

2015

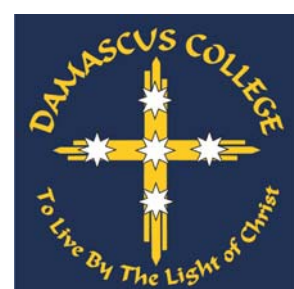
ANNUAL REPORT

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 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
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2015 school year under the Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth) and the Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)

16th May 2016

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.

2015 allowed the College to revel in 20 years of operation and the Damascus contribution to the development of young Ballarat women and men. Throughout the year we conducted a series of events that celebrated our identity as a contemporary Catholic educational community.

Our College is set in a beautiful setting with remarkable views and 22 Hectares 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 prior to the commencement of the College 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 for looking out for those in need.

We commenced the 2015 College year with 1021 students and 130 staff. We welcomed 200 new Year 7's through to 122, 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.

2015 theme

"Growing in strength, wisdom and grace". Luke 2:40

Why do we have a theme each year? As a Catholic Secondary education provider it is important that we continually revisit our purpose. For Damascus College our purpose is encapsulated in our Vision statement; *We are a dynamic Christ centre learning community which values each member. The College offers learning opportunities which inspire and challenge each student to reach their potential and contribute confidently to the global community.*

Our 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 this theme, the intent has been to build on recent themes which were designed to link our core business of learning and teaching to our mission to nurture the love of God.

2015 was defined by the 20th anniversary of the formation of Damascus College and the theme was drawn from the Luke's Gospel and the scripture story about the young Jesus and how he returned to Nazareth, his own community, with his family and grew in strength, wisdom and grace. For the Damascus community our students grow in physical strength as the mature, but hopefully the College also supports them to grow in strength of belief in our God and our capabilities. Wisdom encapsulates so much more than content and hopefully we are laying the foundations for young people to grow in wisdom as they mature and finally Grace speaks of God's divine love for each and every one of us. In considering the theme we felt there were many benefits in reflecting on the concept of graciousness throughout the year and this was strongly aligned with building resilience.

As a College celebrating 20 years and continuing to grow it is important that we continue to draw inspiration from the Holy Scriptures. As we mature as individuals and as a college, it remains important to consider how we are growing in strength, wisdom and grace. Our liturgies, reflections and prayers were be framed by our theme and as members of the community we were invited to explore the concepts of strength, wisdom and grace more fully.

Principal's Report

It is great to be able to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Damascus College in 2015. It has been an amazing year, reflective of the young men and women who walk these beautiful grounds every day.

In celebrating this special milestone, we tried to select a theme for the year which captured the growth in our College, but also appreciated the maturing of founding tenets that were gifted by the Sisters of Mercy and the priests of the parishes that support Damascus College. Our theme "Growing in Strength, Wisdom and Grace" (Lk 2:40) is drawn from Luke's Gospel and the scripture story about the young Jesus and how he returned to Nazareth, his own community, with his family and grew in strength, wisdom and grace. For the Damascus community our role has been to nurture students to ensure that the students grow not only in physical strength but also in strength of belief in our loving God. Wisdom encapsulates so much more than knowledge and hopefully Damascus has provided the foundations for young people to grow in wisdom as they mature. Finally, Grace speaks of God's divine love for each and every one of us, and we are called to be a community where the gift of grace is present in our daily activities and interactions.

As a College celebrating 20 years and continuing to grow, it is important that we continue to draw inspiration from the Holy Scriptures. As we mature as both individuals and as a college, it remains important to consider how we are growing in strength, wisdom and grace. Our liturgies, reflections and prayers throughout the year were framed by our theme and as members of the College we have each been invited to explore the concepts of strength, wisdom and grace more fully throughout 2015.

My role as Principal of the College is enriched by those from whom I receive my counsel. Co-Governors; Sr Berenice Kerr of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea and Fr Adrian McInerney on behalf of the local parishes are exceptional leaders in their vision for our College. This vision is enacted by the Damascus College Board and I thank Board Chair Vin Dillon, Deputy Chair; Joe Cahir and Board members; Jane Collins, Brett Bryant, Stephen Carey, Sr Liz Dowling, Marnie Cooper, Fr Kevin Maloney, Paulene Barton, Jane Collins, Bill Slatter and Brendan Maher for their incredibly generous voluntary contribution to the development of Damascus College as a vibrant learning community. The commitment of each of these individuals is genuinely outstanding.

It was a great privilege for the Damascus community to welcome Bishop Paul Bird to celebrate our 20th anniversary Mass in March and we were honoured to have both Bishop Bird and Bishop Emeritus, Peter Connors present for our festivities.

And who will forget the events of our 20th celebrations; pipers Kirk Baine of Year 10 and Adrian Newman filled the John Shannon centre with Amazing Grace. The biggest cake many of us are ever likely to see was cut and shared following Mass, with literally bucket loads of butter icing being consumed by Damascus students. The 20th anniversary dinner was a wonderful evening with great reflections from former students; Grant Wyatt and John Bath, staff member; Sr Marie Davey and former staff member; Tony Barrett, together with extraordinary performances from

musical performer; Brent Trotter and operatic singer; Bridget Davies. The event was a wonderful tribute to the work of our Leader of School Development, Corrina Dichiera.

We began the 2015 College year with 200 new Year 7 students to make up a total of 1019 students, 794 Families and 130 Staff. As I sit back and reflect on the year I recall the enormous diversity of student opportunity that exists across the College. Some examples that come to mind include; an amazing Damascus Day and Damascus Has Talent final, the wonderful work of our Energy Breakthrough Team (EBT), the prolific representation of Damascus students in the Next Gen exhibition at the Ballarat Art Gallery, the Centenary of the ANZAC landing commemoration, "Parma night" for Timor Leste, Year level Masses, raising \$8,536 for Project Compassion, the Numeracy Week Games Day for primary schools, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day liturgies and breakfasts, Shave for a Cure, the Periodic Table Challenge, the Science Careers Expo, the Launch of the Murrnong Trail, the VCAL camp to Melbourne and market day, the Junior Social, the formals, Graduation Mass and Dinner, the Year Eight *Runner* excursions, the ski trip, and extraordinary academic achievements - these are but a few of the very diverse opportunities that supported classroom learning throughout 2015.

Damascus consolidated its place as an emerging rowing school fielding 8 crews in this year's Head of the Lake and competing strongly across all classes. The College won several BAS premierships. Our refurbished oval has become a showpiece of Ballarat sporting facilities and has been heavily utilised for Soccer throughout the winter terms.

The East Timor immersion continues to be an amazing opportunity for Damascus students. The fundraising and social evening that is the Trivia Night was again an enormous success. In 2015 the Damascus community raised over \$20,000 to support the school community of Santa Maria in Ainaro, this was a wonderful achievement and the students and staff led by Adrian Newman were great ambassadors for our College. Brendan Bawden in his capacity as Indonesian teacher also led a group of 25 students on a study tour of Indonesia. This experience along with the cultural elements included a language study course for two days which was positively received by Damascus students. This trip was an amazing learning opportunity and an important part of the Damascus tradition.

Damascus continued to provide a range of parental, alumni and community engagement opportunities in 2015. Hugh van Cuylenburg of The Resilience Project worked with Damascus students, parents and staff to help achieve the vision of The Resilience Project, which is to assist young Australians be mentally healthy. This program included themes that were picked up throughout 2015 as we created opportunities to express our gratitude for the good things in our lives as a means of building positive mental health.

2015 saw the commencement of the 1:1 technology rollout to Year 7 & 8 students with Microsoft Surface Pro's to support contemporary learning and teaching. This was the first phase in a new age of learning for students and teachers as personal devices began to be adopted in the classroom.

Each year we welcome and farewell a number of staff and I would like to acknowledge the retirement and acclaim the work of Yvette Nesire –McNeil finished up in her role as Alumni

Officer at the end of 2015 following a teaching and support role that has spanned 25 years at St Martin's and then Damascus. Di Falkinder who has been in the St Martin's Resource Centre since 2003 also retired this year. Graham Bright who led the development of the College magazine also retired after a career of mathematics and information technology teaching, Graham has been part of the Damascus team since 2009. Sallie Burke-Muller also left a big hole as she transitioned to the role of Deputy Principal at Catholic College Bendigo after serving Damascus College for the past 21 years and Sacred Heart for 8 years prior to that. Helen Turley and Marg Bruty also concluded relatively short but effective terms of learning support at the College. Peter Gay retired mid-year. Peter had been a part of Damascus College and St Martins in the Pines for the last 25 years. Pete was Property Services Manager for the formation of Damascus College and the again through the period of campus amalgamation and had made an enormous contribution to the College. I thank and acknowledge all of the retiring and exiting staff for their commitment to the students of this school. I wish Peter, Yvette, Di, Helen, Marg, Graham and Sallie good health and happiness in the future. This year we welcomed Tom Nash, Christie Stevens, Jessica Dunstan and Alan Strange to the staff team.

Damascus College has a wonderful reputation for dramatic arts and the two performances of 2015 were no exception. The thirteenth production of "The Final Hours" has seen this representation of Jesus' final hours on earth, performed during Holy Week, span a quarter of a century at Damascus. The setting for this predominately outdoor production is beautiful and students and community members were touched by the extraordinary engagement that students brought to their respective roles. In a completely different dramatic genre, the production of Alfred Hitchcock's comedy "The 39 Steps" showcased the students' diverse skills and the renowned leadership talents of Andrew Seeary and Nicole Burness in this area. It is a great feature of our College.

