation

Prior to establishing our Indigenous Scholarship Programme, BCGS worked for several years with Goomburrup Aboriginal Corporation eventually signing a Memorandum of Understanding for Indigenous students living in the south-west of Western Australia to attend the School as day and boarding students. BCGS recognizes and accepts unreservedly that Aboriginal people must have direct and active involvement in decisions that affect the quality and accessibility of educational opportunities for their children. The School welcomes advice and guidance from the Goomburrup Aboriginal Corporation. Our aim is to provide scholarship recipients with the best educational experience BCGS can offer.

Goomburrup provides advice to the School on a range of issues that impact on Aboriginal education and the successful running of the BCGS Indigenous Education Programme. It also communicates with local Aboriginal families and communities about proposed initiatives and provides feedback to the School.

Indigenous Scholarship Programme

Our Indigenous Scholarship Programme is now in its second year of operation and we are energised by its potential. Scholarship selection is a five-step process, normally conducted over a 12-month period by BCGS staff in consultation with the Goomburrup Aboriginal Corporation. The selection process is designed to facilitate the greatest possible involvement of the student and their family and the student’s present school teachers and advisors.

The process is adjudicated by the Goomburrup Aboriginal Corporation to ensure that the principles of fairness and equity of access apply and that the student’s best interests are served, however, it is the School that has responsibility for awarding the scholarship.

Indigenous scholarships are provided to students who support the overarching aims of the School and are willing to apply themselves with diligence in both effort and commitment to the educational programme offered. We want to support and encourage students to flourish and, ideally, graduate with the knowledge and life skills to enter further education.

Pastoral Support

The School has an Indigenous Students Coordinator who is the key to delivering pastoral care for our Indigenous students. Keeping in regular contact with carers and family, the Coordinator endeavours to help resolve and mediate issues in conjunction with the Heads of House and the School Councillor.

Our pastoral care system helps students feel safe and comfortable in a non-threatening environment. We aim to provide a positive learning environment that caters for diversity; diversity in culture, educational outcomes and in the co-curricular activities we offer.

Our boarding option offers Indigenous students a unique and nurturing environment in which to grow. Set in quiet bush surrounds students live in cottage-style accommodation. The boarding bus service provides transport for students who require it on long weekends and term holidays. Students are able to visit home more regularly, thereby giving staff greater opportunities to liaise with parents and carers concerning each student’s education. This service transports students to their homes, to sporting commitments and into town for recreational activities.

Academic Support

Our system of academic support offers ready access to subject teachers and mentors, as well as to opportunities for involvement in a range of leadership programmes and workplace and tertiary study opportunities. BCGS plans to introduce a range of pre-tertiary opportunities that expose students to educational programmes aimed at broadening their awareness of career options. Access to programmes at the University of Western Australia and our strong and successful vocational education programme help ensure students’ needs are met, regardless of what their goals for the future may be.

We expect all of our students to make their education a high priority. We expect them to join in and contribute to the school community, to work hard at everything they do and to want to be active contributors at school, in their home communities and throughout their lives.

Making a Real Difference

Year 11 student and Indigenous Scholarship recipient Maddison Bedford spoke at our Indigenous Scholarship Programme launch earlier this year. She gave us an insight into what the scholarship means to her.

“I am fortunate and proud to be the first recipient of an Indigenous Scholarship at Bunbury Cathedral
Grammar School. This scholarship has provided access to a range of opportunities for me and helped develop my confidence and abilities as a positive role model and young Indigenous leader.”

Maddison also described how the scholarship has encouraged her to grow personally and will continue to afford her even more opportunities in the future. “Since being awarded the scholarship I have had the confidence to step forward and take up a range of opportunities that have pushed me out of my comfort zone. Next year I am hoping I will be successful in securing an Aboriginal School-Based Traineeship which will count towards my Western Australian Certificate of Education and give me hands-on experience that will complement my future university goals.”

Boarder Brodie McCreanor, who joined the School this year, enjoys “the School’s educational and sporting programmes”. He finds “the school community and environment calm and welcoming”. He said Country Week, which ended in a win, was a highlight.

He went on to say, “I like the high grade of education and tutoring programmes which support students in all subjects. There are many opportunities to be involved in sport activities throughout the year.”

Brodie is also enjoying boarding and all the opportunities it offers. “I like boarding environment and the many facilities provided as I use the common room and gym on a daily basis. The friendly environment of boarding is also great. Boarding lets me interact with my peers. It is good to have older students to look up to and to also be a role model to the younger boarders.”

Brodie Ely is also loving being at BCGS. He said: “I love being a role model to the younger boarders. It is good to have older students to look up to and also great. Boarding lets me interact with my peers. The friendly environment of boarding is also great. Boarding lets me interact with my peers. It is good to have older students to look up to and to be a role model to the younger boarders.”

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School-Wide Approach to Welcoming Indigenous Australians

The Indigenous Scholarship Programme is just one way in which Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School is endeavouring to narrow the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Other initiatives include our primary and secondary school programmes that promote knowledge and understanding of Noongar culture and our support of Indigenous Outreach programmes designed to attract Indigenous enrolments that are run by the University of Western Australia and Edith Cowan University. We conduct an Acknowledgement of Country at assemblies and important events and our student diaries reflect the Noongar culture of the area through the inclusion of traditional language, information concerning Indigenous seasons and relevant local information. Furthermore, we acknowledge important events in the Aboriginal calendar (locally and nationally). In school keynotes and newsletters. In addition, we work alongside the local Djidi Djidi Noongar Primary School on a variety of cultural enrichment programs that promote understanding through engagement and education.

Brodie McCreanor playing soccer for Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School during Country Week.
Statement On Indigenous Education In Anglican Schools

Since the 1800s, Anglican schools have played an important role in the education of Australia’s young men and women. Over the past 200 years, the story of Indigenous schooling has not been without difficulties. Yet today, Indigenous young men and women learn alongside non-Indigenous students in classrooms across the nation.

Anglican schools are diverse and socially inclusive. Whether single sex or co-educational, long-established or newly-founded, boarding or day, our schools are rising to the challenge of providing Indigenous young Australians with the educational opportunity that should be available for all Australians. Furthermore, Indigenous Australians are enriching the lives of students in Anglican schools, through building mutually rewarding relationships.

The partnerships are two-way. Indigenous students enrich the life and culture of schools, whilst they are enriched by the experiences gained from fellow students, staff and the wider school community.

Anglican schools are committed to enhancing the understanding of Indigenous Australian history and culture, whilst ensuring an ongoing commitment to Indigenous communities across the nation.

Our schools aim to professionally develop staff and provide classroom and other resources to enable teachers and support staff to offer meaningful educational experiences for students. One mechanism for such experience is the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum.

Many Anglican schools provide rich experiences for the development of meaningful relationships through direct connections with Indigenous communities, whether local or distant. Students can gain a deeper understanding of some of the complex issues that face all Australians, and in particular Indigenous Australians, empowering them to take affirmative action towards building a socially inclusive society.

When students leave Anglican schools, our aim is that they have a sense of connection with both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous culture and history of their local community, as well as a broader connection with Indigenous people nationally. As young adults, they should feel comfortable to ‘walk in both worlds’.

Anglican schools wish to contribute towards the improvement of educational and employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Accordingly, our schools are committed to providing learning opportunities for Indigenous students and employment opportunities for Indigenous adults where possible and appropriate.

For all involved in Anglican schooling, the challenge is to consider how we can play a more effective role as partners in our Nation’s and Church’s commitment to improve educational outcomes of Indigenous young people. That is a mission imperative for all Anglican schools in this second decade of the 21st century.

Checklist For Anglican Schools

You may consider whether your school can say ‘yes’ to the following statements...

1. Do you acknowledge traditional land owners
   - at the beginning of official ceremonies?
   - by way of a plaque in your school?
2. Does your school have an Indigenous Education Policy?
3. Does your school have an Indigenous Employment Strategy?
4. Have you signed up to a Youth Indigenous Leadership Program?
5. Does your school fly the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander flag?
6. Do you support the provision of educational resources for Indigenous education/communities?
7. Do your staff and students have opportunities to visit Indigenous communities?
8. Does your school have a student and/or staff exchange program with an Indigenous school or community?
9. Has your school invited the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Bishop to visit your school?
10. Do you run a special assembly or newsletter or editorial around NAIDOC Week and/or ‘Sorry Day’/Reconciliation Week?
11. What Indigenous content is in your curriculum - Indigenous art, history and culture?
12. Is Indigenous food explained in food technology classes?
13. Do you host Indigenous sporting teams?
14. Does your school undertake other Indigenous initiatives?

Some material sourced from AHISA Victoria’s ‘Statement of Intent on Indigenous Education’.
On Wednesday 3 June two Year 6 Fraser Coast Anglican College (FCAC) students, Kaitlin Edmondstone and Kelland McNall along with many other students from throughout Australia, excitedly stepped into the shoes of their principals for the day. This is the third year the College has participated in this national leadership initiative, which offers a unique opportunity to students.

To be selected, students are required to complete a nomination form addressing one very important question: Why do you want to be Student Principal for a Day? The College requires that nominations are supported by a teacher and the students’ parents and the winners are announced during a Junior School Assembly.

Kaitlin and Kelland made the most of their time in the role and it has helped broaden their understanding of the College’s inner workings. In the course of their day they discussed the South Doolong Road closure with Fraser Coast Regional Council Deputy Mayor, Cr Robert Garland; they visited students at the Koala Kindy; and they spoke with prospective families looking to enrol their children at the College.

