

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

to the School Community



Damascus College Ballarat

1412 Geelong Road, Mt Clear VIC 3350

REGISTERED SCHOOL NUMBER: 0265



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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Matthew Byrne, attest that Damascus College Ballarat Inc. is compliant with all of the requirements for the minimum standards and other requirements for the registration of schools as specified in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 (Vic), except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA.

23rd May 2014

Our College Vision

MISSION and VISION STATEMENTS: 2009 - 2015

Our Mission

Damascus College Ballarat strives to live the spirit of Jesus as reflected in the Gospel, providing quality learning opportunities for all students in a Catholic co-educational community.

Our Vision

Damascus College Ballarat is a dynamic Christ-centred learning community which values each member. The College offers learning opportunities which inspire and challenge students to reach their potential and contribute confidently to the global community.

Our Values

At Damascus College Ballarat we value:

- our founding traditions and Mercy heritage
- a quality learning environment which enables students to achieve success and enhance their wellbeing
- a community of compassion, justice, pastoral care and responsible stewardship of our environment
- collaborative leadership
- quality resources that meet the needs of our students
- partnerships with the wider Catholic community, the local Ballarat community and other educational institutions.

College Overview

The ongoing Damascus tradition is a proud one. This is a tradition that recognises the Sisters of Mercy, the Christian Brothers and the Priests and Parishes of Ballarat. All of these people have been and continue to be, great educators in a Catholic context of the young men and women of Greater Ballarat.

2013 was an important year in the life of the College as the school finally completed the work of the College master plan to enable students to learn in fresh and contemporary learning spaces. This was the culmination of many years of planning. Our Catholic identity focal point; the Our Lady of Mercy Chapel had the fixtures and furnishings finalised to enable it to be available for 2014 worship.

Throughout 2012 a leadership structure review was completed, a new leadership model confirmed and positions advertised and appointed. In 2013 those staff who were successfully appointed to these roles commenced their positions and a process for performance plans was introduced.

In this 19th year of operation we celebrate that we are a contemporary Catholic educational community. Our College is set in a beautiful setting with remarkable views and 22 Hectare/52 acres of bushland to enable a great learning environment free from external distractions. Damascus' preparedness to embrace change, forming and transforming to meet the needs of the young people of this region, has been the hallmark of this College.

Damascus College is a secondary school where a family with children of both genders can be educated together. In Catholic education this was unprecedented in Ballarat and Damascus College has become a school where Christian family values are reinforced and developed, where hopefully, our young people come to know and appreciate our Loving God.

This school community is one that responds to the learning needs of the individual and has a record of looking out for those in need.

We commenced the 2013 College year with 1025 students and 130 staff. We welcomed 200 new Year 7's through to 115 Year 12's.

Students in the senior levels selected from 3 senior certificates, 30 VCE subjects, 135 students undertook courses from 20 different Vocational certificates and 6 students were involved in school based apprenticeships.

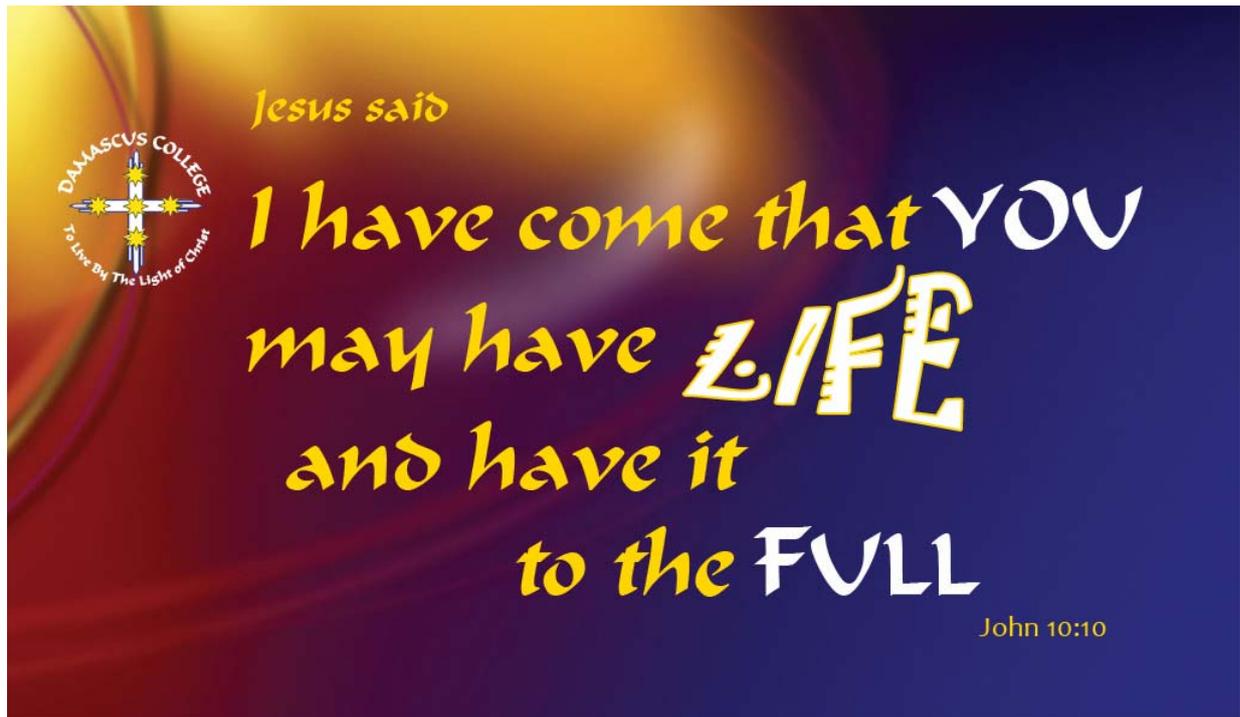
2013 theme

"I have come that you may have life and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10)

Our annual theme offers a concise way of focussing our Catholic Christian identity. The theme helps frame our liturgies throughout the year and can provide a focus for our prayer.

In choosing the 2013 theme, the intent has been to build on the 2012 focus of linking our core business of learning and teaching to our mission to nurture the love of God through the development of our individual gifts and talents.

Jesus said "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10) hopefully assisted each member of the College community; students, teachers, support staff, parents and friends of the College to focus on what it means to be challenged and inspired to reach our potential. This is a key focus of our College vision and the 2013 theme was a key vehicle to achieving this. Our challenge as a Catholic secondary College was and remains, to help students know and remember God's teachings, to assist them to draw on and grow their gifts and talents in a supportive community environment.



Principal's Report

"I have come that you may have life and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10)

These words quoted by Jesus were chosen as the theme for the Damascus College community for 2013. As the year has progressed, we have collectively had the opportunity to explore this beautiful verse. From the start of the year it was highlighted as a core responsibility and opportunity for each member of this community to grow their potential and live life to the full while at Damascus.

Biblically, the verse was delivered in the context of a Shepherd looking after the flock. In my role as Principal, I have the privileged position of sharing many of the joys and heartaches of individuals and families across the community; the Damascus flock. 2013 has borne those highs and lows for members of our community just as any other year. Our theme has allowed us to focus on the amazing range of opportunities that have existed and the chances for growth for the young people of Damascus-I hope that each young person is able to look back on 2013 as a time when their school experience can be reflected upon as something that brought about fullness of life.

It has been a privilege to be able to share the journey of learning with the students, staff and families of the Damascus community. Fullness of life is enhanced by the daily positive interactions between staff and students with the support of wonderful families.

The Damascus Day Mass celebrated by Fr James McKay was a wonderful community event. The growth in our College music was a wonderful enhancement of the Mass and I felt enormous pride with regard to all students' reverence and participation. The Student Representative Council (SRC) worked incredibly hard to establish a wonderful afternoon of activities that could have been diminished by poor weather, but no one seemed to notice. The day finished with a showcasing of student talent through *Damascus Has Talent* which was enjoyed and appreciated by all.

I wish to acknowledge the wonderful support and leadership the College community has received from the College Governors; Fr Adrian McInerney on behalf of the local parishes and Sr Berenice Kerr, acting for the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea. Both have provided sage advice on leading Catholic education in Ballarat. The Damascus staff were fortunate to be led by Fr Barry Ryan on our annual staff identity development day as we explored images of God. I am thankful to all the Sisters of Mercy and Priests of the diocese who supported the work of Damascus throughout 2013. It was a great privilege for the Damascus community to welcome Bishop Paul Bird to our opening Mass at the commencement of 2013 and we were gifted with his insightful reflection on our College theme.

I thank the members of the Damascus College Board for their ongoing commitment to improvement for this College. Board Chairperson, Mr Vin Dillon assumed the role with the confidence of a person who has had a professional lifetime of strong stewardship of Catholic education and he has been excellently supported by all members of the Board.