Our student leaders have acted as role models to younger students and are regularly called upon to be ambassadors for the College. The calibre of our student leaders is a wonderful strength of our community. I extend my congratulations to those students who assumed formal leadership positions this year. I thank College Captains Marie Economou and Ben Taggart for their wonderful contribution. The Year 12 class of 2015 has been an enthusiastic group of young men and women, 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.

I also acknowledge College Dux Sophie Anstis and congratulate her on achieving an ATAR ranking of 97.25 out of a possible 99.95. Sophie has also been recognised by being invited to exhibit her photography work and the developmental processes as part of the prestigious VCE TopArts Exhibition, as an exemplar to other students. She has accepted an offer from RMIT to study Criminology and Psychology in 2016. 170 students undertook a unit $\frac{3}{4}$ study across 45 VCE & VET courses in 2015. The College's median study score of 28 is movement in the right direction, albeit not moving towards better than 30 as quickly as we would hope. All of the 13 students who undertook VCAL in their final year of schooling achieved their certificate successfully.

Damascus College has been on an incredible journey over the past twenty years and whilst the road has not always been smooth, our community has shown great resilience and an absolute

determination to build a College which provides a safe and inspiring environment in which our students can grow and learn. The events of 2015 have demonstrated that the College truly is “Growing in Strength, Wisdom and Grace”, and I am very proud to be playing a part in the history of this wonderful College.

In my role as Principal I thank all members of the Damascus community for your support of our College in 2015.

College Board Report

The week of March 19th to March 24th 2015 was a very significant one for Damascus College. The whole College community came together to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the College. Celebrations included a whole school Mass, the construction of a time capsule which was subsequently buried in the grounds for opening and viewing by a future generation of the College, the sharing of an enormous birthday cake and the wonderful 20 year anniversary dinner on the Saturday evening. All connected to the College, whether that connection was as a student or former student, staff member or past staff member, parent or a parent from past years, Board members, Governors, felt an enormous sense of pride in what the College has achieved over this 20 year period.

In celebrating the past we cannot afford to dwell there. We honour this past through planning well. The 2015 Board of Directors has had planning for the future as a key focus throughout the year through its involvement in a process to establish a strategic direction for Damascus College. The Board is looking to developing a common sense of purpose and direction for the period 2016 - 2020. In approaching this work the words of John Paul II in Novo Millenio Inuente in 2000 are appropriate

“...remember the PAST with gratitude,

live the PRESENT with enthusiasm

and look forward to the FUTURE with confidence:

JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

GOVERNANCE

Damascus College Ltd

The movement of the College from an incorporated body to a Company Limited by Guarantee has been an extremely slow and at times frustrating process. This transition is now complete. I would like to thank Board Member, Brett Bryant and Stacey Grose from BJT Legal for the provision of legal expertise and their patience. Special thanks to our Business Manager, Paul Jans who has incurred a significant extra workload through this change.

Members

The two members of the College are Father Adrian McInerney nominee of the Association of Canonical Administrators of Damascus and Sister Berenice Kerr RSM representing the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea. Although the formal title for these two positions is a Member of the Company, it has been decided to continue to use the term Governor in everyday communication.

Father Adrian and Sister Berenice have an outstanding commitment to our College. They have made attendance at Board Executive meetings a priority, rarely missing any of these early morning meetings. They are extraordinarily generous with their time in attending College functions

and always show an interest in any aspect of the College operation. They are always readily available to listen and offer advice and support when it is sought. Thank you Father Adrian and Sister Berenice.

Board Meetings

The Board of Directors met on ten occasions through 2015. The October meeting was dissolved due to a lack of a quorum. The average number of Directors in attendance at Board meetings was 70%. Whilst acknowledging the commitment of Directors to attendance at meetings, the pattern of inconsistent attendance remains a concern. For the second year running one meeting did not go ahead because of a lack of a quorum and another only had a quorum for part of the meeting. Consistency of attendance is necessary to enable a high functioning Board.

All meetings operated with an agenda that had been distributed prior to the meeting along with the minutes and other associated meeting documentation. For this the Board is indebted to the Board Executive Assistant, Tina Munro. Tina is quite amazing with her attention to detail, ensuring that nothing is forgotten before, during and after the meeting. Thank You Tina.

Board Membership

Over the past three years the Board has had two Directors resign without replacement and there were two current Directors whose term of office will conclude at the AGM. As a result of this coupled with the fact that the Board has not had a full quota of membership for a number of years, the need to develop a realistic succession plan was identified as a priority for the Board. The initial step was to undertake a comprehensive search process to identify potential Directors. These people were invited to an Information Evening in which the governance structures of the College and the role of the Board was explained. Those who wished to be considered for Directorship were interviewed by the Governors and the Board Chairperson. As a result the Board now has five new Directors, Marc Amos, Michael Myers, Lucy O'Beirne, Amanda Western and Ray Wright, all of whom I am sure will add a further breadth of expertise, experience and enthusiasm to the work of the Board.

Mr Peter Morris concludes his term of office at the AGM. Thank you Peter for all you have contributed both as a Director and also as the Chair of the Catholic School Culture sub-committee. In addition your commitment to the College was always clearly evident through your presence at numerous College functions and your promotion of the College to the wider community.

Association of Canonical Administrators

The Directors are most appreciative of the continued support provided to the College by its Canonical Administrators. The priests are always most interested in the operation of the College and continue to make themselves available for whole school and year level Masses. The Association met formally in January 2015 and these meetings are now an annual event. The revised statutes of the Association are awaiting approval from Bishop Bird. Thank you to Father Ian Waters from Melbourne who has provided ongoing Canonical legal advice in relation to the revision of the statutes. The Board thanks Father Kevin Maloney who has made an excellent contribution to its work through attendance at Board meetings. Father Kevin's commitment is especially noteworthy as in addition to Damascus College he has canonical responsibility for four

primary schools. At the start of 2016 Father Peter Sherman became the priest's representative on the Board.

ISMAPNG

The Board through its chairperson and the College Principal continues to have a strong, positive relationship with the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea. In March Matthew Byrne, Sr Marie and I attended the Mercy Governance Forum in Sydney. This forum was an opportunity to meet with the Executive Officers, Board Chairs and Governors of the diverse ISMAPNG ministries across Australia.

The Institute offers a range of professional development for Boards with the appointment of a number of new Directors it may be opportune for the Board to take up some of these opportunities. The Board has continued to support the involvement of staff in the **Mercy Leadership Program & Dublin Pilgrimage**. This is a 6 day program which offers leaders in Mercy ministries the opportunity to be inspired by the founding story and discover what leadership in Mercy ministry asks of them.

BOARD OPERATION

College Review

In June the Board was pleased to participate in the College Review primarily through the participation of Vin Dillon and Joe Cahir in a full day review panel meeting. At the August Board meeting Helen Goode presented a report of the Review. Helen felt the College should be proud of the outcomes since the last review was held. The review report has formed the basis for the School Improvement Plan and also informed the Strategic Plan process.

Strategic Plan

A new Damascus College Strategic Plan needed to be developed in anticipation of the expiry of the 2010 - 2015 plan. The Board appointed Philomena Billington as the facilitator of the process. In the second half of the year involvement in the Strategic Plan development was the major focus of the Board's work. To the end of 2015 the Board had worked with Philomena on four occasions. It has been very apparent that the College has been fortunate to have a facilitator with such expertise and experience. The new Strategic Directions statement will be launched in mid-2016.

Formation

A new initiative in 2015 was for the Board to participate in a professional development seminar on School Governance. The Board was delighted to welcome the Board of St Francis Xavier School, Ballarat East to the seminar. The evening was facilitated by Don Walkley, Executive Director of the Australian Institute for School Governance. The seminar focused upon a number of issues including Standards for Governance, Forward Planning, Risk Frameworks and Succession Planning. Both Boards were very positive about the evening and felt that such formation should be an annual event.

Sub-Committees

Essential to the effectiveness of the Board is the sub-committee structure. 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), Brendan Maher (Learning & Teaching), Marnie Cooper (Leadership & Management until April) & Sr Marie Davey (post April), Jane Collins (School Community) and Bill Slatter (Finance & Risk Management) in chairing the sub-committees.

The following policies were approved by the Board in 2015 - Catholic School Culture; Critical Incident; Digital Citizenship; Privacy; Sponsorship; Staff Digital Communications; Student Behaviour. There is an opportunity in the future with an increased number of Directors for the sub-committee to work even more closely with the Board.

Finance

The financial position of the College remains very solid. This is due in no small way to the diligence and competence of the College Business Manager, Paul Jans. Each meeting the Board receives a comprehensive financial report which allows it to be fully aware of the current financial status of the College. Thanks go to Paul Jans for his commitment in ensuring the Board is fully briefed and to Bill Slatter for chairing the Board Financial sub-committee. The approval of the College Budget, the establishment of the Student Fee level and the acceptance of the audited Annual Financial Statement were key activities for the Board in the financial area. Following a review of the College risk factors and the need for a risk framework to be established, the responsibilities of the Finance Sub-Committee have been widened to include Risk Management.