“I thought it was a really good experience,” Kaitlin said, adding that she was surprised at how much work a school principal had to get done in just one day. “It was much more complicated than I thought it would be, but it was pretty cool to meet all the people who work here,” Kelland said. When asked if they would aspire to being a school principal, their response was a quick "probably not". Kaitlin is looking forward to a career in architecture while Kelland hopes to become a palaeontologist one day.

To complete the experience Kaitlin and Kelland reported back to their peers at the following Junior School Assembly and encouraged others to apply for the role next year.

“I was so proud of our Kaitlin and Kelland,” College Principal, Mrs Leisa Harper said. “They both display a maturity beyond their years.”

Mrs Harper said that they were a great example of FCAC students and the You Can Do It program that promotes confidence, persistence, organisation, resilience and getting along with others. She said the children were wonderful ambassadors for the College and the prospective parents enjoyed the opportunity to talk with them.

“I am a strong advocate for encouraging students to experience new things,” added Mrs Harper.

“Student Principal for a Day caught my eye as something that would enable students to feel even more connected to our college. I wanted to provide an excellent opportunity for students to learn some key leadership skills and see whole school planning and management in action.”

Like most schools, the college takes a hands-on approach to leadership. There are leadership opportunities for students as school captains, sports captains and mentoring roles through the school’s buddy program.

Mrs Harper went on to say: “From the early years at school, teachers provide students with weekly responsibilities that they need to complete. Our students see these skills as a natural part of being a student and are shown the benefits of being collaborative and working together as a team from an early age.”

The College also takes advantage of its position in the world heritage area of the Fraser Coast, seeing it as an ideal environment to focus on outdoor education.

Students in the primary years learn bush and survival skills, while the secondary school has a greater emphasis upon individual challenge, building skills in self-reliance, independence, resilience and perseverance.

Mrs Harper said, “We try to teach our students that being a leader doesn’t mean you need a title or a badge. It is the way you conduct yourself every day. You can be a leader in everything that you do.”

And what kind of characteristics does Mrs Harper try to instil in her students?

“A good leader takes the initiative to lead. A good leader requires courage, care for others and a clear vision with the ambition to succeed.” The students realised very quickly that the foundation of my work is about relationships.

“A good leader encourages people around them and inspires them to perform to their optimum level all the time.”

And what does she hope students will gain from their participation in Student Principal for a Day?

“I would hope that the students will gain a sense of how much I love my job! It would be great to think that our students would consider a career in education and maybe even become a principal one day!”

For the last three years Mrs Leisa Harper, Principal of Queensland’s Fraser Coast Anglican College, has embraced the Principal for a Day program, an initiative of the Principals Australia Institute, as a way of sharing her passion for her role as the head of a school. She loves her job and wishes to inspire others to take up careers in education. This year two of the College’s Year 6 students took up the challenge of ‘leading’ the school for a day.

176 schools and more than 300 students throughout Australia participated in the Principal for a Day program in 2015. The program introduces students to the role of principal providing them with an understanding of how a school is run. At the same time it gives principals an opportunity to listen to the voices of their students.
To Audit or not to Audit? It’s really no question...

Audits can be a little like nits – sooner or later every school has to deal with them. They can be an annoyance while they last, but once it’s over and done with you can breathe a sigh of relief, and you’ll find it was worth the effort.

Regular audits, on the other hand, can be like effective nit prevention programs – they’re much less trouble and each year they get easier to implement, and they leave you feeling much more in control.

The trick is to select the right Auditor. Most accountancy firms that deal with schools do not have a Registered Company Auditor on hand, so they contract the service to someone else – and that costs the school more.

At Francis A Jones, the Auditing division is headed by a Registered Company Auditor, their school experience is extensive, and they will design a customised auditing solution for each school.

Specialists in schools, clubs, associations and not-for-profit organisations, the FAJ Auditing team understands that your system may have ‘evolved’ into something quite unique, and they are experts at their way through the individual characteristics of each system they audit.

FAJ Auditing principal Daniel Papaphotis said, ‘every school is different. The way they deal with bookkeeping, records management and documentation can be very specific and distinct – almost as though it has grown up organically. Our specialty is navigating that complexity, and helping our client schools find ways to streamline their systems so that each year the process gets less and less traumatic.’

Daniel said that the results of an audit can help school boards and administration with business and financial planning, particularly if the auditing is conducted annually. ‘It’s good governance, it makes good business sense, and it really helps if the same auditing team comes back every year. We can identify trends, see developing problems, and help make the most of opportunities as they arise,” he said.

He said that as an established accounting firm with over 80 years in business, and one of the lowest staff turnover rates in the accounting industry in Western Australia, Francis A Jones offers the kind of stability, commitment and service excellence that Anglican schools value.

Daniel Papaphotis can be contacted at Francis A Jones on 9335 5211 or by email at daniel@faj.com.au

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AUDITING? WE TICK ALL THE BOXES.

The idea of putting two 11-year-old students in charge of a K-12 school for a day would sound alarm bells to many people but not to staff and pupils at Swan Valley Anglican Community School (SVACS) who recently experienced a Wednesday with Jackson Joyner and Jasmine Mueller at the helm. On 3 June the Year 6 students shadowed Principal, Mr Jason Bartell, as he went about his daily schedule, as part of the Student Principal for a Day program.

First up the students reviewed Mr Bartell’s calendar to gain some understanding of a typical day in the life of a principal. They also reviewed the operational structures of the School and met with Mr Lal Perera, the Business Manager, to find out about his responsibilities. They attended Junior School and Middle School assemblies and some Senior School classes with the Principal. On a walk through the school they ‘checked out’ the refurbishment of the library and the establishment of new paths from Building 6 to the Technology and Enterprise building. They were also called upon to conduct uniform checks and complete a lunch duty in the Junior School (under supervision of course!). A highlight was spending time with the early childhood children.

Jackson said he enjoyed the walk around the Senior School and being shown all the changes and improvements that are taking place.

‘I now realise what a hard job Mr Bartell has and that you have to be very committed to be a principal,’ he said.

Jasmine said she enjoyed learning about how the SVACS functions. She was amazed at how much behind the scenes work is involved in running a school.

Student Principals For A Day
Global Opportunities For St Hilda’s Girls

Kate Powell

As Exchange Liaison at St Hilda’s School on Queensland’s Gold Coast, Kate Powell is responsible for overseeing overseas student exchanges and liaising with partner schools. She also ensures girls are aware of global student ambassador programs and international academic options that are on offer. Here she writes about the School’s focus on encouraging students to take up global learning opportunities.

Creating openings for students to take up learning opportunities around the world has always been a passion of St Hilda’s Head of School, Peter Crawley. Since his own children spread their wings and took off on exchange adventures in Great Britain and Canada, he has made it his mission to ensure there are global options available to students in his schools. St Hilda’s has been no exception and now offers opportunities for students to broaden their horizons beyond the Gold Coast and Queensland.

Short-Term Student Exchanges

Year 10 students can participate in short-term student exchanges to Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, Chile, Argentina, the United States of America, Canada, England, Scotland, France, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

St Hilda’s girls travel to these destinations and their exchange partners enrich our school in return when they bring their own variety of uniforms and accents into our classrooms. With stays of four to six weeks, students have time to become part of the culture and to feel as if they actually belong in their new environment; and who wouldn’t want to be part of the Model United Nations held in The Hague or a speaker on The Morning Show in New York?

Up to 45 per cent of any St Hilda’s Year 10 cohort is likely to take part in an exchange, so cultural interactions have a major impact at this year level. Many students who have participated in past years remain in contact with their overseas friends and families, meeting up time and again in destinations around the world. As Claryn Chong says of her time in Japan, “The long-lasting friendships established there are something that I will treasure forever. I will never forget my remarkable time on exchange.” Likewise Zoe Culross, a recent visitor to South Africa, enthused about her time overseas. “… my exchange to South Africa has expanded my knowledge and awareness of the different countries and cultures of the world around me. … I also feel very grateful to my family at home and my school for allowing us to have a trip like this that will increase our learning in ways that academics can’t.”
The Friends of Pulteney Grammar School, Adelaide rallied to raise funds following the devastating earthquake that hit Nepal in April. As well as loss of life, the quake caused severe damage to an orphanage with close links to Pulteney.

Ishwor Ghimire, 19, grew up in the orphanage and spent 12 months at Pulteney on a scholarship in his senior school years. He’s being hailed a hero after his work rescuing nearly 60 orphans in the wake of the disaster.

Parent Jo Bourchier, who along with Lynne Rawson hosted Ishwor during his stay, says he went back last year as a carer and mentor while awaiting university studies. “We are extremely proud of him,” Jo says. “He carried so many of the young ones out and ushered everyone into the safety of open ground.”

Thanks to funds generously donated by the community, the Pulteney mums funded and assisted the building of a bamboo and mud-rendered hut to see the orphans through the coming monsoon season, named the Friends of Pulteney Cottage.

A fundraising dinner generously donated by the Grand Chifley Hotel, was held on the June long weekend to raise funds for the reconstruction work.

To donate, please go to www.gofundme.com/t7qxdb8

The links that have been established with other schools have led to new opportunities for our students. When one of St Hilda’s partner schools, St Mark’s School in Massachusetts, began running a Global Citizenship initiative in partnership with Salzburg Global Seminars, St Hilda’s was able to secure places for eight girls from Years 10 and 11 to attend the inaugural conference in 2014. Their experiences included working collaboratively with teams from around the United States and the world and following Boston’s Freedom Trail to bring History to life.