Finally throughout 2013, we were able to achieve the completion of our facilities master plan. For those of us who were involved in the longer term development of these facilities and for the teaching staff, it was a day of great excitement when the portables were finally removed from the site. Damascus facilities are exceptional, and it is great to now see the grounds of our College come together to enrich the learning experience of young people. Our refurbished

Year Seven and Eight learning facility has proven to be a great success and provides a fresh and welcoming environment for those newest to our College.

We began the 2013 College year with 195 new Year 7 students to make up a total of 1025 students, 781 Families and 130 Staff. These community members experienced a diverse and engaging range of opportunities and educational learning activities throughout the year. There have been so many opportunities to live life to the full through the Damascus learning program this year. Some examples that come to mind include; LOTE Day, the wonderful work of our Energy Breakthrough Team (EBT), the *Attack of Colour* VCE art exhibition, the introduction of the College recycling program, involvement in National Tree Day, ANZAC Day commemorations, Shave for a Cure, VCAL camp and market day, introduction of the Junior Social, the Year Eight *Runner* excursions, the ski trip, Royal South Street opportunities and achievements - these are but a few of the very diverse opportunities that supported classroom learning throughout 2013.

At a staff level, we commenced 2013 with a new leadership structure. New Assistant Principals were appointed; Tony Haintz to Catholic School Culture; Jo Kennedy to Student Wellbeing and Nick Yandell to Learning and Teaching. The implementation of a Professional Practice Team that includes Donnie Davidson, Rod Mathews and Greg Dow, has been an initiative that I have been proud of, for its design has been to support teacher development in order to improve student outcomes. Our House Leaders this year; Sallie Burke-Muller, Ann Bawden, Andy Robertson and Nicole Burness have done a wonderful job and they have been ably supported by Matt Hallowell, Rachel Wallbank, Hannah Keating and Deb Larsen. The House system and care of Damascus students has been a great feature of this College and I thank this team for their leadership.

One of our key challenges has been to advance the core business of learning and teaching across the College. It was pleasing to see a significantly higher number of VCE students achieve scores in the 40's in 2013. Our results in NAPLAN are showing improvement and the work of the Professional Practice team in constituting a pilot program for professional learning and feedback for teachers in 2014 for a full roll out in 2015 was exciting.

Each year we welcome and farewell a number of staff and all those who have worked at Damascus have grown our community with their labour and skills, but I would like to acknowledge the retirement and acclaim the work of Fran McCarty who has provided counselling support to generations of Damascus young people over the past 26 years. Also Denise Blood who for 24 years worked as a Finance Assistant within the College. Throughout the year we farewelled Elaine Flavell; Elaine had been a learning support staff member for 26 years and enabled many young people with learning needs and disabilities to grow in confidence and maturity. I also wish to acknowledge and farewell, Andrea Carter who has led the Mathematics Learning Area and been a wonderful educational leader over her time at Damascus. I wish Elaine, Fran, Denise and Andrea good health and happiness in the future.

The College philosophy on sport is one of participation by all. This has been reflected in the fact that the most successful house has always had the greatest number of participants on the day. It was also great to be able to celebrate success by all with Rice House returning to the winning podium after eight years at the Athletics Carnival. The carnival returned to Damascus as a result of other community facilities being unavailable and was a great success. One of the most exciting sporting developments this year was the reformation of the Damascus College

Rowing team and the dinner that launched that event and the ensuing regattas. We look forward to being a competitive force in the Head of the Lake in seasons to come. I congratulate all students on their involvement in the sporting opportunities provided and for taking them up as an opportunity to live life to the full this year.

The 12th staging of *The Final Hours* took place in the first week of the holidays in the lead up to Easter and it is a great celebration of what it means to be a Catholic school. To see young people immerse themselves voluntarily in the representation of Jesus' final hours on this earth is a reflection of our Catholic identity reaching across the broader College community. The celebration of Easter throughout the world marks the centre point of our Christian faith tradition and College beliefs. Students again worked over the duration of Lent to support those in need

just as Jesus did. These works of social justice to raise funds to support Project Compassion raised over \$10,000 dollars. The generosity and lived compassion is evident at Damascus in the way all community members contribute to opportunities like Project Compassion.

Damascus continued to provide a range of parental, alumni and community engagement opportunities. Michael Grose, a parenting expert presented *Parenting in the Tricky Years* in Term 1. The College again worked to educate young people and parents on cyber safety with the help of ACMA specialist, Greg Gebhart. 2012 College Dux, Anna Farrelly-Rosch was awarded the prestigious Macpherson Smith Rural Foundation Scholarship to the value of \$45,000. A range of reunions of former Damascus College and foundation schools' alumni also took place throughout 2013.

Our East Timor immersion program as a lived learning experience in social justice has become an important element of our community. The fundraising and social evening that is the trivia night has become one of the biggest events on the College calendar. In 2013 the Damascus community again raised over \$10,000 to support the school community of Santa Maria in Anairo, this was a wonderful achievement and the students and staff were great ambassadors for our College. Brendan Bawden as a member of the LOTE team, led 24 young people on an experience of a lifetime as they toured Malaysia and Brunei. It was great to hear of students' experiences, particularly of their home stay and school immersion in Brunei.

As a Hawks supporter, 2013 was a momentous year. For members of the College Performing Arts team, all those who had an involvement with the production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, will also look back on 2013 as a time of remarkable success. Andrew Seery supported by Nicole Burness with an outstanding cast, produced a performance that sold out across five shows. The maturity of the cast, the complexity of the set, the use of technology and the ability for people across a range of age groups to relate to this story laid the foundation for what proved to be a highlight of the 2013 Damascus year. I applaud all those who were involved, on your hard work and achievement.

Student leadership is a wonderful strength of our community and I have already made reference to the great work of our SRC. I congratulate those students who assumed formal leadership positions this year. I thank College Captains Elle-Louise Smith and Jordan Holloway for your wonderful contribution. The Year 12 class of 2013 have been a small group by recent Damascus numbers, and I thank you all for your contribution and I hope you take life-long friendships and an appreciation of our loving God and welcoming church from your secondary education.

My personal daily reflection this year has been around our College theme and I am thankful of all the opportunities that this community has given me to live life to the full - thank you!

College Board Report

I am very pleased to report on the activities of the Damascus College Board throughout 2013. I believe it has been a year of growth where we have become more confident as a Board in carrying out our role within the Damascus community. There have been nine meetings of the Board in 2013 all of which have been well attended. I acknowledge the commitment of Board members in giving priority to attendance at Board meetings. It is only through having a consistent attendance pattern by members that the Board is able to make good decisions and provide strong leadership within the College.

Firstly I wish to thank Mr. Joe Cahir for his willingness to step in as interim chairperson in the period December to May. Joe has a demanding and incredibly important professional life and a high level of community involvement, but he had no hesitation in taking on this additional role. Thank you Joe for your leadership during this period, and your continued support of the Board as the deputy chairperson.

During the year Dr. Annette Foley reluctantly submitted her resignation as a Board Member due to an increased work commitment resulting from the establishment of the new Federation University. At the end of this Board year Kathy Wood and Margaret Stewart step down from the Board after seven and three years of service respectively. All three members have been incredibly valuable Board members bringing much expertise and experience to our deliberations. In addition both Kathy and Margaret have very capably led the Teaching and Learning and School Community subcommittees. I thank Annette, Kathy and Margaret for their great contributions and trust they will continue to remain connected to our Damascus community.

In May the Board participated in a review exercise utilizing the SWOT (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats*) process. It was a most productive exercise which has resulted in the Board becoming more effective in its work through the establishment of a Board Action Plan. One weakness identified was the lack of succession planning for Board and sub-committee membership. Over the past few months we have embarked upon a process to address this issue and have made progress. It is very time consuming but most important if a strong Damascus Board is to be maintained. As a result we are delighted to welcome three new Board members, Father Kevin Maloney, Mr Brendan Maher and Ms Paulene Barton. Kevin, Brendan and Pauline bring a wealth of experience in Catholic Education and beyond and we look forward to their involvement. Father Kevin, as the representative of the Canonical Administrators of the Ballarat & District Catholic parishes, fills a position on the Board which has been vacant for almost three years. As well as his individual contribution, I hope his presence will further strengthen the role of the parishes as co-sponsors of the College.