THANKS

At the end of the 2015 school year my role as Board Chairperson concluded. At this Annual Meeting my tenure as a Director of Damascus College finishes. It has been a privilege to have been on the Board for the past seven years. During that time I have marvelled at the growth of the College, in becoming a proud, bold and confident Catholic co-educational secondary college. I know that such growth will continue.

The Board is in good hands under the leadership of Joe Cahir. Joe has been a most supportive Deputy Chairperson and I have valued greatly his analytic abilities in discerning the best way forward and his practical and honest advice. Thanks very much Joe.

Thank you to the staff of the College. I have often commented on how much I admire the staff for what they do day in day out in providing a rich learning experience and a caring environment for 1000 plus Damascus students. I have always felt welcomed and have appreciated the discussions across a wide range of topics.

Finally thank you to Matthew Byrne who apart from one meeting has been the principal or acting co-principal for my whole time on the Board. Rarely in my thirty years in Catholic Education have I met a leader who is so committed to his faith, so passionate and excited about student learning and teacher development, enjoys young people so much and above all is so humble about what

he has achieved. As the Board Chairperson, working with Matthew has been an absolute pleasure

Every Blessing to all at Damascus. May the Spirit continue to guide you, inspire you and challenge you.

Vin Dillon

Catholic School Culture

Introduction

Damascus College's ongoing commitment to the local Catholic Church and to personal spiritual development was ever evident in 2015, the year in which we adopted as our theme the College Motto based on the a verse from the Holy Gospel according to Luke, "*Growing in strength, wisdom and grace*" (2:40). The year formally began with Mass in the John Shannon Centre celebrated by Bishop Paul Bird as part of our 20th Anniversary Celebration Day. This was the first of many anniversary events.

The Damascus Day Mass was similarly themed drawing on Luke's imperative to grow in strength, wisdom and grace. Our focus was on the gift of God's grace and our prayer was that many may take up the opportunities available for young people to cultivate this gift in their lives.

Fr Richard Leonard SJ led the staff Religious Education Day on Monday 13th July. His topic was challenging and his presentation was very engaging for staff "Lights! Camera! Action! How can Catholic Education form believers in a media saturated culture?" As people engaged in Catholic education we are called to live out our faith - to speak and live out the Good News. What strategies can we put in place to ensure that our people are prepared to critically engage with the media saturated culture while holding true to their faith in Jesus and the Community of the Church?

In 2015 the Catholic school ethos team was led by Tony Haintz acting as the Assistant Principal for Catholic School Culture. The team included Mr Adrian Newman acting as Liturgy and Retreats Coordinator, and Mr Martin Ryan as the Religious Education Coordinator. In a year of College review, the area of Catholic School Culture team prepared a detailed account of its strategic direction for reviewers. It also reported regularly at the Damascus College Board Sub-committee for Catholic School Culture. This sub-committee, with Mr Peter Morris in the Chair, worked on policies of the Damascus College Board Inc. and offered support to the work of those at the coal face.

The priorities for the Catholic School Culture team in 2015 continued to fed off the recommendations from the 2011 School Review

- *Prayer Spaces and Chapel: Create an environment of prayer and liturgy to allow the community to engage fully in the experience.* In semester one each year level prepared a celebration in the Eucharist in the Chapel. In the second semester each class prepared a formal class prayer to be conducted in this sacred space. Morning Mass was celebrated for both Mother's Day and Father's Day. Both events were followed by breakfast and were well attended. Weekly staff prayer moved to the Chapel space.
- *Accreditation Opportunities Using Staff: Develop the growth of staff in Catholic identity using qualified personnel.* The Catholic Culture team continued an ongoing program of after school lectures to further the Catholic understanding of staff members at the College. These continued to be very well attended and appreciated by staff members.
- *Review of the CPDA Melbourne Experience through the lens of Catholic Teaching on Social Justice.* The Christian Personal Development Award year 10 Introductory

Program includes a Melbourne experience that needed to be refocused. In 2015 links were made with the Big Issue, which supports homeless, marginalised and disadvantaged people. This link has heightened the Social Justice education outcomes for this experience.

- *Mercy Ethos Staff Development:* Key Staff members attend Mercy Ethos Inductions Programs including the Mercy Story in Lancefield.
- *REAP Religious Education Accreditation Program:* engage key staff in REAP to further leadership development in a Catholic School. Two staff members began their studies toward a Graduate Certificate of Religious Education through the REAP Program.
- An ongoing evaluation of the Reflection Day and Retreat programs has begun and we look forward to the results of this longitudinal study. The key questions are: To what extent was the experience clearly about Jesus and God; to what extent did the experience included significant times of prayer; to what extent was the experience clearly about leading a Christian life. Students complete the evaluation online following the experience.
- The Results of survey instruments, the Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project (ECSIP) and the School Improvement Framework (SIF) which also identifies data that is relevant to Catholic School Culture were being considered in 2015. They are forming a part of the discussion in the revision of the college strategic plan.

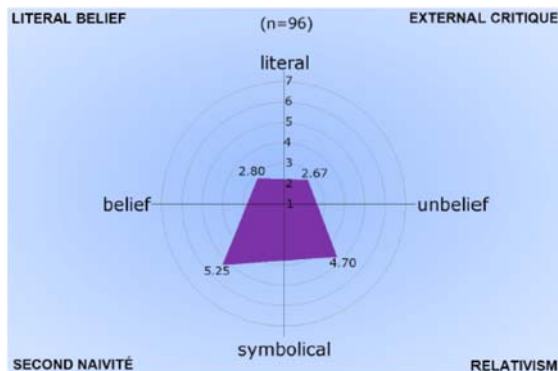
Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project (ECSIP)

The results of this survey instrument were shared with the Damascus College Board and Religious Education Faculties in 2015. ECSIP gives an empirical basis to our understanding about the Catholicity of our school and a common language with which to discuss it. It offers direction in which key sectors of the community wish to take the school and provides criteria for the school renewal process. ECSIP will have implications for many area of college life including: employment of staff; professional learning of staff; teacher training; school resourcing; school-parish relationships. There are four scales in the survey

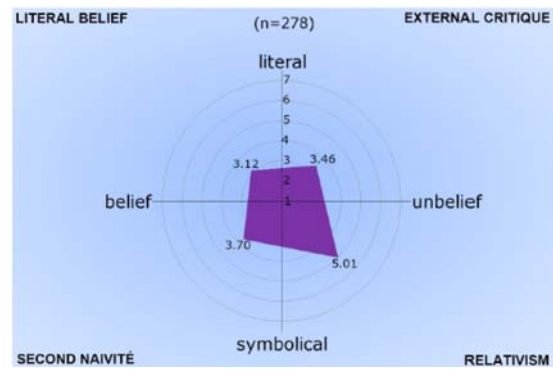
- Melbourne Scale
- Post-critical belief (PCB) scale
- Victoria Scale
- Doyle Questionnaire

This example from the Melbourne Scale indicates that while staff members have a tendency to religious faith that is symbolic, our students tend toward unbelief that is not literal.

STAFF



STUDENTS



School Improvement Framework (SIF) was reported on in the 2014 report (Prepared in early 2015) and as part of the review documentation prepared for the school reviewer in 2015.

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

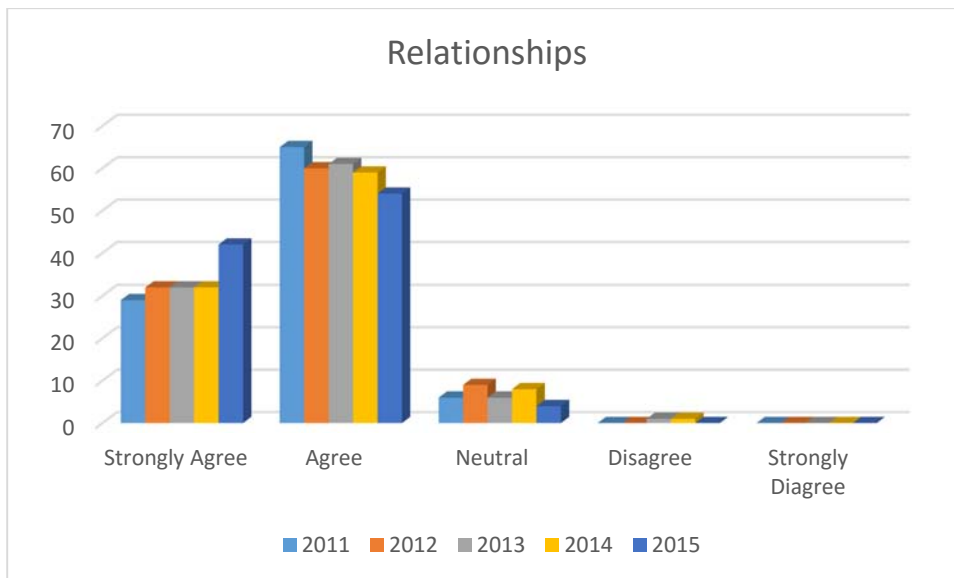
Goal 4. To ensure policies and programs reflect Gospel values, especially social justice

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

In 2015 goal 2 was the focus of the strategic plan but there was significant work completed on goals 3 and 4.