In 2015, girls were taken to Smith College in Massachusetts to enjoy a Smith Summer Science and Engineering Program. Only around 100 girls are able to attend each year, so it was an excited group of five St Hilda’s girls who took off in July to take part in a four-week residential course for ‘exceptional students with a strong interest in science, engineering and medicine’. The success of this venture is summed up by participants Eloise Campbell who comments that, “Opportunities like Smith come along once in a lifetime, especially for a 15 year old girl...(it) opened my eyes to possibilities I hadn’t even thought of yet”, and Eva Devantier, “It has inspired me to think openly about science and carry that attitude and enthusiasm into my studies at school. The knowledge and experience I gained from the program has made me incredibly excited for the future and what it may hold.” This level of achievement is what inspires our staff to keep looking for new openings for our girls.

Other options include World Challenge, People to People, Cambridge Immerses and Oxbridge Programs.

World Challenge expeditions have lived up to their name, offering the girls the challenge of fundraising, planning and realising trips to countries where they can be involved in aid projects, as well as daring themselves to complete tests of endurance, such as trekking in Vietnam, India and Ecuador.

People to People, Cambridge Immerses and Oxbridge Programs provide further scope for global learning pursuits. These amazing conferences take students from around the globe and place them in a hothouse learning environment where they can work on areas of interest such as immersion language studies in France, international diplomacy in Washington, film and media in California and medicine in Baltimore. Attendees are likely to be addressed by former Secretaries of State and Nobel Prize winners, who bring the wider world closer to home.

All of these options add up to a community that is willing to look outside its walls and towards far horizons. St Hilda’s is richer for forging links throughout the world.

Pulteney Digs Deep For Nepal

The Friends of Pulteney Grammar School, Adelaide rallied to raise funds following the devastating earthquake that hit Nepal in April. As well as loss of life, the quake caused severe damage to an orphanage with close links to Pulteney.

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Jo and Lynne flew to Nepal in May with much-needed supplies for the children, who were sleeping in a vegetable patch under plastic sheeting. They delivered the school’s donations of tents, water purifiers, solar lighting, cooking utensils, medical supplies and toiletries after hearing of the difficulties in getting aid to quake victims.

Thanks to funds generously donated by the community, the Pulteney mums funded and assisted the building of a bamboo and mud-rendered hut to see the orphans through the coming monsoon season, named the Friends of Pulteney Cottage.

A fundraising dinner generously donated by the Grand Chifley Hotel, was held on the June long weekend to raise funds for the reconstruction work.

To donate, please go to www.gofundme.com/t7qxdb8
The Gift of Giving

Darren Stevenson

Darren Stevenson is the founder and Managing Director of Extend After School Care, a nation-wide provider of outside school hours care services for children. Established in 2002, Extend’s goal has always been to enrich the lives of children and support schools and families. Darren, a former teacher, has driven this philosophy of support throughout Extend. Extend partners with 100 school communities Australia wide.

Mahatma Gandhi once said, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” And that’s all good and well from Ghandi, right? It’s the sort of quote we’ve come to expect from someone who holds such a position of esteem. But all of us can’t be Ghandi. And do we even want to be?

Most of us are driven by what makes us happy. When we’re at school, career advisors will ask, “How do you like to spend your time? What are your interests?” They’re doing this because they know that choosing a career you enjoy is vital for happiness as well as future success.

And so it goes in all the other aspects of our lives: who we live with, where we live, where we travel, how we spend our time. It’s all based around what will make us happy, because we know that happiness is important. In fact, it’s vital to our well-being.

When you look at it that way, it’s very egocentric. “It’s all about me.” And there’s nothing wrong with that. We’re not Ghandi after all.

We ask ourselves, “What will make me happy?” Is it the nice house, the fancy car, the fabulous career? Once we have all that in place we think it’s time to give back to the world. So we make a donation online to the heart foundation or a children’s charity. And we keep the receipt for taxation purposes. And maybe we pat ourselves on the back because we’re giving back to the community. We heard somewhere that giving to charity will make us feel good, and it does until we can’t find our receipt at tax time and then we’re just annoyed because we won’t get the personal financial benefit from our benevolent contribution.

It’s no surprise that none of that will actually fulfill us in the long term. So then we think that giving isn’t all it’s cracked up to be. What’s all this nonsense about giving being better than receiving anyway? Well if you’re asking that question, then you’ve been giving in the wrong way.

Did you know that people feel happiest when they give in some way that is socially connected to them? In 1990 media tycoon Kerry Packer died. He was dead for six minutes and revived by paramedics with a portable defibrillator before being airlifted to St Vincent’s Hospital in Sydney. At that time it was uncommon for a NSW ambulance to carry a defibrillator. They were very expensive and the state couldn’t afford them. After his medical emergency Kerry Packer donated a huge sum of money to the Ambulance Service of NSW for all NSW ambulances to be fitted with a portable defibrillator. Before his experience, Mr Packer wouldn’t have even thought about the NSW ambulance service. But no doubt after his brush with death, when donating that vital equipment, he felt extremely good about himself and every time he heard that someone had benefited from his new equipment, that positive feeling would rush over him again. It would likely have lasted the rest of his life.

Research has shown that when making donations most people (90%) are motivated to give based on feelings of compassion for those in need. When we feel compassion we are often motivated to provide some relief in any way we can. And with that feeling of providing relief comes an immense sense of satisfaction. So the satisfaction of giving to the community is very strongly linked to a feeling of making a difference in a way that matters to you.

Volunteering has the same effect. If you are emotionally connected to the cause in some way it’s more likely you will gain strong emotional satisfaction from your efforts towards that cause. And if you can use your skills in your voluntary work, that’s even more satisfying.
again. You see this coming together in programs such as Doctors Without Borders or Fred Hollows’ work with the blind. But not all of us are Fred Hollows. So how can we give in our everyday lives?

Firstly you need to know what you’re capable of and do that. Mr Packer didn’t have time to volunteer at his local charity publication. What he did have was resources and a passion for a cause based on personal experience. So he donated to that cause. It was something that mattered to him. But don’t forget time is also a resource. If you can’t donate money, nothing is stopping you from volunteering for a cause for which you are passionate.

A supplier of Extend is a photographer. She watched a documentary one evening 10 years ago when she was up late with her newborn daughter. The documentary was on the genocide in Rwanda. It touched her to the core and at that time she didn’t know how she could help that country continue to recover. But she never forgot. Years later she stumbled over the opportunity to use her career to provide Rwandan children with the opportunity to learn the art of photography. She wrote the program from scratch, fundraised for her trip herself and negotiated with photography suppliers to donate equipment for the children (Nikon donated 30 digital cameras to her cause and Epson donated printers, paper and ink).

The first time she delivered her program to Grade 5 students at a school in Rwanda most of the children had never seen a camera before and certainly none of them had ever operated one. She is now in her fourth year of teaching this course in Rwanda. She goes for three weeks every year, and has now trained local teachers to deliver the program as well. All she had to do was keep her eye open for the opportunity to help. And it presented itself when she was ready.

She isn’t Mahatma Gandhi and she isn’t Fred Hollows. She’s just like you and me: a regular person in the community with her own responsibilities, an idea, and the desire to contribute to something that matters to her.

Next time you see something that matters to you, stop. Think. Ask yourself how you can help. If it’s not yet obvious what you can do, remember. Keep thinking. Look for opportunities. When you’re ready, you will see those opportunities. So start looking and start thinking… because your happiness depends on it.
David Baker, Principal of Victoria’s Gippsland Grammar School (GGS) writes about his three-week trip to Rwanda with a group of colleagues and an Anglican priest from the Diocese of Gippsland. The focus of their mission was to offer professional development, mentoring and support – with a particular focus on the teaching of science, to school teachers at Gahini Secondary School. David travelled with suitcases packed with science equipment and other gifts which he was sure would ‘change the lives of the teachers and students forever’. He returned having learnt that they really want from us is our presence, professional support and respect.

In June 2015 six teachers from Gippsland Grammar School and a priest from the Gippsland Anglican Diocese departed Melbourne for Rwanda on a three-week trip of discovery, uncertainty and learning. Our purpose was to assist the secondary teachers at Gahini Secondary School with professional development, mentoring and support. They had asked that we specifically target science, because this area had been highlighted by the Government as an educational priority and a necessity for a country that is striving for innovation and development.

Every member of the group had their own personal reasons for volunteering and it was enlightening to discuss these reasons with the group before we departed and also with the Anglican congregation at Bairnsdale, who blessed us before our trip.

I wanted to travel to Rwanda as the partnership between the Gahini Diocese and our school has existed for many years and I had been fortunate enough to meet both the Principal of Gahini Secondary School and the Gahini Bishop when they last visited Australia. I felt a strong relationship with both men and had promised to visit them in their own country. In particular, I had found Bishop Alexis to be a very passionate and inspiring leader. When he encourages you to visit, you visit.

I wasn’t sure what to expect from the trip and had spent a great deal of time speaking to other teachers who had made the journey and also researching the history of Rwanda and its people. I knew that there would be vast cultural differences and I was well aware of their dark past. Whenever anyone in the world thinks about Rwanda, they are usually quick to mention or reflect on the genocide and its impact on the country. I was uncertain how the genocide was impacting on current day Rwanda and in many ways I was quite nervous about this trip.

As a principal and a father, I was making a financial commitment to travel to Rwanda and also a personal sacrifice to be away from my family and school for three weeks. In return, I hoped to have a significant impact on the School and the teachers. In short, I was hoping to solve all of their problems and help them to become a great school. A very naïve goal and one that would very quickly be squashed.