The Board sub-committee structure is the generator for much of the Board's work. I thank all the Board Members, members of the College Leadership Team, staff, parents and community members who have served on these subcommittees. In particular I acknowledge the leadership of Peter Morris (Catholic School Culture), Joe Cahir (Student Well-Being), Kathy Wood (Learning & Teaching), Marnie Cooper (Leadership & Management), Margaret Stewart (School Community) and Bill Slatter (Finance) in chairing the sub-committees. During 2013 fourteen policies were submitted by the subcommittees to the Board for approval, a testimony to the hard work of these groups. The Board asked the subcommittees to review their role utilising a PNI (Positives, Negatives, and Interesting Possibilities) process. The major issues

emerging from this related to membership, which is being addressed, and a desire to expand the role to beyond that of policy development. With work soon to commence on a new five year strategic plan for the College, there will be much scope for the subcommittees to provide input to the Board on possible future strategic directions for Damascus. An induction evening for new subcommittee members was conducted in April. The feedback from participants was that it was beneficial in providing them with an overview of the College Governance Structure and the role of subcommittees within that structure.

A positive initiative undertaken by the Board at its meetings in 2013 was the introduction of briefings by a member of the Leadership Team on a particular strategic area of the College's operation. In 2013 briefings were given on the Catholic School Culture, Learning & Teaching and Student Wellbeing areas. The briefing also included an update from the chairperson of the relevant subcommittee on the subcommittee's work in that area. These briefings have enabled Board members to be updated on all areas of the school operation.

A key responsibility for the Board is to oversee the financial operation of the College. It does this through activities such as the approval of a budget, the setting of tuition fees, the approval of major expenditure items, the acceptance of an audited Annual Financial Statement and consideration of any financial issues that are brought to its attention. The Board is greatly assisted in its carrying out of this responsibility through the presentation at each meeting of a full operating statement accompanied by a financial commentary. This documentation is firstly scrutinised by the Finance sub-committee and presented to the Board by Mr Bill Slatter as chairperson of the subcommittee. The process enables the Board to feel very confident that it is practising due diligence in this critical area. The College is most fortunate in having such a competent and committed Business Manager as Mr Paul Jans. The Board is appreciative of his undertaking of a substantial body of work to ensure the Board is fully informed at each meeting.

There has been much ongoing work to establish the Board Constitution. This has been a lengthy and at times frustratingly slow process. It was anticipated that the Constitution would have been presented at this Annual Meeting but a need to revisit whether Damascus will be an Incorporated Association or a Company Limited by Guarantee has meant a further delay. I am very grateful to Board Member Mr Brett Bryant and Ms Stacey Grose from BJT Legal for the provision of legal expertise and their patience. I trust the process will be completed shortly followed by the development of a Board Handbook.

Over the past twelve months I believe the profile of the Damascus College Board both within the College and beyond has been enhanced. Board Members have been most generous with their time in attending such College activities as the Opening School Mass, the Damascus Day Mass, Performing Arts activities, Visual Arts exhibitions and Sporting Events such as the Head of the Lake. It is very important that the College community, in particular the staff, know who the Board members are and feel supported by the Board. Attendance at these functions facilitates this. One item on the Board Action plan that is yet to be addressed is for a Board report of each meeting to be placed on the College web-site. This would allow all in the College community to have knowledge of the Board's role and activities.

I acknowledge the outstanding support of the two College Governors, Sister Berenice Kerr RSM and Father Adrian McInerney. They have demonstrated a strong personal commitment to the College and are most generous in being present at as many College activities as possible. They attend an early morning Executive Meeting prior to each Board meeting and as chairperson

value highly their insights and wisdom. Sister Berenice and Father Adrian are excellent respective conduits to the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea and the Parish Priests of the Ballarat area.

Two people without whom the Board would not function are Mr. Matthew Byrne and Mrs. Tina Munro. Tina, as Executive Assistant to the Board ensures that everything is in place to ensure the Board operates smoothly. This includes not only the preparation and distribution of Board documentation but also attending to follow-up actions, correspondence, catering, welcoming of Board guests and many other tasks which often go unnoticed. All this is done with her usual cheery, sunny disposition. Thank you Tina.

All Board members are very much aware of how fortunate Damascus College is to have a leader of the calibre of Matthew Byrne as Principal. Undoubtedly he was, and continues to be, the right person at the right time to develop Damascus into the high quality educational institution that it is today. As Executive Officer of the Board he ensures that the relationship between the school operation and the Board is as strong and collegial as it can possibly be. Through his report to the Board at each meeting he has a strong commitment to briefing the Board fully on all aspects of the school operation. He is visionary, yet at the same time open to listening to the opinions even when they conflict with his own ideas. All this allows the Damascus Board to be a high functioning team. For all this, thank you Matt.

Finally I must express my appreciation to each and every Board member. Eighteen months ago I anticipated retiring from the Board at the 2013 AGM but instead found myself accepting the invitation to be the Chairperson!! It has been an honour to have this role and I am energised by the calibre and commitment of the members who sit around this table at each meeting. I look forward to the next twelve months as our College continues to reflect the words of Jesus, *'I have come that you may have life and have it to the full'* (Jn10:10)

Catholic School Culture

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Damascus College: Catholic School Culture Strategic Plan

Goal 1. To foster relationships based on respect, responsibility, honesty, truth and inclusion between all members of the school and broader communities

Goal 2. To encourage active participation in the life, prayer and ritual of the Catholic Church

Goal 3. To ensure that our Catholic heritage and traditions are valued

Goal 4. To ensure policies and programs reflect Gospel values, especially social justice

In 2013 goals three and four were the focus of the strategic plan.

Achievements

Goal 3. To ensure that our Catholic heritage and traditions are valued

Strategies relating to Goal 3

- Create an environment of prayer and liturgy to allow the community to engage fully in the experience
- To use the terms "Catholic" & "Social Justice" & "Compassion" & "Mercy" in key signage
- Develop the growth of staff in Catholic identity using qualified personnel
- Ensure symbols of Catholicity and Mercy heritage are placed strategically in classrooms
- To renew the College Liturgical Banners
- Key Staff members attend Mercy Ethos Inductions Programs
- Engage key staff in REAP to further leadership development in a Catholic School
- Naming the Buildings: to assist with the telling of the Damascus Story

Report on Goal 3

Throughout 2012, a dedicated area, Room 2110 was set up as a reflective prayer space while the Chapel space was furnished in the new building. The prayer space was regularly used on Thursday morning for staff prayer and RE classes did make some use of the space throughout the year. Staff confidence leading whole class liturgies, prayer and reflections will be developed in the future.

The physical structure of the new Chapel in Building 7 was completed late in Term 2 2012 but it was not to be used formally until appropriately furnished. The architect was engaged to design liturgical furniture for a launch in 2013. The College leadership were not happy with the early concepts provided by the architect for the space and sought out an alternative liturgical space designer. To this end, Anthony Russo of Orchard Designs was engaged and the design and construction process for a completion date in time for the Opening Mass of 2014 was arranged. Sister Anne Macmillan RSM acted as consultant to the College leadership on key elements of the sacred space.

Throughout 2013 it was determined that the Chapel would be named the Our Lady of Mercy Chapel. Bishop Paul Bird assisted the Damascus College community to understand the role of

Our Lady of Mercy within our College; to recognise that *each of us makes a commitment, before God, to live mercifully toward others is a continuation of the charism of the Sisters of Mercy in the College.*

Our Lady of Mercy, Jesus' mother and mother of all, offers God's grace and mercy to those who call upon her maternal blessing. An icon of Our Lady of Mercy was gifted to the College in anticipation of the Chapel's blessing by former Governor Sr Veronica Lawson RSM and current Governor Fr Adrian McInerney.

Both the icon and the Chapel is a reminder of the countenance of Mercy that we are called to witness. In particular to do justice in the corporal works of mercy: feed the hungry; provide drink to the thirsty; clothe the naked; shelter the homeless; visit the sick and the imprisoned; and bury the dead.

We ask Our Lady of Mercy to intercede in the Damascus College community that we may be a community of deep prayer and sacred liturgy and a community faithful to justice that knows mercy.

The position of Sacristan was to be facilitated by the Assistant Principal of Catholic School Culture in 2013 with the support of the Liturgy Coordinator under the College's new leadership structure.

Additional to the Chapel, plans for a new Remembrance Garden began through a student design task contributed by David Neate's Horticulture class. It is planned to move the garden to its new home west of the Board Room and The Mercy Administration wing in 2014.

The strategic intent to use the terms "Catholic", "Social Justice", "Compassion" and "Mercy" was not significantly advanced in 2013 beyond a continued awareness of the importance of education in these terms and of working with both the student and parent community of the College on aspects of our lived identity.