Achievements

Our data from the Year 7 Parent Survey continues to be positive in this regard. Parents are asked to rate the College on how well it fosters relationships based on respect, responsibility, honesty, truth and inclusion.



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

Actions

- Increased Staff Eucharistic and non-Eucharistic Prayer experiences.
- Establish baseline data for success of the Retreat / Reflection Day program

Achievements

Eucharistic and non-Eucharistic Prayer experiences

Our Lady of Mercy Chapel was blessed by Bishop Paul Bird at the conclusion of the opening Mass on Friday 14th February 2014 and in 2015 the chapel use was maintained. Staff prayer on Thursday mornings in the chapel using the Lectio Divina prayer form based on the gospel reading for the following Sunday. This saw growth in attendance in 2015. More staff were involved in Year Level Mass experiences in 2015 but there is more that might be done in this area.

Morning Mass was celebrated for both Mother's Day and Father's Day. Both events were followed by breakfast saw increased support in 2015. A full Liturgical Calendar for 2015 is included as an appendix.

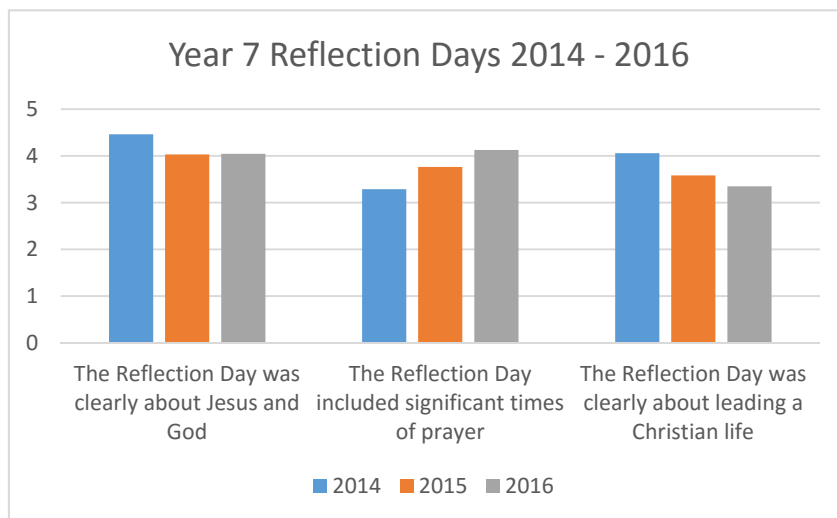
Retreat / Reflection Day program

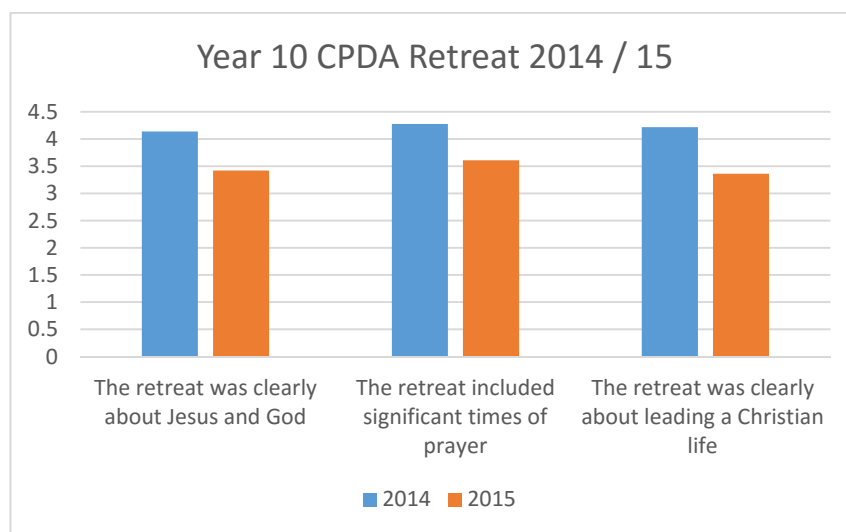
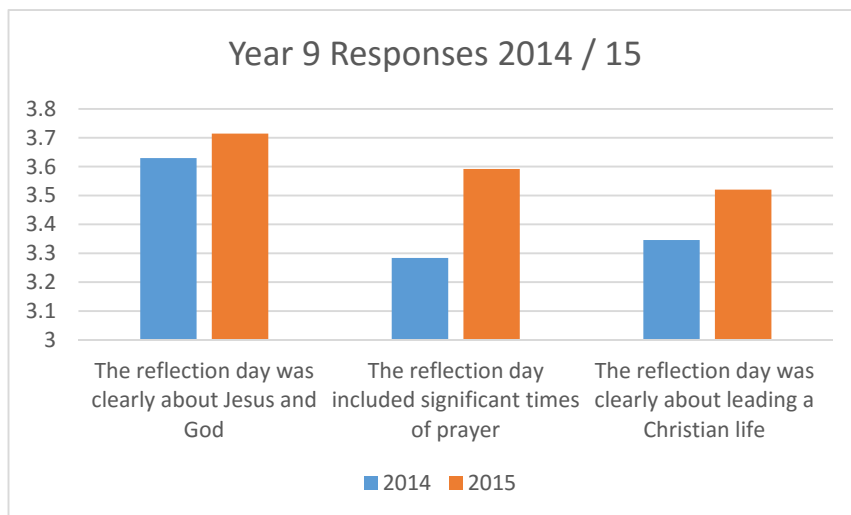
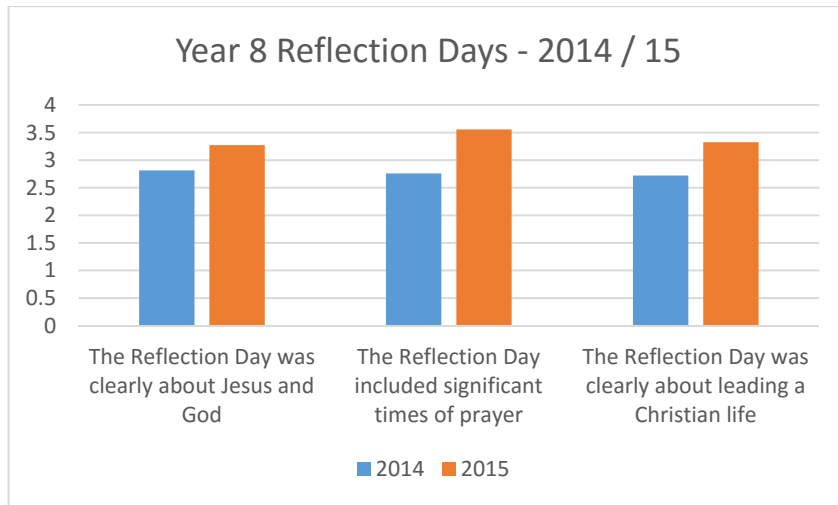
From early in 2014 student attitudes to the retreats and reflection days began to be evaluated using an online survey instrument. Along with some general questions about venue, process,

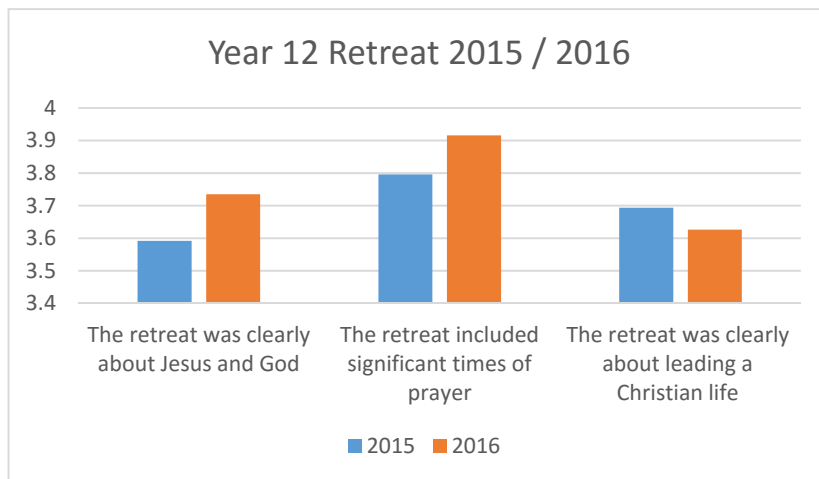
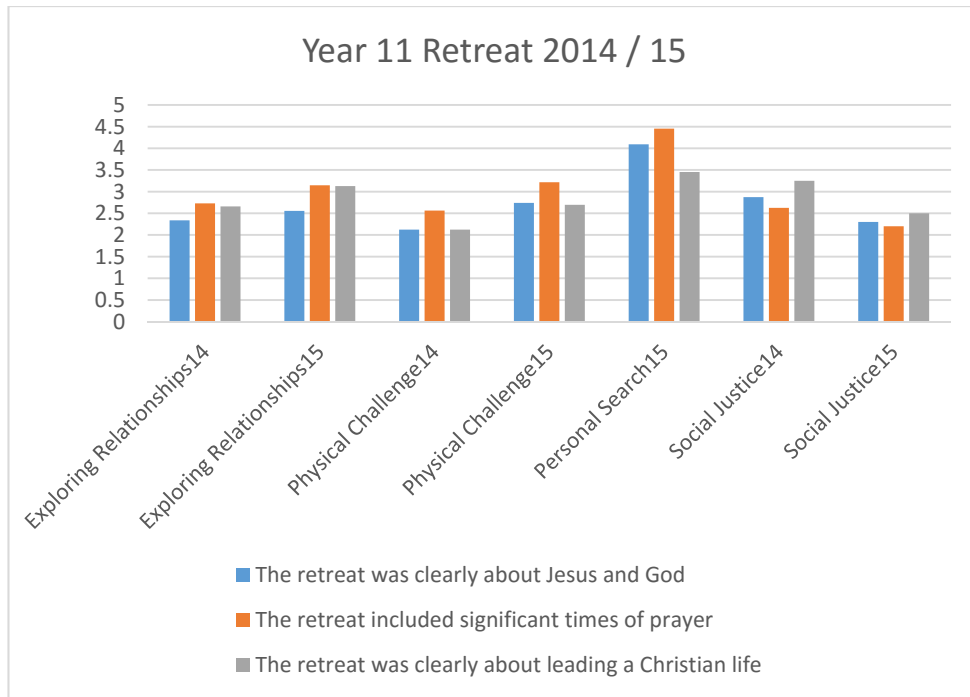
outcomes and the presenter three key content statements were put to students in each survey with a ranking system. Responses were sought on a five point scale.