I recently attended the annual Anglican Schools Australia (ASA) conference in Canberra and was fortunate to spend time with Radford College’s School Chaplain, The Reverend Richard Browning, and Director of Service Learning, Mr George Hultker. Their concept of Service Learning helped me unpack my experience in Rwanda and identify many of the mistakes I made in preparing for this trip. I was what they would refer to as a ‘do gooder’. I was going to help them imagine what it is that they need and provide ‘a quick fix’ to the poverty of Rwanda through any piece of science equipment. It was also our support was much more important and valuable than any piece of science equipment. It was also our contact with the students, the informal discussions in the yard or trying to teach them Aussie Rules football that they will remember not the telescope or the skeleton.

I soon realised that what they wanted from us was professional relationships, respect, someone to listen to their needs and provide empathy and someone to help them imagine what it is that they need and what they can achieve without our help. The Service Learning program at Radford describes an authentic relationship developed around trust, respect, listening and imagining. One of their rules of engagement is: Never to, not for, but with people. This is what I needed to understand before our departure and this is what became clear to me when we were with the Rwandan people and after our return. Our relationship with the teachers of Gahini is important to us all individually and also to our schools. With each visit, we learn more about each other and strengthen our relationship. We listen, we respect and we imagine.

I learnt a lot about myself during this journey. I developed friendships and professional relationships with people in Rwanda that will last for a long time. I value the professional relationships I developed with my travelling companions and believe that through our discussions I experienced some of the most effective professional growth of my career. I was thankful for the presence of The Reverend Kate Peeken from Warragul, who guided us through the spiritual nuances of the Gahini Cathedral and the absolute emotion and passion that exudes from their worship. We sang and danced with the Rays of Hope Choir and were overwhelmed by the energy and passion of their normal Sunday services.

As a group we are forever grateful to our Deputy Principal, Jan Henry, who organised, led and guided us through the experience of Rwanda 2015. Her deep understanding of human nature and her patience when helping us unpack our experiences helped to make this such a valuable experience.
For many years I have been planning to spend time in Africa, volunteering in a capacity that would be determined by the locals. I have always presumed that this would be after my husband and I retire and our children have left home. So the pull of Africa is constantly there for me. When the opportunity arose for me to go to Rwanda to ‘teach the teachers’, it was both an exciting prospect and a daunting one. The trip would give me the opportunity to see if the ideals I imagined were actually realistic or if they were simply ‘pie in the sky’. The most difficult thing about it was leaving my children for almost three weeks, when previous to this I had only ever been away from them for three days!

When we arrived in Africa, the first country we went to was South Africa. I have never seen people living in poverty before, and it was heart-wrenching to see so many people living in such difficult and seemingly hopeless situations. And having the feeling that I have read about many times; how can one person help so many needy people? This was contrasted by the experience of going on safari in Pilanesberg National Park, where we saw the beauty of God’s creation everywhere we looked. To be on safari in Africa, watching an African sunset was certainly a dream come true. I hope to repeat that dream many more times during my life.

On arrival in Rwanda we were greeted by our very enthusiastic hosts, Luke and Mannassah. Then we were whisked through the seemingly chaotic traffic to the town of Gahini. There were cars, bicycles and pedestrians on and beside the road for our next hour and a half of travel, and I was sure that either we or someone else on the road would be killed! However, unlike me, the Rwandans are used to this method of travel, and they managed it quite nicely. So we arrived safely at our guest house in Gahini, where we were looked after very well.

The next day was Sunday, and in the morning we went to Church. Before the service itself begins, they have a ‘warm-up’ session for about half an hour, when one of the three church choirs sing. They were in full voice as we entered, and the great joy of the singers brought me to tears. It was such heartfelt worship in honour of the One who has brought them great hope and comfort in their time of trial. I felt very privileged to be a part of it.

The idea of ‘student-centred’ education is a focus
for the Rwandan government, but I was nervous about going to the secondary school in Gahini and imposing our ‘western’ ideas of education on the teachers. However, the teachers were very receptive and gracious, and openly welcomed us into their classes. The knowledge they have of the subjects they teach is outstanding, and it was very impressive to watch them teach it in English, which is their second or third language. They teach students from 7.00am until 4.00pm, which makes for a very tiring day having to think in another language. We were able to take some of their classes in order to demonstrate different methods of teaching, and then prepared lessons with the teachers for them to try various techniques. It was a very useful professional learning experience for myself, as I was forced to think about the basics of teaching, without using ICT or any other fancy equipment that we take for granted in Australian schools. The time I spent with my own Australian work colleagues as we planned lessons together was invaluable. I am very grateful to have had this opportunity and feel I am a better teacher because of it.

My overwhelming feeling about the country of Rwanda is one of hope and growth. As a nation they are fully mindful of their dark history, but have made a conscious decision to move forward in a positive way. Their economy is booming and, although there are still obvious signs of poverty, there are indications of growth everywhere you look. It has been a very rewarding experience for me to have had the opportunity to visit this ‘Land of one thousand hills and one million smiles’. I can’t wait to return to this inspirational country.

Leanne Caithness, Science Teacher

I was very fortunate to travel to Rwanda during the mid-year school holidays. This trip was well organised thanks to our expert team. Most importantly we were able to learn about Rwanda’s culture, customs and history prior to the trip. While I was thrilled to learn about the differences, I was also nervous about mentoring the teachers in Gahini. I was not sure how effectively I would be able to communicate with them as like me, the teachers were non-English native speakers. I was also worried about my limited vocabulary in different subject areas.

Interestingly the mentoring part was one of the highlights of the trip. All staff members warmly welcomed us with their beautiful smiles. We were able to communicate effectively and have productive sessions with mutual respect, which reassured me that language is just a tool. Everyone was very dedicated and passionate about their profession. I was very lucky to have the opportunity to get to know them and to spend time with them.

I also learned a lot from my own team. We teach different subjects, we have different experiences and backgrounds, and I guess that unique mix made our discussions exciting. It was probably the best professional development I have ever had.

Spending time with students was another highlight. They were very friendly, talented and hardworking. I still cannot forget their beautiful smiles when they understood the class content. It was amazing to see how appreciative they are about getting an education. This caused me to reflect on my teaching.

Rwanda does not just have beautiful nature. This country has genuine, beautiful people who have a lot of hope for their country’s future. I hope to continue to be part of their community and develop our friendship.

Eri Shinagawa, Japanese Teacher

I was definitely nervous about travelling to Rwanda. The information sessions we attended prior to our departure were not the comforting experiences I had anticipated. Instead of giving me a sense that knowledge is power, I was left with more to worry about. I had travelled to Egypt when I was in my early twenties and been fascinated by the pyramids and the country’s ancient history - a love I’d had since childhood - but other than that, I’d never been to Africa. As the trip drew closer I constantly questioned why I was going and whether it was going to reignite dreams of working for an NGO internationally.

I once read that the only point of charity is to provide the means for the recipients to become independent of it and in many ways this dictum reminded me of the parable of giving someone a fish and teaching them how to fish. The only concept that was very clear in my mind before I left, the aim that I clung to despite my fears and trepidations, was that I had to leave Rwanda knowing that I had left behind some idea, technique, conversation or methodology that would be used after my departure and would in time become the idea of the recipient to pass on as they desired. It wasn’t so much that I wanted to leave a mark or change the people or their country, but I wanted to give them something they could own and that would be of use during my time in Gahini.

What I learnt was that it is incredibly important to determine that your definition of usefulness aligns with that of the people you believe you are assisting. I found that whilst the teachers were incredibly interested in learning about student centred learning they wanted acknowledgement that their teaching conditions were challenging just as Australian teachers also demand recognition when their conditions are not equal to those of other schools.

The strongest sense of connection I felt to the Rwandan people was when there was a shared sense of communion and that is the greatest gift with which I have returned; certainty that it is our similarities rather than our differences that must be the focus of our human endeavour. These are the threads that connect us across gender, race, religion, economics and education. The shared laughter at the antics of a student seeking attention, the knowing nod at another who is avoiding eye contact so they don’t have to answer a question and the united sigh from both teachers and students when the final bell rings. These are the memories I have taken home with me and yet they have also been left behind to be passed on amongst the Gahini community and I cannot be happier.

As a young teacher, I have the whole world in front of me to explore. My first thought of travelling to Rwanda was pure excitement. Having travelled a bit in the last few years, Africa was simply the ‘icing on the cake’. So there I was, beginning a new adventure, with a camera ready to snapshot every moment. But travelling to Africa is not quite the same as travelling anywhere else.

There is a certain peacefulness amongst the people of Rwanda. They have an incredible ability to forgive one another, no matter how awful the issue may have been. The history of Rwanda is in their past, they don’t dwell on what has been lost, but simply use it to fuel their future. They use education to their full advantage and take hold of every opportunity that may come their way. The people are just students, the students are just students. They giggle over boys they like and get lost in discussions over football. The people of Rwanda have truly enriched my life and I am so thankful for that.

Alexandra Molinari, Student Teacher and Learning Assistant

Jan Henry shows a photograph to three captivated Rwandan children.