In 2012, the College appointed an Assistant Principal of Catholic School Culture for 2013-15 whose significant task will be the development of Catholic identity with the staff. In early 2013 the AP Catholic School Culture completed some significant research into the possibilities that might be offered to teaching staff including a meeting with Gina Bernasconi, the secondary consultant of the Religious Education Centre. After some negotiation, an Accreditation database was established to keep records of opportunities, enrolments and applications for approval of activities as well as the production of certificates. The pilot ran for 4 sessions in Semester 2 of 2013. The after school format included the following topics: Amazed and Afraid: The Revelation of God Become Man; Happy are we: The Teachings of Jesus; Fowler I: Stages of Faith; Fowler II: Applying Stages of Faith. There were two presenters, Tony Haintz and Martin Ryan. The after school pilot was very successful and plans for a heavier schedule of PD in the after school format was planned for 2014 with an additional presenter, Yvette Nesire-McNeil.

The Religious Education Professional Development Day was led by Fr Barry Ryan and was entitled God and the Catholics and was held in the newly refurbished level 2 foyer Building 4. A conference offered online through the Broken Bay Institute was also offered to staff: *The Gospel of St John.*

With the refurbishment of buildings, the extensive use of portables and the constant reallocation of rooms, the record of crucifixes in classrooms, established in 2009, was sadly out of date. In early 2013, there was still talk of a blessing and opening of buildings at the Damascus Day Mass at the end of Term 3. The time was opportune to complete a review of the crucifixes and their positioning. This was conducted throughout terms 2 & 3 and concluded before the end of term 3 in 2013. The database is stored in the Liturgy drive in the folder "Crucifixes." There is now a crucifix in all significant work spaces in the College.

The process of replacing the House Banners that have served well for 19 years was begun in late 2013 by the School Development Officer in association with the Liturgy and Retreats Coordinator and the Assistant Principal of Catholic School Culture. Engaging the production company, School Banners (Kincumber, NSW), a design process and selection of materials followed. The project was being brought to completion during term 1 of 2014.

The positive feedback from the "Mercy Story" story professional development weekends in 2011-12, led to the desire to have all House Leaders and then other Position of Leadership (POL) staff members involved in the experience. The 2013 participants were very positive about the experience.

May 26 – 28	Queenscliff	Jo-Anne Kennedy	Hannah Keating
July 28 – 30	Queenscliff	Deborah Larsen	Rachel Wallbank
October 20 – 22	Queenscliff	Andrew Robertson	Sallie Burke-Muller
August 28 – 30	Apollo Bay	Ann Kane	Rod Mathews

Mr Paul Jans was a participant in the Mercy Immersion in Dublin in 2013 and Gerard Macklin will be heading to the Mercy International Centre in 2014.

After some research, 3 staff members began their involvement in the REAP project in the 2013 intake: Carmel Russell; Matthew Hallowell and Glenn Jessup. Including weekend study, the REAP project offers a depth of religious thinking in the subjects offered. With formal assessment never far around the corner, participants do well to manage the process. All Damascus staff participants reported favourably on the 2013 experience and hope to bring the course to a successful completion at the end of 2014.

The Catholic School Culture sub-committee of the Board used the Naming policy that was developed in 2012 to assist with the naming of the new and refurbished buildings. The discussions within the committee and then at Board level and with College Governors proceeded in earnest through 2013 until the final arrangements were reached towards the end of the year. Research into the names by Assistant Principal Catholic School Culture Tony Haintz was used to introduce the names to the College at the opening school Mass which was also used for the Blessing and Opening of the buildings and refurbishments. The formal naming of the buildings took place within the 2014 school year.

Goal 4. To ensure policies and programs reflect Gospel values, especially social justice

Strategies relating to Goal 4

- Continue to develop and make explicit students' social justice awareness so students can make the links between Christian living and social justice:

- To review the Social Justice Policy
- To review the Social Justice Reflection Day for Year 8
- Review of the CPDA Melbourne Experience through the lens of Catholic Teaching on Social Justice

Report on Goal 4

Opportunities to develop and make explicit students' social justice awareness have been exploited during whole school assemblies and through the newsletter to educate as to why causes such as Project Compassion, Catholic Mission, St Vincent de Paul, Timor Leste and Shave for a Cure are examples of how Christian people within this school community can respond to the needs of others within the world. The newsletter and daily bulletins have been used as a medium to raise this with families and students.

At Damascus College we live Christian mission. Our vision also calls us to "social justice" and our work for the needy was consistent and profound in 2013. An enormous number of expressions of social justice as a means of Christian living were supported throughout 2013.

During Term 1, Damascus staff and students undertook a huge variety of fundraising activities in support of Caritas Australia, the Catholic aid agency assisting people in need all over the world. The Damascus community showed its generosity by organising a range of activities which raised over \$10,000 for Caritas. In Houses and TA groups, students and staff organised raffles, coin lines, bake sales and bookstalls, they sold donuts, brownies and icy-poles, they busked on the streets of Ballarat and beyond and the staff auctioned off their time and skills and even their car parking spaces!

The support of our sister school, Santa Maria in Ainaro, Timor-Leste, was again spectacular. We prepare for a fourth immersion in 2014.

Ongoing involvement with the Seeds of Justice Project is a part of the Mercy Ethos family of activities. This program developed a regional option in 2012 at Anglesea so that more students can be touched by the story of Mercy and its work for social justice. The theme at Anglesea this year was homelessness.

There were guest speakers for Refugee Week and from Catholic Mission in India. The Oak Tree foundation spoke to assembly. Visitors from the Alma Sisters in Dili gave the Immersion Teams a new place to visit in country. A visitor from a Catholic school in Tanzania spoke with Year 11's in Term 4.

The winter collection of basic food items for distribution by the local St. Vincent de Paul Society provided immediate support to the needy of our area and was a massive contribution in 2013.

The contribution to Catholic Mission, through the fundraising efforts of the College, supported the global development work of the Mission Societies. The casual day at the end of Term 3 raised in excess of \$1100.

The work of the Student Representative Council (SRC), Justice Action Group (JAG) and a junior justice group, Making a Difference (MAD), in coordinating these ventures was essential to their success.

The House Council process in 2013 gave every member of the College community an opportunity to have a voice about issues of justice in the College as well as in the local, national and global areas of concern.

Our links with the Edmund Rice Camps Inc. grew in 2013 as senior students attended training days and camps in support of the many needy families touched by the organisation.

The College announced that a fourth Immersion Team planned to visit our sister school, Santa Maria in Ainaro in 2014.

Christmas baskets to share with the needy families of Ballarat through the St. Vincent de Paul Society was a new initiative in 2013 and was very successful, raising \$2600 in goods and cash.

The strategic goal to review the Social Justice Policy was not fully achieved within 2012-13 the policy review will carry into 2014.

The strategic plan to review the Year 8 Social Justice Reflection Day was anticipated as essential, given the changed context for the delivery of the program – movement to one week of Year 8 camps. This move is now deferred to 2015 and the work will be completed in late 2014.

The Christian Personal Development Award (CPDA) began at Damascus College in May 2003. The twenty-second Year 10 CPDA Introductory Program concluded in November 2013. The program introduces the students to a certificate that they can aim to achieve in their final years of schooling at the College. For eleven years now the program has included a retreat based on the corporal works of Mercy, an experience of the other (in Melbourne), an experience of alternative recreational activities, an assessment of physical potential for sporting activities and an experience of volunteering. The experience of the other in Melbourne was not achieving its intention and a review of the experience was conducted in light of the original intention. The day is being completely revamped for 2014.

Damascus College believes strongly in a holistic education to grow the gifts and talents of each individual within the community. As such, students have the opportunity to participate in a broad range of sporting, cultural, social, religious, creative or artistic pursuits. These vary from camps to ski trips to international language or social Justice immersions, school formals, College or year level Masses, chess club, school productions, volunteering activities and of course a diverse range of sporting opportunities.

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal 1: to ensure that the Gospel values permeate all learning and teaching experiences.

Actions

- Facilitate staff PD opportunities in current understanding of our Mercy Tradition

Achievements

Staff in key leadership roles were offered places in the Mercy Ethos Program, a weekend residential retreat that is managed by the Sisters of Mercy, and the majority amongst the Wellbeing staff have now attended. We will look to extend this to Learning Area Leaders next year, especially given the number of staff who are new to these roles.

Induction sessions were conducted for new staff at the beginning and middle of the year, with an introduction to the Mercy Ethos as well as the other traditions of the schools which combined to form Damascus.

The whole staff PD has been addressed in the area of Catholic Identity. The 2013 Staff RE day was held on 15th July with Fr. Barry Ryan with a focus of different ways to interpret the life and divinity of Jesus.