- The retreat/reflection day was clearly about Jesus and God
- The retreat/reflection day included significant times of prayer
- The retreat/reflection day was clearly about leading a Christian life

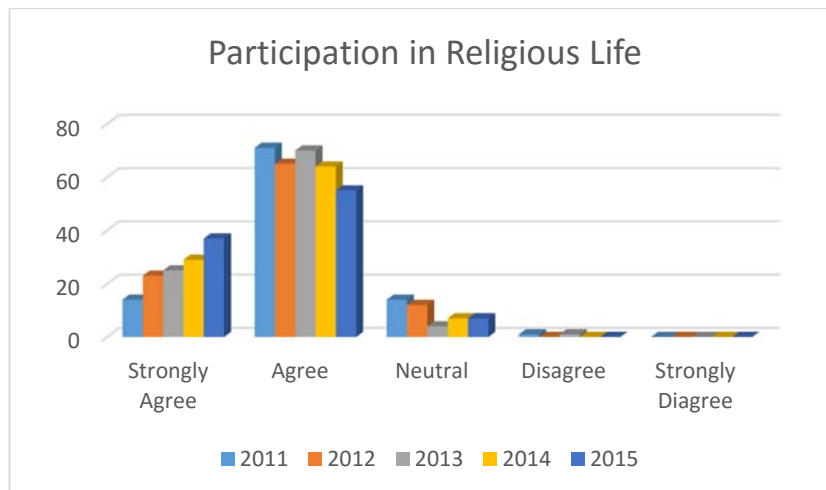
It is hoped that this baseline data will provide a greater sense of the value of the programs from the point of view of these intended outcomes. It is intended that the evaluations be ongoing and that longitudinal data will show a positive return in these intentions that are so central of the retreat and reflection day process.







Our Year 7 parents continue to be certain that Damascus College provides sufficient opportunities for participation in the life, prayer and ritual of the Catholic Church



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

Actions

- 20th Anniversary Celebrations
- Accreditation Opportunities using third party providers

Achievements

20th Anniversary Celebrations

At the commencement of the school year in 1995 Damascus College opened for business. The College has changed dramatically since, evolving from a two campus college into stunning single campus college at Mt Clear. Governance and management structures have also progressed, but at the heart of the college has always been the commitment to Roman Catholic faith in a co-educational secondary education setting. A 20th Anniversary was worth celebrating and what a time of remembering was.

MSP Photography's David Torrington was engaged to arrange a whole school photograph at the start of the major celebration day for the student body on 19th March. A copy of the photograph later placed into a time capsule as part of the ceremony in the John Shannon Centre and another larger copy would be hung in the Administration wing at the student entrance.

Later in the day at the 20th Anniversary Mass, Bishop Paul reflected on the founding story of Damascus College from the Acts of the Apostles Chapter 9, The Road to Damascus, and linked it to our College theme for 2015, *Growing in Strength, Wisdom and Grace*. Our prayerful petition named our commitment clearly. We prayed:

The Damascus College community is called by the wisdom and grace of God to the work of education. May we be committed to education that is challenging and inspires each person to reach their potential. God of light, hear us.

Response: God of light, hear our prayer

Stewarts Bakery was engaged to make a plain iced and decorated cake 32" x 84." The cake, with 20 sparklers alight, was moved into the JSC after Mass and ceremonially cut in front of the College by Bishop Paul Bird, Matthew Byrne, Sr. Marie Davey and the Governors Sr. Berenice Kerr and Fr. Adrian McInerney. At close hand were all the teachers who were serving at the College in 1995. The distribution of the cake took place on the oval during lunchtime.

A time capsule was also prepared and buried a few days later by Bishop Peter Connors and the Damascus School Captains, Ben Taggart and Marie-Angeline Economou. Inside the Capsule was placed: The Whole School Photograph, a copy of the 2014 School Magazine, an SD card containing a Photo Story and Images, a Staff Photograph and a contribution from each TA completing the following question:

As a Catholic School in the Mercy tradition

Damascus College Ballarat is growing in strength, wisdom and grace.

Damascus College is making a difference by...

Four water gums, representing each of the College's four houses (McAuley, O'Collins, Rice and Xavier), were also planted adjacent to the John Shannon Centre and a stand of 40 spotted gums were planted along the Geelong Road frontage, which was recently cleared as part of the widening of Geelong Road. The College's Hall of Fame, which recognises and celebrates the sporting achievements of current and past students, was also refurbished as part of the anniversary celebrations.

Then on Saturday 21st March, 193 guests gathered once again in the John Shannon Centre for the 20 year anniversary dinner. Former student Bridget Davies opened the evening with an operatic performance from Puccini's, Madame Butterfly. Principal - Matthew Byrne; Deputy Principal - Sr Marie Davey; former Deputy Principal - Tony Barrett; 2002 School Captain – Grant Wyatt and past student John Bath all reflected on the development of the College and its influence on their individual lives. Former student Brent Trotter also performed musical numbers from Fame and Jersey Boys and then Bridget concluded the evening with an aria from Bizet's opera, Carmen! It was an evening of great entertainment, wonderful food and excellent company. Sister Annette Schneider, Acting Institute Leader of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and PNG also announced at the dinner that the Institute will contribute \$30,000 to enable the restoration of the statue of St Martin de Porres, which was originally erected at the College in 1967 and now stands in the atrium of the St Martin's Resource Centre.

The statue of St. Martin de Porres, that had pride of place in the former St. Martin's in the Pines and now graces the Damascus College Resource Centre, was inspired by the life of the 16th Century Peruvian Dominican monk who, like St. Francis of Assisi, was at home with all earth's creatures.

In the 1960s, The Sisters of Mercy were acutely conscious of the natural beauty that was to be the site of the new senior secondary campus of Sacred Heart College and considered Martin to

be a fitting patron and protector. They had prayed for the canonisation of Martin in the 1950s and made their own the prayer to St. Martin.

In 1963, the young Italian artist Ernesto Murgo had just completed his Art studies at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and established the Centro Italiano D'Arte in Carlton. The Sisters commissioned him to sculpt a statue of Martin for what was to be the heart of the new campus, scheduled to open in May 1967. It was intended to capture the imagination while embodying the College motto, "In Altum Oculos Tollite" (Raise your eyes aloft). The completed statue was constructed using a fibre glass interior which was overlaid in bronze coming with a warning that the bronze overlay had a limited life-span. At that time though, there were no funds to cast our Martin in bronze.

By 2010, after more than 40 years of exposure, it was recognised that the statue was in need of urgent care and attention. But where was the money to be found? Fortunately, a generous donation was made by one of the members of the inaugural St Martin's group and a fund for the Restoration of the St Martin's Statue was established. Over the next few years, thanks to many generous individuals, groups and the Sisters of Mercy, sufficient funds became available for the project to proceed as part of the 20th Anniversary celebrations for Damascus College.

The restoration and recasting works on the St Martin statue were completed by Melbourne based sculpture foundry Coates and Wood, with artisan Mal Wood completing the works. The foundry specialises in moulding and casting works in bronze or aluminium for Australian and International artists.

Initial work on the original statue was to repair the cracks, holes and areas of fibreglass worn down by exposure to the weather. This was required to restore the structure to its original form so that the recasting would not contain the imperfections. A small change to square off the base of the statue was also made to enable it to be placed on a level surface. The statue was then cast in bronze in sections, using the lost-wax process, where a wax positive is made and then encased in a refractory mould before being burnt-out (lost). The molten metal is then poured into this heat resistant mould and the cast complete. The cast sections were then welded together to complete the reproduction of the original piece, with the mould and the original statue then broken to prevent replication. The bronze was then detailed with copper through a patination process to give the statue a similar colour profile to the aged original work. While this work was occurring, within the atrium the maintenance team were busy arranging a new base, refinishing the tiled surface and timber work and incorporating features with both water and light, to highlight the returning statue.

The timing of Martin's return in all his bronze splendour could not have been more fortuitous. He returns to raise our eyes aloft and to remind us of the need to share his concern for all the creatures of the earth community at the very time that Pope Francis draws our attention to earth's distress. Martin's return also coincides with the release of the very first images of the dwarf planet Pluto, testament to the wonders of the universe.