As a Japanese teacher, I had always known that Rwanda was in conflict, but I didn’t know what the future would bring. I was however very grateful to have had the opportunity to visit this ‘land of a thousand hills’ and to spend time with the teachers. The knowledge they have of the subjects they teach is outstanding, and it was very impressive to watch them teach it in English, which is their second or third language. They teach students from 7.00am until 4.00pm, which makes for a very tiring day having to think in another language. We were able to take some of their classes in order to demonstrate different methods of teaching, and then prepared lessons with the teachers for them to try various techniques. It was a very useful professional learning experience for myself, as I was forced to think about the basics of teaching, without using ICT or any other fancy equipment that we take for granted in Australian schools. The time I spent with my own Australian work colleagues as we planned lessons together was invaluable. I am very grateful to have had this opportunity and feel I am a better teacher because of it.

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Alexandra Molinari, Student Teacher and Learning Assistant
The Laos Project: A story of compassion and generous community spirit

Wesley Chambers, Charity Coordinator at Woodcroft College

In 2010, after three highly successful years as South Australia’s top fundraising school for the 40-Hour Famine, Woodcroft College was invited to partner with World Vision for an initial period of three years to raise funds for a food and water security project in the district of Phoukoun, a mountainous region in the province of Luang Prabang, in Laos. And so the College’s Laos Project was born. A competition was held amongst the students to design a logo to symbolise the project. The winning logo, which is featured above, has represented the project since its inception.

The project is now in its sixth year and the college community has raised over $65,000 for the people of Laos. In addition, during the last decade Woodcroft College has raised more than $140,000 for World Vision’s 40-Hour Famine appeal.

Fundraising Activities

The Laos Project is managed by a group of students, who are led by selected student charity ambassadors. They are supported by staff. Over the years funds have been raised through a variety of events including sausage sizzles (often associated with staff vs student sports events), movie nights, roller-skating nights, student talent competitions, bake sales and casual days. Every year tutor (home) groups are asked to set a fundraising goal and to plan activities to achieve that goal. One tutor group set up a Krispy Kreme doughnut sales promotion. Individuals also organise events. One student organised a Quiz Night for the college community and raised over $2,000 towards the Project for her MVP personal project. A pleasing aspect of the project is the unifying effect it has had on the College, with students and staff from all sub-schools working side-by-side for a common goal.

Tutor groups also raise funds through whole-school activities that run throughout the year. An example was a recycling drive where the students were encouraged to bring in used drink containers which are worth 10 cents each in South Australia. The College was informed early in the project that the average wage for a farm labourer in Laos is 10 cents per hour so every disposable drink container would cover the cost of an hour’s labour. The containers were collected in specially marked bins situated around the College and by visits to home rooms. Student volunteers, many of whom were involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme, sorted the containers. Staff ferried the containers to the local recycling centre, which was pleased to support the project. We estimate that recycling alone has contributed more than $18,000 to project funds. Most importantly, students embraced the idea that ‘our rubbish is their food and water’.

Another activity is the regular collection of small change. This quickly adds up when 25 students in a class commit to giving 20 cents a week over the school year. This year one Year 8 class raised over $150 in small change in first semester.

More than Fundraising

The Laos Project is not just about raising funds for people in need.

Our involvement in the project has raised awareness of the needs of others on a global level and resulted in a deeper appreciation of what we take for granted in our part of the world. Promotion of the project regularly reminds students of the needs of others as well as how significant their fundraising efforts are in changing lives. This has been assisted by regular visits from World Vision staff including a couple of visits by Tim Costello, the organisation’s CEO. These visits have encouraged and inspired the students to continue this work.

Recycling used drink containers has raised awareness of issues related to the environment and reinforced the need to be caring local and global citizens.

The project has also been a means of supporting the College’s Student Community Service programme. Students are required to complete a set number of community service hours each semester. Some have combined this with their fundraising efforts for Laos by accepting donations for their community service and donating these funds to the project.

Most importantly the project has had a strong unifying effect on the school community with all sectors assisting with fundraising. College leaders have been very supportive and have encouraged the whole community to be involved. Tutor teachers have encouraged their classes to be involved and have been creative in finding ways to raise funds. One teacher collected recyclable containers from a popular local Indian Restaurant and donated the funds to the project. A group of woodwork teachers salvaged some timbers from a demolition site next to the College and used them to make cutting boards which were then sold raising more than $1,100 for the project.

Grounds and support staff have assisted with the organisation and promotion of events and administrative matters.

Significant too has been the involvement of the Junior School staff and students (Reception to Year 5), who are situated at a separate location from the Middle and Senior Schools. They have led the fundraising in a number of areas, notably recycling. In addition, they have held sausage sizzles at the end of each term. Another highlight is our annual Laos Week, which focuses on issues of global poverty and includes a number of fundraising activities. One of these is a ‘Woodcroft’s got Talent’ contest where prizes are available, but the tradition is that the winners donate their prizes to the project.

Study Tours to Laos

To date the College has organised two study trips to the Province of Luang Prabang for staff and students to see the outcome of their fundraising.

In 2012 two staff and eight students were escorted by World Vision staff on a study tour of the area where our funds were being put to good use. They were able to see how changes in agricultural practices, under the guidance of World Vision staff, have resulted in significant benefits to the villagers. They visited pineapple and ginger plantations and heard from the farmers first-hand how their lives have improved. Water projects, rice banks, immunisation programs and village micro credit funds were a part of each village’s story.

Shortly before the students left Australia on their study tour, the Middle and Senior Schools donated a further $1,000 to be spent on school supplies in Laos. The students were able to purchase and distribute sports equipment, art supplies, stationery and books to over 1,000 students in eight schools in the area. Each of the students on the tour had a sponsor child with World Vision and one of the highlights was to meet and spend time with their sponsored child. It was a very moving...
experience. The tour group returned deeply affected by their experiences and with some wonderful stories, photos and videos to share. They inspired the College to continue the good work.

In 2014 two teachers and 14 students embarked on a cultural tour of Laos and Vietnam. Prior to their departure the students collected $800 in extra funds from their peers which they used to purchase supplies for an orphanage school on the outskirts of Luang Prabang. 130 students received books and stationery and over 400 hundred picture books were donated to the orphanage’s library. Each evening our students had the opportunity to teach English to local teenagers at Big Brother Mouse, a local bookshop that aims to help lift literacy levels in Laos. This experience had quite an impact on the group and for many was the highlight of their trip. By our second night, the shop was overflowing as many young people had heard that a school group was in town.

Benefits of Service

There is no doubt that Woodcroft College has made a valuable contribution to the people of Laos. Having said that, the College has also benefitted from this work. According to the Woodcroft College Mission Statement, the school aims ‘to provide an excellent all round education in a Christian environment’. The Laos Project has played an important role in the education of our students developing their understanding of what it means to be a responsible global citizen. It also helps them appreciate what they have, and has provided a meaningful context for them to participate in the work of loving service that we are called to by Christ.

TOP LEFT: Students from Woodcroft College visit a school in Luang Prabang with gifts from the College.
BOTTOM LEFT: Woodcroft College students visit a pineapple plantation to see how the funds the school has raised are being put to work.
TOP RIGHT: Woodcroft College students spending time with their sponsor children.
BOTTOM RIGHT: Woodcroft College students visit a ginger farm.

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CONTENTS PAGE
Privileged to Help

Maggie Dunnill
Maggie Dunnill, Head of Junior School at Peter Carnley Anglican Community School, in Wellard, Western Australia, writes about the Junior School’s annual lapathon that has raised funds to support educational projects in the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Bali.

For the last six years the Junior School at Peter Carnley Anglican Community School (PCACS) has celebrated its Founders’ Day by holding a fundraising lapathon - a wonderful afternoon which sees students in Kindergarten to Year 6 running, skipping and hopping around the school oval alongside their parents, friends, grandparents and a pusher or two. It has become a much-looked-forward-to event. For the first two years the proceedswere sent to Anglicare in support of its ministry to the needy in Perth’s local community. Staff and students then began to look further afield for projects to support.

Project in the Philippines

In 2012 the Junior School supported a project in the Philippines sponsored by the Anglican Board of Mission. Two grain threshing machines were purchased with the proceeds, together with materials to construct two barns and four very large water-tanks. Funds were also set aside for the provision of school resources. The additional income the local families have derived from these improvements has enabled them to send their children to school. The Junior School is very proud that it has helped to make a positive difference to some Filipinos’ lives.

Galle Pre-School

In 2013 the Junior School supported another project - a small pre-school in Galle, Sri Lanka. When its community was devastated by the tsunami in 2004, the local people asked for help to establish kindergartens - places that would provide activities to help young children recover from their traumatic experiences. The Junior School raised $13,500 for the Galle Pre-School, which was used to purchase safe outdoor play equipment, music resources, books, writing materials and other classroom essentials.

Bintang Timur School

In 2014 a building project in Bali caught our eye. Bintang Timur Pre-School in Nusa Dua was looking for sponsorship to build a second storey on top of its current building to provide facilities for students to stay at the school until Year 6. This small school is not in the affluent part of the Nusa Dua Peninsular where many Australians take their holidays. Rather it is in a very poor district to the west, where education of any sort is not guaranteed.

The school began as a Pre-School a few years ago in two small rooms with an inner courtyard for outdoor play. When it rained the roof leaked, and the play equipment was rusty and needed repairs. But parents, desperate for their children to receive even the most basic education, continued to add their children’s names to the waiting lists. The teachers are Christians from the local Balinese community; most times they’re paid, but sometimes not! They are utterly dedicated, and currently work with Pre-Kindergarten to Year 2 children from a variety of religious backgrounds - 80% Hindu and 20% Christian and Moslem. Meagre financial sponsorship over the years has managed to keep the dreams of this school community alive as little support has been forthcoming from the Indonesian Government.