Goal 2: to create independent thinkers with enthusiasm for learning

Actions

- Build team planning and shared teacher preparation to improve student engagement within the classroom
- Select a platform for student learning using ICT
- Develop understanding of and begin to implement approaches to differentiation in the classroom

Achievements

Planning teams have successfully been formed in Learning Areas, and have conducted several planning sessions throughout the year. Most of these teams are year-level based (for example Year 7 Maths), but in some areas, these are based on subject (e.g. Drama) across several year levels. Many of these teams have been focused on developing new curriculum in line with the Australian Curriculum and AusVELS, whilst others that have not implemented the Australian Curriculum as yet have focused on the progression of their programs from Years 7-12. Data on student engagement is not available at the time of writing, but the Insight SRC survey is due to be conducted in August of 2014 which will provide valuable feedback on our progress.

In 2012, the TIE (Technology In Education) Committee was formed from staff nominated by their colleagues. In July of 2013, the TIE Committee recommended a 1:1 student ICT platform

based on Windows 8 to the Executive and a decision made to proceed with rollout in 2015. At this stage, the number of year levels has not been determined.

The Pilot of the Professional Learning Program has been developed by the Professional Practice Team, and 21 staff have volunteered to participate in 2014. The focus of the Pilot is an Action Research approach to trialling approaches to differentiation in the classroom, with a trusted colleague or colleagues to act as an advisor and making some classroom visits as part of the process. Learning Area Leaders were introduced to Understanding By Design (UBD), a curriculum planning approach that supports differentiation. This approach is also one of the cornerstones of the Australian Curriculum, with many Australian Curriculum outcomes expressed in terms that operate within the UBD framework.

Goal 3: To contribute to the development of the student as a whole person

Actions

- Prepare for the implementation of the General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum
- Continue the use of our Shared Vision of Learning and Teaching to inform both teaching practice and planning

Achievements

To date, there has been no clear guidance from the VCAA (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority) as to how the General Capabilities is to be implemented across the curriculum, so this aspect of the Australian Curriculum has not been explored in depth in 2013. There is still some uncertainty as to when other areas of the 7-10 curriculum will move to Australian Curriculum, as no concrete dates for implementation of Arts, Technology, LOTE and HPE have been announced as yet. At the time of writing, this governmental uncertainty is creating significant issues for members of the Learning Areas affected, as they are aware that their current curriculum is on the way out, but do not have a clear picture as to when their new curriculum will be released.

The Vision of Learning and Teaching is part of planning documentation, and was a central theme to our Damascus Day Mass. However it is not necessarily part of reflective practice on behalf of teaching staff at this point and students and families have only a vague notion of it. More needs to be done in this area to ensure that it informs our Learning and Teaching practices across the College.

Goal 4: To work collaboratively with individuals, families and the wider community to enhance learning outcomes

Actions

- Continue to develop the TA program, with a renewed focus on student learning
- Continue with, and refine, the recall of students with overdue work

Achievements

TA's continue to work with the students and families to form learning goals, but the absence of clear and timely information has been a major sticking point for forming measureable,

achievable goals in these partnerships. Work continued with various groups to see if a better data management system can be developed, but this encountered a range of external difficulties and has not progressed as quickly as we might have hoped.

Recall (now referred to as Call Back) is continuing with a range of processes trialled to target students who have not submitted major assessment tasks in Years 7-10, including data being entered onto central spreadsheets and data being extracted directly from the reporting system so that those students can be called back to school to complete these tasks when the rest of the student body is absent. The College community (perhaps with the exception of students) is supportive of the process. The major issue still continues to be teacher notification of completed work – this is not being done consistently or effectively, creating issues for House staff who supervise Call Back days. These administrative issues have the potential to derail the process if not addressed.

Goal 5: To challenge staff and students to strive for excellence

Actions

- Continue to develop the Awards Evening and Class Awards
- Revise approaches to assessment

Achievements

The Awards Evening was conducted for the second year in 2013 in a revised structure which incorporated the Sports and Academic Awards, with past student Jordan Roughead as a guest speaker, and musical and dramatic performances by College students as part of the evening. It was well supported by parents. The purpose of the evening is to showcase and recognise excellence.

The less-formal Class Awards are given by each class teacher and distributed at House assemblies. This process continued to function effectively and anecdotal evidence would tend to suggest that these awards are increasingly valued by the students that receive them.

This year, the revision of assessment processes focused primarily on assessment scales, and whilst this adds consistency, it does not address some of the underlying issues that still need to be addressed, especially the differentiation and moderation of assessment. Common assessment through a number of tasks that were planned within Learning Area teams and common end of semester exams have also added to this consistency.

Goal 6: To facilitate individual pathways that enable student success

Actions

- Continue to develop the subject selection process

Achievements

The TA program is now more involved in the subject selection process with a range of resources designed to support them. Students and parents were surveyed and most report that the

process was useful to very useful, but many were concerned about uncertainty amongst TA's in giving advice. Given that for most TA's this is only their second experience of the role, this is to be expected. Increasing exposure and experience will decrease this uncertainty.

The Taster Day was run again in 2013. Students chose from a range of subjects available to them in 2014 and then experienced a day of single lessons based on the content and activities of those classes. In 2013 this was extended to Year 9 and 10, but it created issues with teaching staff and the commencement of their classes for semester 2. It is recommended that we move the Taster Day to later in the semester, even if only a week or two. Students and parents were surveyed on Taster Day, and the majority of responses were positive through to very positive. We also conducted our regular Subject Selection Evening, and surveyed students and parents afterwards. The results were not as positive, and this evening needs to be re-evaluated to become more effective and valued.

Extensive resources are now on the College website regarding subject selection and careers, although it is not clear how effectively this is being accessed by students and parents at this point. Through the Empowering Local Schools federal funding – Damascus College engaged project officer, Mrs Joanne Humphrey. Joanne contributed strongly to the improvement of the subject selection process over 2013 by developing the written resources to support informed decision making when it comes to subject selection. Retention data within both the VCAL program and the VCE were stronger throughout 2013.

Changes in the minimum Standards or Minimum Standards-NAPLAN	2011	2012	2013
YEAR 7 READING	97.9%	95.7%	98.9%
YEAR 7 WRITING	87%	91%	92.6%
YEAR 7 SPELLING	93.8%	90.4%	93.6%
YEAR 7 GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION	95.8%	97.3%	96.3%
YEAR 7 NUMERACY	97.3%	96.8%	99.5%
YEAR 9 READING	96.7%	90.8%	95.8%
YEAR 9 WRITING	80.6%	80.1%	77.6%
YEAR 9 SPELLING	89.9%	87.6%	92.4%
YEAR 9 GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION	93.5%	92.5%	90%
YEAR 9 NUMERACY	93.2%	98.6%	93.8%

SENIOR SECONDARY OUTCOMES

VCE MEDIAN SCORE	28
VCE COMPLETION RATE	100%

POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

TERTIARY STUDY	28 %
TAFE / VET	13 %
APPRENTICESHIP / TRAINEESHIP	8 %
DEFERRED	23 %
EMPLOYMENT	22 %

Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Achievements

Goals and intended outcomes

Goal 1: To provide a pastoral care system at Damascus College that will be well resourced, responsive to student need and built on a model of Mercy and Restorative Justice

Actions

- Develop and implement a whole school approach to Restorative Practices
- Develop teacher confidence in using Restorative Practices by providing continual professional development
- Develop and introduce protocols for student classroom behaviour based on inclusivity, respect and co-operation
- Work with staff to use these agreed protocols

Achievements

Restorative Practices continue to be our approach to behaviour management at Damascus College. A core team of House Leaders, Assistant House Leaders and interested staff were trained by Therese Sheedy early in 2014 so that we have an in school trained teacher resource to further develop our Restorative approach into the future.

All staff new to the school are inducted into the use of Restorative Practices and continue to work on this with their mentor and House Leader. The House Leaders and Assistants continue to practise and model the practice to all staff. Parents are gradually being exposed to the practice as House Leaders have contact with them throughout the school year. This has at times been a challenge as parents have often been brought up with punitive discipline procedures in their time at school.

The students have responded well to being dealt with in a restorative way and are getting used to the questioning process associated with it.

At the beginning of 2013 as a staff we discussed classroom management used by individuals and collectively came up with a list of classroom practices that staff could use. The staff in general were very positive about this activity as they found new classroom practices that they were able to trial with great success.

The Wellbeing Team then took this one step further and developed student management procedures for the classroom teacher, the TA teachers, the House Leaders and the Assistant Principal of Student Wellbeing. These procedures were given to all staff including CRT staff so that they had an understanding of the student management hierarchy at the College.

These management procedures have seen staff being more accountable for student management and House Leaders have used these procedures as a starting point when discussing student issues with staff. When staff have been writing Behavioural Tracking reports they have also successfully linked these to the behavioural management plan implemented.