With Martin and all those who form part of our heritage, we raise our eyes aloft in praise and gratitude, even as we keep our gaze firmly fixed on the whole earth community and respond to its cries for mercy and compassion.

Prayer to St Martin de Porres

*Blessed by your example of unbounded charity and humility of heart,
we offer our prayers through you, St Martin de Porres.
show people of every race and nation the paths of unity and of justice,
for the honour and glory of God
and the salvation of all creation.
May we live by the light of Christ.*

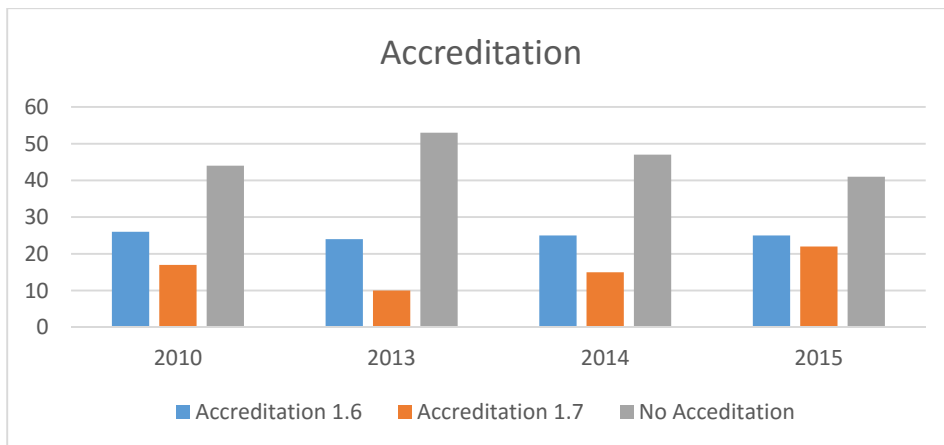
Acknowledgement of the Restoration of the St Martin de Porres Statue was a two stage event on 30th July. In an extended TA time there was an unveiling of the statue area streaming via YouTube into TA rooms. Student Representative Council Members removed the screens that had hidden the restoration works. In the evening a gathering of many Sister of Mercy and friends of the College formally acknowledged the work.

The College also commissioned and sold a Damascus Anniversary Rose to mark the 20 year celebrations.

Accreditation

While the offering of in-house opportunities for teaching staff members to receive hours toward their Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School (CECV Policy 1.6) had been somewhat successful in an after school format since the second half of 2013, there was still a need to offer a more flexible possibility for staff. The Broken Bay Institute (North Sydney) was offering online course options for Adult Faith Development that it was hoped might be able to be accessed by staff for accreditation purposes. This involved negotiation of the protocols that apply through the director of Religious Education at the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat and led to discussions across the directors of the religious education across the CECV diocese structure. Approval came late in 2014. The concept was advertised in 2105 with some expression of interest but with no formal uptake. A new protocol will be negotiated for 2016.

Our statistics show a steady movement toward greater levels of accreditation at the College with around half of the College teaching staff having one of the types of accreditation. It is anticipated that the numbers achieving accreditation will be greater in 2016 as a result of the work in the past three years.



The Damascus Day Mass

For 21 years the College has held this major event that is a primary expression of our heritage. This tradition continued in 2015 using the theme “Growing in strength, wisdom and grace” (2:40) as a focus for our prayer. The preparations in Religious Education classrooms focused on our Trinitarian faith. Our celebrant, Fr James Kerr, reminded us that God’s love is known in mercy.

Strength	Wisdom	Grace
Father	Son	Spirit
Buff	Pink	Mauve
Body Spirit Relationship Mind Wellbeing	Understanding Right Judgement Awe and Wonder Courage Knowledge Reverence Wisdom	Compassion Joy Peace Patience Kindness Goodness Generosity Gentleness Faithfulness Modesty Self Control Chastity
A Five Aspects of the Human Person Years 7 & 8	The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit Years 9 & 10	The Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit Years 11 & 12

Mercy Ethos

The numbers of staff preparing for Mercy experiences in Dublin and attending Mercy ethos continues to grow. The induction of new staff and the induction of new POL holders into a fuller

understanding of our Catholic Heritage and traditions is an ongoing project for 2016 and beyond.

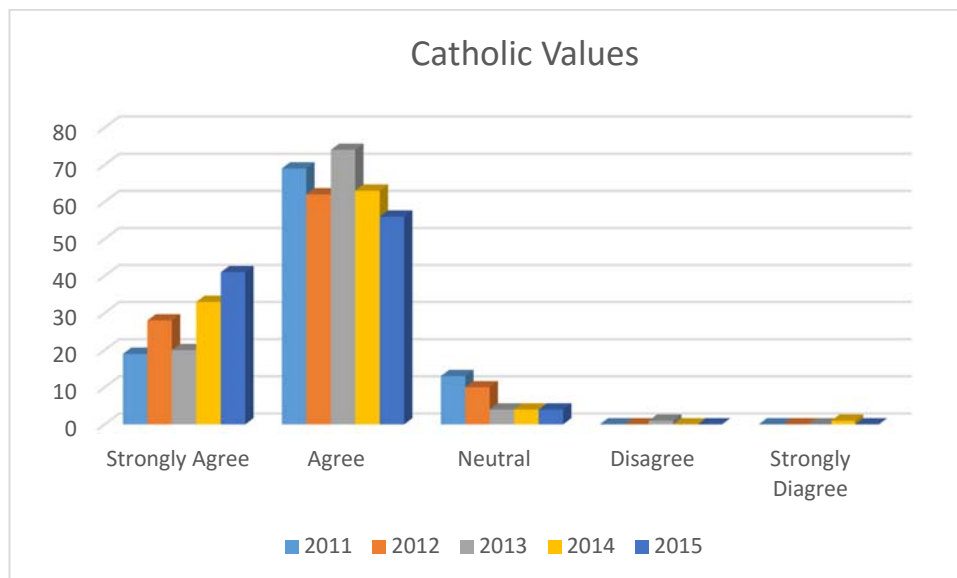
Goal 4. To ensure policies and programs reflect Gospel values, especially social justice

Actions

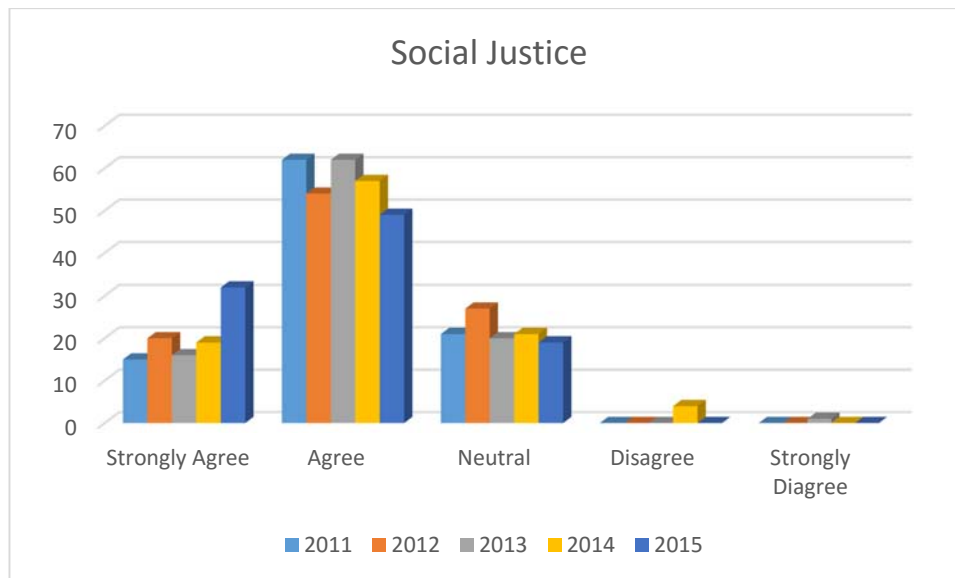
- Introducing a Justice and Eucharist Program at Year 8 Level in association with St Vincent de Paul Society

Achievements

The Year 7 Parents are able to acknowledge that Damascus College is authentic in its teaching of Catholic values.



Similarly, Year 7 Parents are very clear about the College’s commitment to social justice and when asked if the College’s program is effective, they have a strong sense that this is a positive aspect of College life.



Year 7 Mercy and Eucharist Program

Year 8 Justice and Eucharist Program

Following the success of the Year 7 Mercy and Eucharist Program of recent years, in 2015 the College introduced Justice and Eucharist Program at Year 8 Level in association with St Vincent de Paul Society. The program took year 8 religious education classes to the St Vincent de Paul service centre in the Cathedral Precinct on a day that the centre was not open to the public. Society members spoke with the students about the very hands on work of the society before the students moved to the Cathedral for the 12:05 Mass.

Supporting our friends and neighbours in Timor-Leste

Over the past ten years, Damascus has been building and nurturing a relationship with the people of Timor-Leste and in particular with the people of Ainaro, a small town located 115km from the capital Dili.