When the school lease expired a couple of years ago, sufficient funds were raised by the local Christian Church and other friends to cover the cost of building three ground floor classrooms and an office on land around the corner from the old school. Teachers and students have now moved into their new premises with a larger, but still small, play area. However, even with three new and larger classrooms the school is not big enough for the number of families wanting to enrol their children, and for students to stay on until they reach Year 6. Designs were soon underway for the construction of an upper storey, but financing such a project was, as always, a major hurdle to be overcome.

PCACS Juniors were determined to assist in whatever way possible. The results of our lapathon fundraising appeals in 2014 and 2015 have enabled construction work on this second storey to go ahead. The school will be completed towards the end of this year, and, hopefully, there will be sufficient funds to cover the cost of classroom furniture.

Several of our families have visited Bintang Timur School. They have witnessed at first-hand the stark difference in resources at PCACS and at Bintang Timur but more importantly they have come away touched by the happiness and enthusiasm of the teachers and students at the school.

A Rewarding Project

A delightful surprise came my way recently. A woman from our local neighbourhood, who had heard about the Junior School’s Balinese project, visited the school and provided some much needed IT equipment – so generous. It is always a life changing experience for a school community - students, parents and teachers - to be a part of such a rewarding project, but it fills me with even greater joy to know that others beyond our school gates want to join with us in our mission.

Over the last few years the PCACS Junior School has raised over $60,000 for educational projects. We know that we can make a difference to the lives of others, and especially to the quality of their education.
The Reverend Peter Waterhouse, Chaplain at Hume Anglican Grammar in Melbourne’s north-west, writes about two community events that all of the school’s Year 9 students are involved in each year as part of their Religious and Values Education (RAVE) course. The first is a ‘world religions tour’ to four different local non-Christian faith communities: a Hindu Murugan temple, a Cyprian Turkish mosque, a Tibetan Buddhist temple and a Sikh Gurdwara. For many students this is the first time they have mentally and physically engaged with other religious cultures which represent much of the growth fringe of north-west Melbourne and indeed a significant proportion of Hume Anglican Grammar’s student body. Whilst confronting for some, it is a helpful, stimulating and sensory exercise for the students to wrestle with the social questions of truth and tolerance, in light of the enduring teaching of Christ as being the way, the truth and the life.

In Term 4, as a tangible way of engaging and becoming familiar with the wider Anglican Church body, our students participate in a community service day with Anglicare, the local charitable arm of the Diocese. Last year students assisted with two tasks: packing Christmas hampers for delivery to needy families and gift-wrapping cook books, which would later be given as gifts at the annual Anglicare fundraising gala dinner. Once this service was complete, the students travelled to St Paul’s Anglican Cathedral in the heart of the city, to take part in a midday Eucharist service. It is vitally important for students to recognise their place in the Anglican Church and be willing to assist in acts of service, which reflect Jesus’ endearing command to ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’.
Stepping Up and Out for the Homeless in Adelaide

Kerry Ramsay

Kerry Ramsay, Year 7 Teacher and Student Representative Council Key Teacher at St Peter’s Woodlands Grammar School (SPW) have been asking the SRC’s role is to raise money and, of equal importance, to raise awareness amongst our school community of our chosen charity for the year. The Hutt Street Centre in Adelaide’s city centre is a place of hope and opportunity, helping people facing homelessness to rebuild their lives, without judgement. Students chose this organisation as the school’s charity for 2015. A local charity was selected to allow students to really understand and see at first hand the impact of their work. As one of the school’s values, service is at the heart of daily life and what we do at SPW. Authentic and purposeful service, supporting the work of the Hutt Street Centre, is the vision of the SRC; it is something they can advocate for and be leaders in.

Choosing our Charity

What does it mean to be homeless? Is it an individual’s fault? How can we help? How can we make a real difference?

These are the kinds of questions that the members of the Student Representative Council (SRC) at St Peter’s Woodlands Grammar School (SPW) have been asking. The SRC’s role is to raise money and, of equal importance, to raise awareness amongst our school community of our chosen charity for the year. The Hutt Street Centre in Adelaide’s city centre is a place of hope and opportunity, helping people facing homelessness to rebuild their lives, without judgement. Students chose this organisation as the school’s charity for 2015. A local charity was selected to allow students to really understand and see at first hand the impact of their work. As one of the school’s values, service is at the heart of daily life and what we do at SPW. Authentic and purposeful service, supporting the work of the Hutt Street Centre, is the vision of the SRC; it is something they can advocate for and be leaders in.

Stepping up to support those facing homelessness was an activity in which the SRC wanted to participate. They did not however, just want SRC members to take part. Instead they wanted it to be a mass community event. They wanted the SPW community to stand together and show their support for a cause important to the children. It was hoped that ‘Walk a Mile in My Boots’ would give everyone a better insight into what people who are vulnerable and experiencing homelessness face each cold winter morning – walking the streets to get breakfast, a cup of tea and a hot shower – by experiencing that life for one hour, walking one mile.

Planning a Unique Event

Planning involved the youngest Reception aged children to the oldest Year 7 students. Working collaboratively, discussion focused on five key questions: Who would walk? Where would we walk? How would we walk? How would we raise awareness? How would we ensure this was an ‘awesome’ fundraising opportunity? With many ideas shared, the SRC made final decisions and began putting actions into place.

In order to make our ‘Walk a Mile in My Boots’ event fun-filled and unique, the decision was made to ask everyone to walk in crazy coloured socks. Advertising, as well as some very able sock modelling in our assemblies, resulted in 400 pairs of socks being ordered – ranging from pink to orange and red to gold, blue hoops and pink stripes to yellow and green hoops. All sizes and all colours were ordered by students, staff and parents, eager to stand out from the crowd and show their support for the event.

The younger members of the SRC worked hard to advertise the event through washing lines adorned with colourfully decorated socks strung around the school.

Older members of the SRC team made banners for the school’s 27 classes to carry during the event.

People who are homeless have had jobs, homes and families.

Ever wondered what might have happened? We all have a story to tell.

Was it hard getting out of bed this morning? Imagine sleeping out in the cold all night. Now that’s hard!

Key messages about homelessness made for thought-provoking reading and reflection amongst the whole school community both before and during the event.

The Mile Walk

Friday 7 August, the day of the walk, dawned. Grey skies and cool temperatures went unnoticed as child after child, staff member after staff member walked through the school gates proudly sporting a pair of brightly coloured socks. Socks and sneakers, socks and boots, socks and school shoes and even the odd pair of socks and high heels! What an incredible sight. Brightness however, was not restricted just to our feet. Instead, brightness shone from faces everywhere you looked. Awareness that this was the day that SPW stepped up to make a difference was apparent wherever you looked and with whomever you spoke.

Gathering together, the entire SPW school community, led by the SRC team, left the school grounds for the walk around the streets of Glenelg. Younger and older children walked side by side and hand in hand; children, staff and parents walked united. Smiles abounded, laughter rang out and the happiness was contagious.

Children proudly carried banners and spoke with passers-by about the work of the SRC and the work of the Hutt Street Centre. Members of the public stopped to take notice, congratulated the children and, on several occasions, cheered whilst digging deep into their pockets.

SPW’s ‘Walk a Mile in My Boots’ created a huge buzz in our community. The event also had a real impact on us. Not only did children, staff and parents ‘walk the walk’ but they also ‘talked the talk’ with donations to the SRC’s cause currently totalling an incredible $7733. This money will directly benefit those facing homelessness in Adelaide. We are all very proud of our achievement, an achievement of which the SRC and SPW community can feel justifiably proud.
Combining fun with service was a huge part of the event. Developing an increased awareness and understanding of those facing homelessness however, was an aim of the SRC which was well and truly achieved. Through the work of the SRC, children at SPW understand that not everyone is as fortunate as they are; they know that homelessness is not a choice and can happen so easily to anyone. Importantly, children understand they can make a difference to the lives of others. Children aged 6 and 7 years independently chose to donate their birthday money. Sam, for example, brought a lump to many people’s throats by writing a letter saying that, “homeless people need this $10 more than I do”.

‘Walk a Mile in My Boots’ demonstrates true and authentic service in action. It shows an example of children taking the lead in stepping up to make a difference, agreeing that no person who is homeless should feel like they are walking alone.

St Peter’s Woodlands recognises the role appropriate leadership plays in raising the awareness of and service to others. Our school has recently introduced two new Key Teacher roles; one responsible for working alongside Reception to Year 3 children, the other working with Year 4 to Year 7 students. Kerry Ramsay and Barbara Saunderson have been instrumental in bringing consideration of others to the forefront. Our school community is a much richer place because of our staff and student’s passionate work.

Amanda Kelly, Head of Primary

At Woods, we believe that education is of the utmost importance – not just for the children of today but for our world tomorrow.

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We’re for flexible learning.
Since the beginning of Term 3, Year 5 and 6 students at Western Australia’s St James’ Anglican School, together with their parents, grandparents and numerous volunteers, have been busy making dolls for children in South Africa as part of the Uthando Project Inc. Centred in Perth, Western Australia, the project is a ‘worldwide, grassroots movement of people who make dolls for expressive play which suit the culture of the children of Kwazulu Natal’. The dolls are all hand-made.