Goal 2: To develop student leadership and participation at all levels

Actions

- Develop a new student leadership structure
- Work with House Leaders and students to make sure the new structure is implemented

Achievements

With the assistance of the SRC, the House Leaders Committee came up with a new student leadership structure which was a more generalised structure rather than students being given specific roles. The new structure will see each House having four Year 12 leaders which make up a House Council. These students will cover the previous roles of House, Sports, Arts and Liturgy Captains.

The students wanted to implement this structure as they wanted to work as a group on all aspects of the House rather than concentrate on one area only. It also gave for example the Sports Captain a role throughout the year rather than just being involved in sporting activities during Term 1. The SRC structure from Years 7-11 will remain the same with one student chosen from each level in each House.

The House Leaders Committee in partnership with Claire Hughes and the SRC developed an intensive campaign to identify leaders from all levels during 2013. The House Leaders spent an afternoon with the Year 11's to identify leaders within their House and look at what makes a good leader. The nominated students were asked to write an application letter and undergo an interview before being accepted onto the ballot paper. This has given us 16 high calibre Year 12 students who have excellent leadership skills.

Goal 3: to provide a safe and welcoming physical environment

Actions

- Complete stage four of the College master plan and induct students and staff into the use of these areas

Achievements

Prior to moving into the refurbished Year 7 and 8 wing a set of common expectations were established for students as to how they would learn in that area. A lesson plan was formulated by the Leadership Team and each Year 7 and 8 class undertook a lesson in the new buildings to understand how the space was to function. Learning Area Leaders also spent a significant proportion of their meeting times throughout 2013 determining the furnishings for classrooms. This approach allowed a much smoother transition into the new spaces than was experienced during the induction to the Year 9 wing.

Goal 4: To provide opportunities for participation in activities that support family on student wellbeing

Actions

- Evaluate the current Year 7-9 camp program
- Develop a new camp program to be implemented in 2015
- Begin the introduction of a rowing program for the College

Achievements

The current camp program was evaluated using the following:

How does it link to the curriculum? What are the required outcomes of the camp? How much disruption to classes is caused by each camp?

It was decided the Year 7 camp should remain as is at Log Cabin Lodge Creswick with each Year 7 group going for 2 days and 1 night. As this camp is during week 3 of the year it will have a getting to know you theme. The students will also be introduced to the SRC reps from their House and have time to work with their mentors from Year 10.

After much discussion around Year 8 camp it has been decided to send all Years 8 students to camp over one week instead of two and they will attend in core groups. This minimises disruption to classes over a one week period in Term 2. The camp will be a combination of a residential retreat for one night and a tent experience for one night. This will provide a lead in to the Year 9 camp experience.

The Year 9 experience will see all Year 9's going out on a one week camping experience run by Auscamp. The students will be streamed into groups according to their hiking, cycling and general fitness. Hopefully this will influence some students who have been hesitant to attend in the past.

Sports coordinator, Matthew Rea proposed to the Leadership Team that the College recommence rowing within the BAS competition. This was supported at Board level and BAS conceded modified arrangements for Damascus in their first year. A strategic alliance was struck with the Wendouree Ballarat Rowing Club and this was supported with funding for a schools program from Rowing Victoria. Peter Moon was appointed in November as the Director of Rowing. A number of teams were formed and coaches appointed and training began for the first Head of the Lake in 2014. Damascus participated in the first regatta in Bendigo in October and went on to compete at a number of preliminary regattas to build student confidence, technique and stamina. This initiative has been well supported by both the Damascus and greater Ballarat community.

Non-attendance is carefully monitored through the College administration system with teachers marking rolls each lesson. Official Rolls are taken on Period 1 and Period 5. Parents are contacted by SMS when a child is absent and notification has not been received by the family. Unexplained absences are followed up by the Teacher Advisor and if a pattern emerges this progresses through the pastoral care hierarchy.

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal 1: to encourage all staff to share leadership in a supportive and transparent educational environment.

Actions

- Support staff as they take on new leadership positions.
- Staff in the restructured Leadership roles for 2013-15 are to establish clear goals for their position
- To improve role clarity of POLs and develop clear lines of communication throughout the Leadership Structure
- To investigate an appropriate Appraisal Model for evaluation and development, developing a suitable model for Damascus.

Achievements

Throughout 2013 an organisational flowchart was implemented to help staff understand layers of accountability. This organisational flowchart was utilised to provide support structures for people as they commenced within their respective roles. Each staff member in a Position of Leadership (POL) was answerable to a member of the Leadership Team and met with them on a regular basis. One of the key initial tasks for new POLs was to establish a performance plan both for their team and for themselves as an individual. This was certainly effective and used at a team level, but has taken more embedding at an individual level.

The Deputy Principal facilitated a professional learning seminar for all POL holders on conducting "Courageous Conversations". Dr Michele Mulvihill was the presenter of this PD and senior staff appreciated the opportunity to workshop some of their challenging issues.

Annual Review Meetings (ARMs) were held with the appropriate Leadership team member on an individual basis and groups evaluated their progress for the year.

The Meeting schedule for the year included regular meetings of staff in the appropriate areas.

The lines of communication became clear under the areas of House Leaders/Student Wellbeing, Learning & Teaching and Pathways.

One of the significant elements of the re-structure of the Positions of Leadership (POLs) across the College was an emphasis on the development of teachers as a key mechanism for improving student outcomes. The introduction of a Professional Practice team was determined to be a means of achieving improved teacher development. The Professional Practice Team was appointed for 2013. External funding has been sought and awarded to enable the involvement of an external consultant and some opportunities to visit other sites to explore models of appraisal and development. It is hoped that an appropriate and staff supported model will have a pilot in place for 2014. More information on the Professional Practice Team is outlined under goal four.

Goal 2: to ensure that leadership at all levels in the College is active and supportive.

Actions

- Undertake a review of student leadership

Achievements

The Assistant Principal of Student Wellbeing worked extensively with the House Leaders Team (including Assistant House Leaders) to review the Student Leadership structures and method of appointments. A new system was established for the end of 2013 to elect the new members in Term 4 ready for commencement in the role in 2014. Elected Senior Leadership attended an external Leadership training day and all elected leaders for 2014 participated in an internal Leadership day in the last week of classes in 2013. The new model encapsulates a much stronger team approach within each House with a group of 4 appointed leaders. The voting was also broadened to include the incoming Year 11's to create a stronger sense of succession within the leadership roles.

Goal 3: to provide programs that promote and affirm staff and student achievement

Actions

- Create formal processes which affirm staff/student achievements

Achievements

In 2013 the work of the formal Awards Review undertaken in 2012 was further developed. The Formal Awards evening was held for the second year at the Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts with changes which added to the success of the evening – developing the practices that were in place and enhancing them to increase the formality and the public reception of the evening. 2008 College Captain Jordan Roughead was invited as guest speaker for the evening and Jordan was able to tie together the importance of academic and sporting success within a holistic education. Each year the College is trying to draw on a former student to help create an aspirational culture for current students of the College, while providing affirmation to the teaching and other support staff of the graduates of our College community.

Throughout 2013 the processes of recognising Class Awards throughout the year was simplified and a consistent rollout within their House structure achieved. The points system for the Ron Matthews shield which supports the healthy rivalry between houses was reviewed and broadened to include a greater range of student activities. Examples include; public speaking and debating, house contributions to Project Compassion, the number of class awards achieved, et cetera

In 2013 there was a much greater push to encourage students to put themselves forward for external opportunities. The most significant recognition of the Damascus student was of 2012 College Dux, Anna Farrelly-Rosch who was awarded the prestigious \$45,000 Macpherson Smith Rural Foundation Scholarship. Other senior students were recognised with the Notre Dame medical science prize, where 2 students were flown to Sydney for the day. And the awarding of a place at the National science summer school for one of our existing year 11 students.

Goal 4: to develop a mentor and modelling program for leadership in the College.

Actions

- Build a culture of staff accountability to ensure student progress is improved, understood, tracked and evaluated.

Achievements

Coming out of the 2010 SIF review were two key recommendations:

Teacher professional growth and appraisal & feedback appear to be two areas for future attention. The College clearly recognises the need to focus on strengthening teacher capacity to provide effective learning and teaching experiences for all students.

In response, the College introduced the **Professional Practice Team (PPT)** to commence work on the priorities identified through the Review so to allow a 3 year timeframe for the College Learning Community to implement relevant strategies to meet the demands and expectations of the Governors, Board and the wider Damascus Community.