The district of Ainaro, to which the town of Ainaro belongs, shares a special relationship with the Ballarat community more broadly. In July 2005 the Ballarat City Council formally established the Ballarat Friends of Ainaro Community Committee (BFACC), providing funding and support to further develop the friendship with the Ainaro District which had commenced in a less formal way in 1999. It was through BFACC's Sister School Program that Damascus established a sister school relationship with Santa Maria College in Ainaro in 2005.

In the early years of this relationship, direct communication with Santa Maria was made difficult by the lack of infrastructure in Timor-Leste. Damascus College students sent letters and donations of educational items from time to time during this period, but it was not until 2010 that the first Damascus College staff member had an opportunity to visit Ainaro.

Tony Haintz, Assistant Principal of Catholic School Culture at Damascus (then Religious Education Coordinator), travelled with St Joseph's College Echuca on their first immersion experience to Timor-Leste in 2010. This visit took Tony to the town of Aileu, not far from Ainaro, where Sr Maryanne Dwyer, a Sister of Mercy from Ballarat and former Damascus staff member, was living. Tony then travelled onto Ainaro to establish a personal connection with the community of Santa Maria College. Upon his return to Australia, Tony led the formation of the Damascus College Timor-Leste Immersion Program for Year 11 students.

In line with the College's Christian values and teachings, the immersion program sets out to provide an experience for students which will allow them to consider the principles of human dignity, community and the common good, rights and responsibilities, options for the poor and vulnerable, solidarity and the promotion of peace. The immersion experience is now an integral part of the College's social justice program.

The first group of Year 11 students to participate in the College's immersion program travelled to Ainaro in June 2011. Since then, immersion groups have continued this tradition annually, with the 2015 cohort of fourteen students and four staff members returning to Australia in early July.

Each year the immersion group is tasked with raising awareness of the struggles faced by the people of Timor-Leste, as well as raising funds which are donated to various organisations during their travels. The 2015 immersion group raised over \$21,000 in the nine months leading up to their departure, which was donated to schools, hospitals and other non-government organisations in need of funds.

The Timor-Leste immersion experience has a powerful impact on the students and staff who take part. Four students from the early immersion groups have returned to Ainaro as volunteers during their gap year, and several students from the 2015 immersion group are already making plans to follow in their footsteps.

The relationship that has developed over time between Damascus College and the people of Timor-Leste has also allowed Damascus staff to explore the opportunity of volunteering abroad. Damascus College teacher Casey Baxter with her husband Anthony spent three months in the small town of Remexio early in 2015, teaching English in the local school, Sao Jose (Saint Joseph's). So touched were they by this experience that they have commenced a crowd funding campaign to raise money for computers at the school, to assist students reach their goal of continuing on to university.

In early 2015, we welcomed Fr John Soares to Damascus College. John had been a great support to Immersion teams in his role as assistant priest to Fr Lito in Ainaro from 2012-2014. Fr John has gone on to an assistant priest role in Remexio, supporting Casey Baxter on her visit, and to Dili as a diocesan youth animator. In early 2016 we welcomed Fr Joao Felisberto who was acting as administrator of the parish in Ainaro since Fr Lito's move to Dili following the rededication of the refurbished church in August on 2014. Fr Joao's visit was essential for the ongoing nature of the connection that Damascus College has with Santa Maria. We now look forward to working with the new Parish Priest of Ainaro, Fr Armindo de Brito.

The Ballarat Friendship Schools Forum was held at Damascus College for the third year running on Friday 20th November 2015. It included visitors from a number of the Ballarat schools who had had friendships in Ainaro District in Timor Leste for over 10 years now. The morning of activities is an introduction to Timorese culture and language conducted by the Friendship Schools Association.

Planning is already underway for the sixth group of Damascus students to visit Ainaro in June 2016. The fifteen student members of the group were brought before the Damascus College Assembly on McAuley Day. A Catholic Church Insurances (CCI) risk review of the College International excursions has been commissioned by the College across 2015/16 to bring all college excursions under a secure framework. Christopher Hall of CCI Risk Management is conducting the review with the key players.

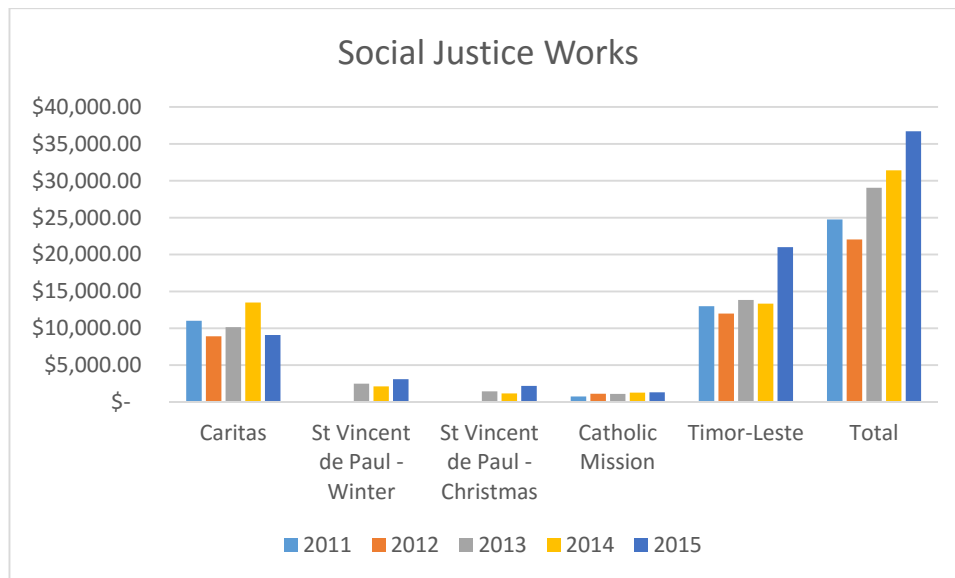
As part of the planning of the 2016 Immersion the College welcomed Fr Joao Felisberto, the administrator of Santa Maria parish in Ainaro to the College in February 2016 for his own immersion. His visit has cemented the future of the sister school arrangement as movements of Church personal in Ainaro require renegotiation.

Seeds of Justice Program

Ongoing involvement with the Seeds of Justice Project is a part of the Mercy Ethos family of the 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 Camp Araluen Anglesea in Thursday 20th and Friday 21st August 2015 was Global Justice: A Mercy Concern. Other programs with held at Templestowe. In May the theme was Mercy: Impelled to Respond; in October the theme was "Turning the Tide"

Annual Collections for Social Justice and Mercy

In 2015 the Lenten Project Compassion appeal for Caritas Australia was no longer a part of the Ron Matthews shield and the collection, although significant, was down on recent years. The winter collection of 2015 again focused on blankets for distribution by the local St. Vincent de Paul Society. There were new 30 queens size blankets purchased and these provided immediate support to the needy of our area. The contribution to Catholic Mission, through the fundraising efforts of the College, supported the global development work of the Mission Societies. Christmas collection to share with the needy families of Ballarat through the St. Vincent de Paul Society was a new initiative in 2015, replacing the Christmas baskets of the previous two years and the gifts of Christmas food of earlier time. It was very successful raising



Christian Personal Development Award

The Christian Personal Development Award (CPDA) began at Damascus College in May 2003. The twenty-sixth Year 10 CPDA Introductory Program concluded in October 2015. The program introduces the students to a certificate that they can aim to achieve in their final years of schooling at the college. For twelve 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.

In November, the Year 12 class of 2015 were the eleventh group of graduating students have the opportunity to achieve the Christian Personal Development Award (CPDA). The CPDA is awarded to students who have completed 120 balanced hours of personal development activities in the four categories: Action for Social Justice / Community Service; Spiritual Development; Physical Pursuits, Other Personal Development Activities. The CPDA has become the backbone to extra-curricular experience in the senior school. The Awards were presented at Graduation.

House Council

The House Council process in 2015 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.

Areas of ongoing focus areas in 2016

Reconciliation – Constitutional Recognition

Relocation of the Remembrance Garden

Faith Formation Document 2016-2021

Staff Formation: Fr Richard Leonard S.J. 15th August

Awakenings Review Outcomes

Family Faith Formation

CCI – International Excursions

Year 9 Nazareth House and Eucharist Program

College Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal 1: To promote the mission of the Church through building closer links between the College and parishes and parish schools.

Actions

- Host all 17 Catholic primary schools for a transition visit
- Conduct a Maths Games Day for Grade 4 students from St Alipius, SFX and Emmaus
- Invite primary staff and parents to guest speaker event in May – The Resilience Project
- Invite Catholic Primary Principal’s Network to meet at Damascus
- Invite new principal from St Brigid’s Ballan to Damascus
- Year 7 students spend a day in their old primary school
- Notify primary schools about achievements of past students
- Conduct a collaborative ‘mini-project’ with 1 or 2 primary schools
- Foster a connection with Catholic primary schools that teach French

Achievements

Damascus College has continued to consolidate its relationships with local parishes and parish primary schools throughout 2015. Fifteen of the seventeen parish primary schools undertook a transition visit to Damascus with their Grade 5 students in 2015, an increase from ten schools in the previous year. This followed a concerted effort to engage all of the primary schools in the Damascus Transition Program in 2015. One school also requested that the Damascus Transition Co-ordinator visit their school to run a specialised Science class. The College’s transition program continues to receive extremely positive feedback from primary school staff as a highly engaging experience for their students, and we know of several instances where students have returned with their parents to participate in a School Tour or an Information Evening following an enjoyable transition visit.