Uthando Doll Project

The Uthando Doll Project is the brainchild of Dr Julie Stone, an Australian infant, child and family psychiatrist. She visited South Africa in March 2004 where she was confronted by the harsh reality of the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic which had brought trauma, grief, bewilderment and loss. Dr Stone was especially moved by the plight of the children. She realised that AIDS had affected the lives of all children, not just those who had been orphaned, because ‘the parental, family and cultural support around them had been fragmented or was missing’. Determined to make a difference to the children’s lives, Julie Stone returned to Perth and inspired people to make dolls for the children to play with. The idea had come from a conversation she had had with a young colleague when she was working with children in Hlabisa in Kwazulu. The colleague, who was a clinical psychologist had commented: ‘After I’ve done as assessment or done any therapy with them they want to take the dolls home. Most of them have never had a doll of their own.’

Since 2004 more than 35,000 dolls have been sent from Australia to Kwazulu Natal.

Setting the Scene

The Uthando Project was introduced to St James’ students at the start of Term 3 by Lynne Togolini, who coordinates the collection and then delivery of the dolls to Africa from her home in Lesmurdie. She showed the 32 students what life was like for children of a similar age growing up in Kwazulu Natal in Africa. For our students, who predominantly come from very stable homes with ‘all the mod cons’, this was a real eye-opener. They were fascinated by the different culture and had many questions for Lynne.

The Importance of Play

Having set the scene, the students were then introduced to the idea of making dolls for these African students. Lynne discussed why dolls were chosen and how they benefited people in Africa. The dolls are used as an invitation to play, giving happiness to the children and their carers. The idea is that to own and play with a doll encourages a child’s development in all spheres; physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual. The dolls are distributed to the children through a training partner – Dlalanathi - which is a Zulu word meaning ‘play with us’.

Creating our Dolls

Lynne concluded the introductory session with a workshop for students, parents, grandparents and other volunteers on how to create their own dolls. From the outset we had decided to open up the project to the whole school community. We saw it as a compelling cause and a tremendous opportunity for bringing our new community together. An added bonus was many of our volunteers arrived with sewing and embroidery skills! There was much that they could teach the students.

We learnt about the importance of choosing the correct fabric to make our dolls. Polar fleece, knitted fabric or felt are considered the best options. We also learnt that it is important to think about the skin colour of our dolls so that the African children can relate to the dolls we make for them. This caused us to think about the sort of hair our dolls should have. We agreed that flowing golden locks would look out of place. We also needed to be taught how to thread the hair through old socks to make a simple but tough wig, as each doll would need to stand up to the rigours of a child’s play. Finally, we were required to become fashion designers as we had to design and then make clothing that would be suitable for our dolls.

At the end of the workshop an incredibly motivated group of students and volunteers set about planning how they would create their dolls. Conversations were dominated by questions about the doll-making process. What would the dolls look like? What clothes would the dolls need? What resources would they need to make their dolls? Enthusiasm and positivity for the project have continued throughout the term. Most excitedly the dolls are now starting to take shape. Our aim is to ship our first instalment of dolls to Kwazulu Natal before the end of the year.
Service Above Self

Dr Emma Burgess, Chaplain Scott Sargent and Mr David Witcomb

‘Only a life lived in the service to others is worth living.’ A Einstein.

At Collegiate we believe a rich and unique education for girls and young women fosters a deep, purposeful contribution to community, through active global citizenship. We hope to instil within our students a lifelong commitment to serving others. Indeed, we seek to develop judicious and empowered young women who are well prepared to make sustainable and active contributions to society.

To support this aim, we provide meaningful, purposeful and life-wide learning experiences that will develop a strong sense of service. We understand that students who participate in high quality service learning programmes become more responsible, caring, compassionate and self-aware.

Our teaching and learning programmes, co-curricular offerings, service learning and leadership opportunities are therefore, carefully designed. We acknowledge that learning is optimal when students are actively involved. It is sequential and has a deep sense of purpose. Opportunities to learn and serve are fully integrated into school life. Students are exposed to concepts of compassion, service, justice, advocacy and ethical decision making through core subjects of Faith and Life and Religion and Philosophy from K-10.

We are committed to providing service learning experiences that also allow students to experience the world beyond the classroom. Students are encouraged to be active, global citizens, who respond to the needs of others. We recognise the importance of imbuing our students with an understanding and appreciation for those less fortunate.

Service Learning

Service learning at Collegiate is about engaging girls in meaningful and rewarding relationship-building with a number of local, inter-state and overseas communities. These opportunities seek to offer a balance of formal instruction with opportunities to serve in the community in order to provide a pragmatic, progressive learning experience. Through real life lessons students reflect on their service experiences in order to grow in character, problem-solving skills, and a better understanding of civic responsibility. Service learning gives our girls the ability to directly apply what they are learning in a way that makes a positive and significant difference to others.

9 ASPIRE Programme

In our 9 ASPIRE Programme, a pivotal year for Year 9 girls in the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood, we programme a range of diverse learning opportunities beyond the classroom that provide a practical and experiential approach to learning.

Our offerings include a local programme at Bruny Island, where we provide an opportunity for girls to be immersed in an Indigenous rural community located at Murrayfield Station. They learn about Aboriginal culture on Bruny Island and continue to build an on-going relationship with students and staff at Bruny Island District School.

An overseas programme in Laos provides the girls with the opportunity to be immersed in the culture, history and traditions of Laos. The girls visit one of the poorest Southeast Asian countries, and have the opportunity to support the work of a local community development organisation through an education project. Building relationships with a school community and supporting an Education Academy, as well as visiting development projects in rural Laos, are the key focus of the programme. The girls are encouraged to immerse themselves in the local community and learn from young people their own age about life in a diverse culture.

Another global programme is the Solomon Islands Trip. In September, a number of Year 9 girls will travel with the School Chaplain and two Collegiate teachers to the Solomon Islands for two weeks of service and cultural immersion. The girls’ days will be spent teaching numeracy and literacy to small groups of students in our two partner schools. The schools are Norman Palmer, a Kindergarten to Year 10 co-educational Anglican school in Honiara and the Buma Village Kinder to Prep School in a remote village on the island of Malaita.

The girls will also visit the headquarters of the Sisters of the Church, the same order of Anglican nuns that founded and for many years ran Collegiate, as well as the Christian Care Centre, the only domestic violence refuge in the Solomon Islands, which is run by the Sisters in cooperation with two other Orders of nuns, Catholic and Anglican. In addition to several fundraising activities, the students will each bring and give 10 kilograms of teaching and learning resources to the schools.

The Year 9 girls are mentored by our expert teachers and teach activities in our Junior School at Collegiate before travelling to the Solomon Islands. The opportunity to teach others, combined with exposure to a less developed country and living in a village community for four days, ensures that students return more mature, capable, and confident.

There are many more learning experiences within the 9 ASPIRE programme. Indeed, this innovative 9 ASPIRE programme encourages and assists our Year 9 girls to develop the skills to grow in independence, maturity, self-belief and to become more resilient and responsible global citizens.

Beyond Year 9, Collegiate is mindful of the need for students to feel connected to the model of service and develop a strong sense of ownership and commitment to drive philanthropic endeavour. As a consequence, many of our partner organisations and causes for support are chosen by the girls. Many of our fundraising initiatives, acts of service and learning experiences are likewise student led. The Champassak Project

The students’ humanitarian charity focus for 2015 is on young women in Laos. The Collegiate girls chose an international approach, based on a wish for a
personalised relationship with their cause. Our Head Prefect, Jordan Eastway, explained that they chose to embody the notion, ‘thinking globally; acting locally’.

The girls have worked collaboratively with TEAR Australia on a project designed specifically for St Michael’s Collegiate School with the themes of health, education and young women: “Transform Together: The Champassak Project”. The project is aimed to support school attendance, fund skilled learning workshops, provide small business loans, and reduce poverty, exploitation and the transmission of disease in Champassak through village committee health and HIV prevention education sessions.

Throughout the year, the Year 12 Prefects and students have engaged in various volunteering projects and fundraising experiences. Jordan Eastway said a favourite amongst the students occurred on Valentine’s Day, where Year 12 students face painted red hearts on girls’ faces, held a large and delicious bake sale, sent ‘love notes’ of gratitude to Collegiate students, and spent an entire lunch time dancing in the courtyard to well-known love songs. Other experiences have included food stalls, a Mother’s Day Breakfast and an upcoming Fashion Parade, The Winter Wonderland.

This sense of purpose and contribution beyond the self, in turn, has several benefits for our students. The available research on purpose and service learning projects suggests a host of advantages for young women including an increased ability to cope with stress, strong commitment to academic work, improved academic achievement, and a stronger sense of work value and community involvement (Cordiano, 2013).

Furthermore, these purpose filled acts in community invite our students to make a sustainable impact on the world. Across the school, our students are aware that their contributions will support the lives of others - these endeavours have raised awareness about how to make a difference in the local, national and global community. Through these experiences, the girls are learning that it is possible to help make a difference in the lives of others.

References
Kambala Students Commit to Sustainable Projects

Shona Goggin

Shona Goggin, World Challenge Coordinator at Sydney’s Kambala, writes about the school’s World Challenge program for Year 10 students that has been operating for almost a decade. Each student-led expedition to a rural community in the developing world involves a trek and a sustainable project. To date students have helped communities in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Peru, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Zambia and Botswana.

For the last nine years Kambala has had 165 girls participate in an annual World Challenge Expedition: a 28-day, student-led expedition to rural communities in the developing world. Each year teams of Year 10 girls have embarked on what has become a four-week adventure of a lifetime. Each expedition is divided into four phases: acclimatisation, trek, project and rest and relaxation. It is safe to say that all the destinations and itineraries our girls have been presented with have been jam-packed with physical and emotional challenges and plenty of eye-opening cultural exchanges, enabling each girl to experience a journey of self-discovery during the four weeks they spend in a country. To date our girls have travelled to and helped rural communities in countries such as Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Peru, Thailand; Cambodia, Laos; Vietnam, Zambia and Botswana. Expeditions to Borneo and Sri Lanka are programmed for 2016.