This included **pedagogies** such as *instructional differentiation, clear learning intentions, effective feedback, the use of data and other engaging learning and teaching approaches.*

The Review did acknowledge the complexity and importance of undertaking this initiative and stressed that **the key to future success** would be **leadership supports such as teachers planning together, teaching together and mentoring & coaching each other.**

Following on from the Review recommendations, the **role of the PPT** was to:

- Promote and support teachers to bring about strategic change for the enhancement of learning and teaching:
- Support the Assistant Principal – Learning and Teaching in leading, developing and enhancing the teaching practices of others: and
- Support the Learning Area Leaders in the implementation and implications of the National Curriculum.

With funds accessed through the **Empowering Local Schools** initiative, the College contracted Leonie Saundry, Des Gorman and Cherie Loncar to provide project management, professional advice and marketing expertise to the PPT.

The task for this group for 2013 was **to set up a teacher appraisal system** for Damascus College for 2014 in conjunction with the PPT.

The result was that at the end of November 2013, **twenty (20) teachers** had expressed interest in being part of **Shaping Effective Teaching** - the Teacher Professional Development Model at Damascus College.

Staff members from all over Damascus College from Leadership, Administration and Maintenance had successfully participated in ensuring that **a no fail first step** has been achieved.

Measureable outcomes -The core business of schools is to provide students with a **rich learning environment that is open, respectful, caring and safe**. This ideal learning environment optimises wellbeing. It reflects a positive school ethos that makes the school an exciting, stimulating and welcoming place.

Teachers in the pilot project have been **guaranteed** that the **same value base** will be applied to their participation in the project as such **Collegiate Classroom Observation and Feedback** is one of the core elements of the draft teacher professional development model being trialled in 2014.

As the College Leadership Team, PPT and Teacher Participants prepare the planning for the project commencement, it is clear that there is a match between the targeted initiative, the professional learning and the anticipated positive impact on student learning outcomes.

Goal 5: to develop appropriate management and Governance structures

Actions

- Liaise with the Board in its review of Board structures – evaluation of the implementation of Board Sub-committees
- Restructure of the sub-committee membership and recruitment of new members from staff and community
- Revision of the Constitution of the Damascus College Board.
- Establish clear links between the Board & Strategic Planning Group

Achievements

New Board members were appointed and sub-committees were re-formed to place Board members in the most appropriate areas of expertise. New sub-committee members were recruited.

With the new leadership structure within the College, staff representation on subcommittees was reviewed to reflect the expertise of individual teachers and their appointed area of leadership. Significant work took place throughout 2013 to discern appropriate parent and community representatives to act on the subcommittees in 2014.

The executive of the Board worked with local law firm, BJ T Legal to undertake a review of the Constitution. Once a preferred model for the Constitution was established, it was referred to the legal representatives of ISMAPNG for review prior to the convening of the special general meeting of the Board. ISMAPNG expressed some concern about the proposed structure which has seen the review of the Constitution carry into 2014.

In an attempt to create greater cohesion between the College Board and the College Leadership Team it was determined that a member of the Leadership Team would present on their specific portfolio as a means of creating greater rapport, dialogue and fulfilment of the strategic intent of the Board. This process was commenced in 2013 and was generally

perceived to strengthen the relationship between the Board and members of the Leadership Team.

Achievements

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	
NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN PL	91
AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER TEACHER FOR PL	\$2120.00

College Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal 5.1: to promote the mission of the Church through building closer links between the College and parishes and parish schools.

Actions

- Invite parish priests and Sisters of Mercy to all major College events
- Utilise parish newsletters, ODC & Diocesan e-news to promote the College and College events
- Distribute "Damascus In Touch" to parishes for inclusion in the parish newsletter
- Distribute College publications to parish priests and Sisters of Mercy – newsletter, enrolment booklet, The Road
- Utilise the Damascus newsletter to share parish news with the College community
- Offer transition visits to all local Catholic Primary Schools annually
- Develop a program for interaction between parish schools and the College above and beyond the existing transition program
- Distribute College publications to primary school principals – newsletter, enrolment booklet, The Road
- Invite primary school staff and parents to staff PD sessions and community events held at Damascus
- Circulate "Damascus In Touch" twice per year – this is a newsletter written for primary schools about Damascus
- Utilise primary school newsletters to publicise Damascus events
- Invite primary principals to meet at Damascus once per year or once every second year

Achievements

Damascus College has worked consistently throughout the year to build closer links with the parishes and parish schools by creating greater opportunities for interaction as well as increasing the flow of communication between the College and the parishes. Damascus College publications are regularly distributed to parishes and parish schools, Damascus News is used to publicise parish events, and primary school and parish newsletters are utilised to disseminate information about Damascus.

The College's transition program has expanded over 2012 and 2013 to offer incoming transition visits to all Grade 5 students from local Catholic primary schools each year. The expansion of the transition program has been a great success, with some schools requesting a second transition visit for their students. The development of a program for interaction with parish schools above and beyond the transition program has been more challenging and whilst these interactions do occur on an ad-hoc basis, Damascus will continue working towards a more structured program in the coming year.

Goal 5.2: to become an environmentally sustainable College.

Actions

- Implement the second phase of the College recycling program (comingle recycling)
- Implement actions as per the Strategic Environment Management Plan (SEMP)
- Install water tanks in horticulture garden area
- Replace light fittings in JSC if funding application is successful
- Review recommendations of energy audit and implement recommendations with an ROI less than 5 years
- Raise awareness about sustainability and sustainable practices
- Work towards the completion of the Core Module and the Waste Module as per the SETS

Achievements

The two major achievements in the area of sustainability in 2013 have been the introduction of a College-wide comingle recycling system early in the year as well as the receipt of a \$10,000 energy efficiency grant which enabled the installation of energy efficient lighting in the John Shannon Centre in December. Whilst the recycling program has brought about an increased awareness of sustainability practices amongst staff and students, the other sustainability targets outlined in the action plan have not been addressed this year, mainly because the College did not have a dedicated staff member in charge of running the sustainability program for the last six months of the year.

Goal 5.3: to actively engage parents in the College community.

Actions

- Develop procedures for volunteering and parental engagement at the College in line with the Volunteer Policy and the Parental Engagement Policy
- Convey to parents the opportunities that exist for participation in the life of the College. Use various methods of communication to convey this information in order to increase the likelihood that this information will be received
- Encourage the formation of parent support groups for special events
- Organise a parent community evening with a keynote speaker

Achievements

In 2013, Volunteer Procedures were developed which outline the process through which parents and other community members can become volunteers at Damascus College. These procedures were based on the College's Volunteer Policy and are in support of the Parental Engagement Policy. Alongside the Volunteer Procedures, a flyer was produced which explains the volunteering process and outlines the opportunities available for volunteers at the College. This flyer was published to parents at the start of the 2014 school year. Small parent support groups also formed to support special events such as the Energy Breakthrough Team and the College production.

In regards to community evenings for parents, in March the College arranged for parenting expert Michael Grose to speak at the College. Around 350 people attended this event and the feedback after the event was very positive. Wellbeing expert, Liz O'Brien, also ran two

information sessions for parents and students on managing stress. These sessions were also well received by those who attended.

5.4: to build a College community which gives a voice to all its members and is welcoming to visitors.

Actions

- Undertake parent surveys from time to time to gather parental views about the College
- Provide various mechanisms for parents to contact the College and respond to parent enquiries in a timely manner
- Improve communication between the SRC and students
- Set up regular meetings between Principal and School Captains
- Conduct at least two House Councils
- Survey Year 12 students in Term 4 about their experience of Damascus College
- Invite staff to conduct a staff forum
- Reiterate to staff the process for proposals to be submitted to the Leadership Team for discussion
- Improve signage around the College so locations are easier to find
- Staff member or student to ALWAYS accompany visitor to their destination
- Improve the presentation of the school grounds in regards to litter

Achievements

During the course of 2013, the College conducted various surveys with parents and students to gain their views on different aspects of College life. A Subject Selection Survey was sent to parents and students, a survey was sent to Year 12 students at the end of their studies and an Office Service Quality Survey was undertaken. These surveys have provided one avenue for parents and students to voice their thoughts and concerns about the College.

At the start of 2013, Damascus launched a new website which contained various online forms which make it easier for parents to contact the College in a timely manner. Many parents also utilise the generic info@damascus email address to make contact with the College. The email addresses of staff in Positions of Leadership are also published on the College website. In addition, parents utilise the Damascus Facebook page from time to time to ask questions or make comments about the College.

In regards to student feedback, two House Councils were conducted during 2013 which allowed students to raise issues concerning them. Staff forums were invited but were not taken up by staff in 2013, however it's likely that staff forums will be reinstated in 2014 following a survey conducted with staff at the end of the 2013 school year.

Damascus College always strives to create an environment which is welcoming to visitors and there has been a significant improvement in the presentation of the College over the past 12 months, partly due to the completion of the capital works program and partly due to the reduction of litter being left by students around the College grounds. The recycling program seems to have had a positive effect in the area of litter management.