Planning and Organisation

In the 18 months leading up to an expedition, the students plan and coordinate the logistics of the trip themselves whilst raising funds for the community projects they will undertake. The girls are encouraged to take on casual jobs to help fund their trip costs, giving them much more self-satisfaction and ownership of the whole experience.

During the expedition not only do the girls have to manage their own budget, organise accommodation, food and transport, but they also have to learn how to work as a team, take on various leadership roles and communicate with locals who don’t always speak their language. The girls are definitely taken outside their comfort zones at numerous times throughout the expedition.

Making a Meaningful Contribution

The part of an expedition that has had the deepest impact on our students has definitely been the project phase. This is where the girls spend five to seven days working alongside a local community with the development of sustainable projects. We want our students to immerse themselves in the experience of living as part of a community and undertaking hard physical work to benefit the locals. A World Challenge expedition is not just about handing money over, it is much more than that.

Each destination we have visited has offered an opportunity for our students to contribute meaningfully to a local area through valuable community-based or conservation work. Typical manual labour tasks that our girls have been involved in have included renovating school facilities; building mud houses; renovating toilet blocks, furniture and other buildings; painting murals; making vegetable gardens; constructing fences; constructing workshop floors; digging trenches for drainage; and clearing vegetation. In situations where our girls have lacked the requisite trade skills, they have used the funds they raised prior to departure to support communities with endevours such as building health centres and houses for teachers and vulnerable members of a community as well as for installing electricity and fans, sky lights, solar panels and hot water systems.

Brooke Wanford, who travelled to Costa Rica and Nicaragua in 2013 said: “It made us feel like we really had accomplished a lot as a team. It was such a great feeling to be able to help people and leave knowing that we had made a real difference to their lives no matter how big or small.”

In addition to the hard physical work the girls undertake, they are also involved in a number of soft-skill initiatives like teaching, sports, reading programs and playing games with children from the communities. Whether it is cooking local cuisine with women from a community, participating in cultural ceremonies or singing and dancing around the campfire, being immersed in the daily life and traditions of a community offers an unrivalled cultural experience for our girls.

A Life-Changing Experience

The World Challenge program Kambala offers gives girls opportunities to achieve personal and team goals as well as develop valuable skills for later life, such as teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, communication and cultural awareness. Through teaching life skills and expanding minds outside the classroom, World Challenge Expeditions have provided a life-changing experience for the girls and staff involved. The opportunity to discover more about our world and experience first hand how other people live has really helped our students grow as global citizens. We hope this will lead to increased awareness of and further engagement in future projects, whether they be local or global.

This year Jessica Attenborough aged 16 travelled to Llachon in the District of Capachica, Southern Peru to help improve educational facilities. She commented, “I have always wanted to do something for someone else. However, after this trip, I feel like I actually want to commit myself to charity in a way that allows me to be up close and personal. I would love to do something similar again where I can help out by physically taking part in a community project.”

“The expedition was defining. It is nice to see what the world is like – different to when you go on a holiday.”

This PAGE: Grace Purcell and Grace McClintok with some local primary school children in Chari.

“Doing something like World Challenge at our age, really makes us.”

Overcoming issues such as illness, language barriers and homesickness, the girls successfully completed the expedition. Jessica said, “When someone was struggling, we all came together. We found that we excelled the most when we got through a challenge together.”

Many of our students who have participated in a World Challenge Expedition have gone on to become prefects or take on other leadership roles throughout the school. After leaving Kambala some have even chosen to return to developing countries and participate in volunteer community project work during their Gap years. It is safe to say that a lot of this has been inspired from their World Challenge experience, which has given them the confidence and tools to tackle these new experiences.

“From the people you meet to the unforgettable experience you have you definitely come back a changed person and so much more appreciative of what we have here. It helps give you perspective on life and confidence to give new things a go. Africa and the people we met and helped has definitely touched all of us in a special way and inspired many to want to continue to help make a difference in the future.”

Alexandra McLaren, Zambia/Botswana 2014
Since 2003, Overnewton Anglican Community College (OACC) has been working in partnership with Chibobo, a small remote, rural community in the Central Province of Zambia, Africa. The community is very poor, with no mains power or running water. Whilst our initial work centred on helping to set up and run an orphanage with local charity, Help Ministries Project (HMP), it quickly became apparent that the most effective way to assist the vulnerable children of the area was to help the Chibobo community as a whole.

Over the years we have contributed to the community in a wide range of areas. However, it is our work in health and education that is making a significant difference. At the heart of this work is a desire to assist the community to become more self-sufficient in both the short and long term. In doing this, what has been created is a mutual exchange of friendship, respect and humanity beyond our expectations. We have learnt as much from this small community as they have from us. Overnewton visits Chibobo every second year, alternating with a local Anglican Church group. The trip is open to all members of the Overnewton community; Senior School students, staff, parents and Old Collegians.

Empowering Young Women

One of the most satisfying feelings on this year’s Chibobo Trip was our involvement in helping the young women of the community on a number of different levels.

The United Nations made clear its goals ‘to promote gender equality and empower women’ in its Millennium Declaration (2000). Worldwide there is agreement that the empowerment of women is the key to reducing poverty and that the key to empowering women is getting girls to stay in school.

What stands out in the small community of Chibobo is that they believe this is the answer too. As a result, emphasis has been placed on increasing girls’ retention rates at school. Patricia, one of our sponsored Year 12 Chibobo graduates, is making it her mission to advise young girls about early pregnancies and the need to finish school. So it was fortuitous that this year our little posse from OACC included eight female students.

One of our objectives was educating girls about feminine hygiene as a way of ensuring they attend school and to facilitate a leadership program for Chibobo’s student and community leaders.

The second session was presented by Stanika, an OACC mother who is an experienced nurse. She gave a thoroughly informative session on the use of the kits as well as female development from puberty to menopause. As her target audience was made up of women from 25 to 65 years it was fascinating to watch their faces, listen to their giggles and sighs as she showed them illustrations of parts of their bodies they had probably never seen before!

We determined the best way to distribute the kits would be through practical information sessions. It was impossible to reach out to 150 girls at one time so we decided to educate 20 girls and 20 women in the community who would in turn educate others.

The other key focus of this year’s trip was facilitating a Leadership Program for Chibobo’s student posse from OACC included eight female students.

Loving Our Neighbours: An Australian-Zambian Partnership

Di Rufus

Di Rufus, Senior School Head of Teaching & Learning and 2015 Chibobo Trip Leader at Overnewton Anglican Community College in Melbourne’s north-west, writes about the school’s 12-year partnership with Chibobo, a small remote rural community in the Central Province of Zambia, Africa. Staff, students and members of Overnewton’s community visit Chibobo every second year. Initially their aim was to help establish an orphanage with a local charity but they soon realised that the most effective way to assist vulnerable children in the area was to help the Chibobo community as a whole. Over time, they have contributed in many areas, notably health and education. This year participants went to Zambia with two aims: to educate girls about feminine hygiene as a way of ensuring they attend school and to facilitate a leadership program for Chibobo’s student and community leaders.

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Kim and Stanika did a wonderful job helping their audiences understand and feel comfortable about using the materials in the Days for Girls kits.

A few days later at the community football match it was encouraging to see those little kits naturally flung over the backs of a few of the girls as they watched the game. It is hoped Chibobo’s local women’s group, the Koala Club (another initiative from our work with the community), will be able to take over making the kits and will become a sustainable option for all the women in the community.

Leadership Program

The other key focus of this year’s trip was facilitating a leadership program for student and community leaders in Chibobo. We hope this will become a regular feature of our visits to the community. While initially it was quite daunting to face a group of 20 young people with limited English skills, by the end of the three-day course there was certainly a great sense of fulfilment.
The course objectives we set for the students were:

- To gain an understanding of what leadership means
- To identify key qualities of a leader
- To evaluate students' strengths and areas of improvement
- To provide some strategies for becoming a leader
- To develop project building skills

The first hurdle was ascertaining what the students could understand. As an English Language teacher, I felt inadequate explaining some of the complexities of the language and the meanings we apply to qualities of words. What does it mean to be a product of the people? Is control the right word to use for a quality of a leader? What does it mean to be visionary?

During the three days Overnewton students also took turns attending, helping with group work and facilitating sessions. They were a credit to the school and worked alongside the other students with patience and empathy.

Sessions, scheduled for two hours each day, were lengthened to cater for the language difficulties. One thing that was clearly evident with the young leaders was their enthusiasm and commitment to complete the course and their intrinsic desire to learn something that may benefit their community. They completed tasks in concept mapping, thinking routines, public speaking and developing a project idea that would fulfill a need in the community.

Project ideas, which were developed in teams, were as follows:

- A night school for the whole community run by the Year 12s who had just completed their studies.
- A young women’s club that would address issues of early pregnancy, relationships, diseases and a sporting opportunity for netball
- Construction of a covered area for cooking, built in collaboration with a local church and the orphanage.

The highlight of the course was witnessing the students speak about their projects to our HMP director, Stalvoux. They did so with passion and pride. Each participant was rewarded with a Certificate of Achievement and their delighted faces said it all. This was a teaching experience not to be forgotten!
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