Goal 5.5: to increase commitment to and participation in College community events.**Actions**

- Issue a Quick Reference Calendar to parents and staff at the start of each term
- Utilise the newsletter and other communication methods such as email, Facebook and SMS to alert parents about upcoming Damascus events
- See additional action items from Goal 3 Action Plan
- Address the exacerbated absence rate at the whole school events.

Achievements

Damascus College utilises various methods of communication with parents to ensure they are notified of upcoming College events. The main communication tools used are mail, email, text message, messages on the College Facebook page, the newsletter, and the College website. Damascus also issues a Quick Reference Calendar each term which lists all the significant events coming up during the term which parents may wish to attend or are required to attend, such as TA interviews. By providing adequate notice to parents and by inviting them to attend College events, it is hoped that parents will feel welcome and interested to participate in the College community.

In regards to student commitment and participation, the College regularly reiterates its expectation that students must attend all Damascus community events such as College masses, sports days and celebration days. Students who do not show a commitment to College events will be unable to attend special functions such as school formals and will be ineligible to hold leadership positions within the College.

The leadership team sought to implement a higher degree of accountability from families supporting students who were absent from whole school events such as the swimming or athletics carnival, opening mass or Damascus day. Improved outcomes were achieved by notifying the student community that optional school events such as the ski trip or College formals would only be available to those who supported whole school events. Where absences occurred, even though parents had contacted the College, they were asked to provide an explanation for the reason for the absence. Where no attempt had been made to contact the College, the family was asked if there was a particular reason why it would be unjust to deny their student access to these optional activities. This strategy appeared to support improved attendance as the year progressed.

Goal 5.6: to promote Damascus College in the wider community as the school of 'first choice'.**Actions**

- Implement the Damascus College Communications and Marketing Plan

Achievements

The Damascus College Communications and Marketing Plan allows for a structured approach to promoting the College. The Communications and Marketing Plan is a comprehensive document which identifies the College's primary stakeholders, the key messages the College wishes to impart to these stakeholders, the methods of communication the College will utilise to achieve this as well as the proposed timing of these communications. The Communications

and Marketing Plan is primarily implemented by the Leader of School Development, however other staff members also contribute. Anecdotally, we are led to believe that the College is building a positive and strong reputation within the wider Ballarat community.

PARENT SATISFACTION

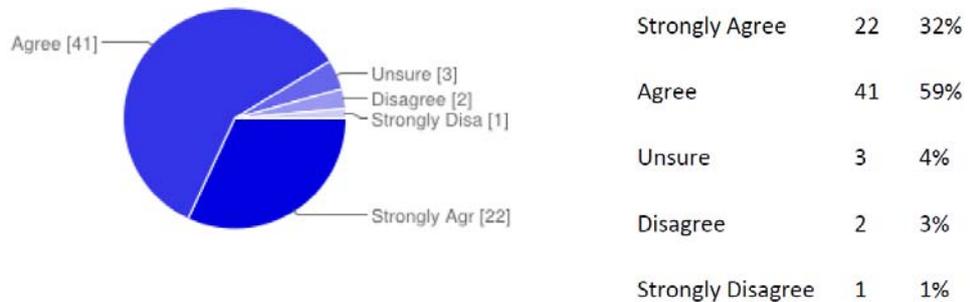
Year 7 2013 Parent Survey – Results

February 2014

69 responses

Overall

Overall I am satisfied with the quality of education provided by the College



Financial Performance

REPORTING FRAMEWORK	ACCRUAL CASH \$
Recurrent income	
School fees	\$3,905,724.00
Other fee income	\$32,032.00
Private income	\$203,370.00
State government recurrent grants	\$2,352,387.00
Australian government recurrent grants	\$7,978,333.00
Total recurrent income	\$14,471,846.00
Recurrent Expenditure	
Salaries; allowances and related expenses	\$9,986,602.00
Non salary expenses	\$3,981,949.00
Total recurrent expenditure	\$13,878,551.00
Capital income and expenditure	
Government capital grants	\$256,738.00
Capital fees and levies	\$308,311.00
Other capital income	\$9,092.00
Total capital income	\$574,141.00
Total capital expenditure	\$3,496,199.00
Loans (includes refundable enrolment deposits and recurrent, capital and bridging loans)	
Total opening balance	\$4,433,178.00
Total closing balance	\$5,483,679.00

Note that the information provided above does not include the following items:

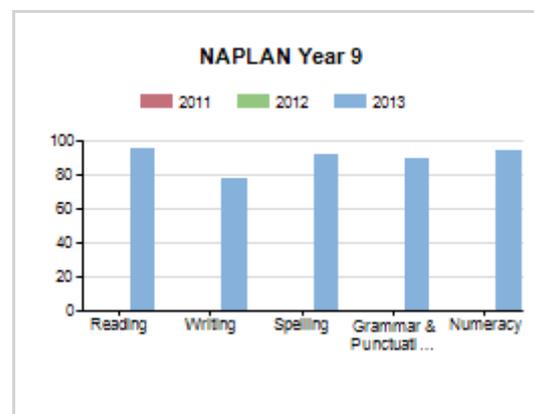
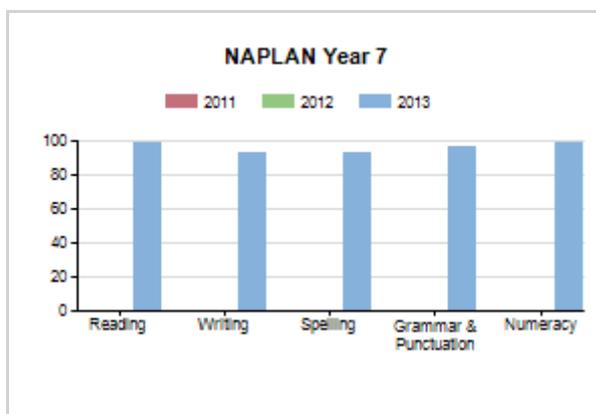
System levies charged to individual schools, intra-systemic transfers and diocesan supplementary capital fund (SCF) supported borrowings for primary schools. The information provided is not comparable with other educational sectors. This VRQA template is not comparable to the ACARA school-level income reporting requirements which are to be reported on the MySchool website. ACARA school level reporting requirements will require system level income from Government grants and some private income to be allocated by school. This will be a small adjustment in relation to the total level of school resources. At this stage, recurrent income from Government sources, school generated income and capital expenditure are to be reported by schools. Additionally when assessing the private income of the school include both recurrent and capital school fees.

VRQA Compliance Data

E2075
Damascus College, Mount Clear

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS

NAPLAN TESTS	2011 %	2012 %	2011–2012 Changes %	2013 %	2012–2013 Changes %
YR 07 Reading	0.0	0.0	0.0	98.9	0.0
YR 07 Writing	0.0	0.0	0.0	92.6	0.0
YR 07 Spelling	0.0	0.0	0.0	93.6	0.0
YR 07 Grammar & Punctuation	0.0	0.0	0.0	96.3	0.0
YR 07 Numeracy	0.0	0.0	0.0	99.5	0.0
YR 09 Reading	0.0	0.0	0.0	95.8	0.0
YR 09 Writing	0.0	0.0	0.0	77.6	0.0
YR 09 Spelling	0.0	0.0	0.0	92.4	0.0
YR 09 Grammar & Punctuation	0.0	0.0	0.0	90.0	0.0
YR 09 Numeracy	0.0	0.0	0.0	93.8	0.0



YEARS 9–12 STUDENT RETENTION RATE

Years 9–12 Student Retention Rate

35.33%

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	%
Year 7	95.35
Year 8	93.82
Year 9	93.79
Year 10	94.01
Overall average attendance	94.24

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE	
Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	91.58%

STAFF RETENTION RATE	
Staff Retention Rate	96.43%

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	
Doctorate	0.00%
Masters	19.74%
Graduate	55.26%
Certificate Graduate	6.58%
Degree Bachelor	80.26%
Diploma Advanced	34.21%
No Qualifications Listed	2.63%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class	2
Teaching Staff (Head Count)	101
FTE Teaching Staff	113.045
Non-Teaching Staff (Head Count)	45
FTE Non-Teaching Staff	34.862
Indigenous Teaching Staff	0

MEDIAN NAPLAN RESULTS FOR YEAR 9	
Year 9 Reading	579.60
Year 9 Writing	546.20
Year 9 Spelling	580.80
Year 9 Grammar & Punctuation	561.40
Year 9 Numeracy	567.90

SENIOR SECONDARY OUTCOMES	
VCE Median Score	28
VCE Completion Rate	100%
VCAL Completion Rate	90%