In addition to the transition program, Damascus hosted a Maths Games Day for Grade 4 students from Emmaus Primary School, St Francis Xavier Primary School and St Alipius Primary School during numeracy week in August. The event, now in its second year, was a highly successful day which saw approximately 140 Grade 4 students attend Damascus for an engaging day of learning, which included mentoring by a group of Damascus Year 8 students. This event provides a great opportunity for community building between the four schools within the Ballarat East parish, and

showcases Damascus not only to the students who attend, but also to the staff and parent helpers present on the day.

The Damascus College school production presents another opportunity to engage with parish primary schools and in 2015, Grade 5 students from Emmaus and St Alipius attended a performance of 'The 39 Steps' which by all accounts, was thoroughly enjoyed by the students and staff.

The annual guest speaker event at Damascus is another way in which the College engages with primary school staff and parents, with staff being invited to the professional development session and parents being invited to the evening event. The 2015 guest speaker event, The Resilience Project, was attended by over 350 people from within the Damascus and broader Ballarat community. Damascus continues to enjoy strong patronage at these events and is becoming well-known for the high calibre of guest speakers it engages, and makes available as a free event to the Ballarat community. In 2015, the College received an overwhelming amount of positive feedback from both Damascus parents as well as parents from local primary schools with regards to both the content and delivery of the guest speaker's message.

Whilst the Catholic Primary Principal's Network was invited to undertake a meeting at Damascus in 2015, they did not take up the offer this year. And whilst the new principal of St Brigid's Ballan was invited to visit the school during the Grade 5 transition visit, she was unable to attend the College on this day.

A number of new initiatives were also proposed for 2015 with regards to building closer links with parish primary schools, as listed in the action plan, however due to other priorities in 2015 such as the 20 year anniversary celebrations and the School Review, these new initiatives were not implemented.

Whilst enrolment numbers from Catholic primary schools has risen from 57 in 2013 to 73 for the 2016 school year, this is largely due to an increase in year level size at Emmaus Catholic Primary School. There has been noticeable enrolment growth from Lumen Christi, however enrolment numbers from other Catholic primary schools remains largely unchanged. Overall however, demand for Year 7 enrolment in 2016 has been unprecedented, with considerable growth coming from Buninyong Primary School and Woody Yaloak Ross Creek.

Goal 2: To become an environmentally sustainable College.

Actions

- Complete the Biodiversity Trail
- Run student activities during Environment Week
- Continue to work on the Core Module, Energy Module and Waste Module of ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic

- Investigate opportunities for rain water harvesting at Damascus
- Continue to educate the school community about the recycling program

Achievements

The greatest achievement experienced in the area of Sustainability at Damascus in 2015 was the completion of the Murrnong Trail, also known as the Biodiversity Trail. With funding received in 2014 through the Communities for Nature grant, an 800m interpretive trail was created in the bushland at Damascus College, where the rare Murrnong plant can be found. The opening of the trail on Monday 2nd November 2015 came after 12 months of hard work on the trail, which included many working bees as well as contracted labour. Students from the Green Group were actively involved in this project, as was a Year 10 student whose hand-drawn pictures can be found on the signs along the trail, accompanied by text about the many different types of flora and fauna which can be seen in the bushland. It is hoped that this resource will be utilised by students and staff for years to come.

Another great milestone has been the completion of the Energy Module through the Resource Smart AussivIC program, as well as significant progress being made on the Core Module. Staff have been working on these modules over the past few years and the efforts of the Sustainability Coordinator throughout 2015 have enabled these modules to move towards completion.

The other areas of the sustainability action plan were not achieved in 2015.

Goal 3: To actively engage parents in the College community.

Actions

- Continue to engage parents in established school events and ensure opportunities for participation are communicated via a range of methods
- Conduct an online survey with parents about parental engagement e.g. Do they feel they're engaged, what do they participate in, what would they like to participate in, how could improvements be made etc.
- Use parent occupation data (available in SAS) to tap into parent expertise, either inside the classroom or for specific school projects
- Implement two new opportunities for parental engagement eg. community choir, language soiree, House BBQ
- Continue to strengthen the TA program through initiatives led by the TA Leader
- Enable emailing of parents by class list in SIMON

Achievements

Throughout 2015 Damascus continued to strengthen engagement levels with its parent community. The rollout of the Parent Access Module (PAM) has been a key component of this, with parents now able to access a wide range of information about their student's learning progress through the online portal. Activation of the Learning Areas module within PAM in Semester 2, 2015 has enabled parents to view the learning tasks that have been set for their students in real time, along with the due date for these tasks and the task outcomes once completed. As of December 2015, there are 854 total Parent Accounts in PAM with 737 of these active account, thus translating to 86.30% of parents whom are actively engaging with the module, which is an excellent result.

The introduction of a new Position of Leadership to the College in 2015, by way of the TA Leader has also helped to strengthen the TA Program. The TA Leader has been able to provide greater confidence and structure to the TA Program as well as consistency across the College. Various strategies have been introduced by the TA Leader to assist TA's in building relationships with the students and parents. Weekly communication to TA's has occurred giving TA's the resources and confidence to interact and engage more with students and parents eg, conversation starters, PD days, quizzes, special day of the year etc.

The College has also continued to engage parents in a number of events throughout the year, with strong attendance at the Father's Day Liturgy and Breakfast (78), the Mother's Day Liturgy and Breakfast (107) and the annual Guest Speaker Event (362). Other events such as the Year 7 Meet the Teachers Evening, the morning tea for new parents on the first day of Year 7, as well as the Orientation Day morning tea also enjoyed very strong patronage.

The number of registered volunteers has also grown from 25 to 57 with particularly strong parental participation in the areas of Rowing, EBT and the Timor-Leste program. The SAS database was also utilised in 2015 to tap into parent expertise for the annual Science Careers Expo and an approach was made to parents regarding work experience and Gap year job opportunities for graduates, which brought seven new work experience and/or gap year opportunities for graduates, through organisations such as ACU, Findlay Engineering, Federation University, Central Highlands Water, Mitre 10, Bodyzone Panels and Foundation Legal.

Effective communication with parents remains key to strong parental engagement and the College continues to use a range of communication methods to engage with its parent community.

Goal 4: To build a College community which gives a voice to all its members and is welcoming to visitors.

Actions

- Undertake the Organisational Culture Inventory with all staff, led by an accredited professional, and implement a strategy for change as required
- Allow more time and avenues for consultation with staff on issues that affect them

- When a staff forum is conducted, provide non-verbal avenues for feedback ie. online survey or suggestion box
- Undertake a survey with all students about student voice/empowerment
- Continue to provide a welcoming environment to parents and visitors to the College
- Continue to provide avenues for parental feedback

Achievements

Damascus made a considerable investment of time and financial resources in 2015 to better understanding the organisational culture of the College with regards to staff culture. This was undertaken through a process known as the Organisational Culture Inventory (OCI), a process which was carried out during Semester 2 of 2015 and one which involved all staff. Through the OCI, the College gained a greater awareness of its cultures strengths, weaknesses and challenges and began to map out a number of initiatives aimed at overcoming cultural challenges and strengthening areas of cultural weakness. This process will continue over the coming years, with a view to undertake the OCI survey again in 18 to 24 months to measure cultural shifts.

Staff forums were not readily undertaken in 2015, however significant staff feedback was gathered through the School Review process. The feedback received during the review was a catalyst for undertaking the OCI and has also been incorporated into the School Improvement Framework.

A survey regarding student voice was not conducted in 2015, however House Councils were run and student feedback gathered. Despite the House Council process, there are still improvements to be made in the area of providing greater avenues for student voice.

Anecdotally we know that parents and visitors to the College generally feel welcomed and parents readily take up the various mechanisms available to them to provide feedback to the College such as phone calls, emails, online contact forms and TA interviews.

Goal 5: To increase commitment to and participation in College community events.

Actions

- Develop a process to ensure that non-attendance of students at College events is followed up and recorded
- Use attendance data collected in SIMON to monitor improvements in participation rates
- Continue to confirm expectation to students that College events are compulsory
- Continue to communicate effectively with parents regarding upcoming College event opportunities

- Continue to ensure that College events are engaging and well run

Achievements

Student commitment to College events such as House Carnivals and Damascus Day continues to pose some challenges for the College with regards to attendance. Whilst there is a general trend that unexplained absences have declined over the past four years, there has been an increase in parent notified absences on these event days. The number of students absent on event days is also considerably higher than on a normal school day. The College therefore recognises that the value of these College events is perhaps not being articulated clearly enough to students and parents, with many families choosing not to send their children to school on these days.

With regards to events aimed more specifically at parents, such as the community guest speaker event, morning teas, breakfasts etc. attendance data has continued to grow in 2015 which demonstrates strong parental interest in these events. The feedback received on the calibre of these events has also been pleasing, with parents generally noting that the event has been enjoyable and well-run.

Goal 6: To promote Damascus College in the wider community as the school of 'first choice'.

Actions

- Implement the Damascus College Communications and Marketing Plan
- Complete the Hall of Fame refurbishment
- Promote and deliver the 20 Year Anniversary events
- Continue to build relationships with Catholic primary schools (as per Goal 1 Action Plan)
- Continue to build the Rowing Program

Achievements

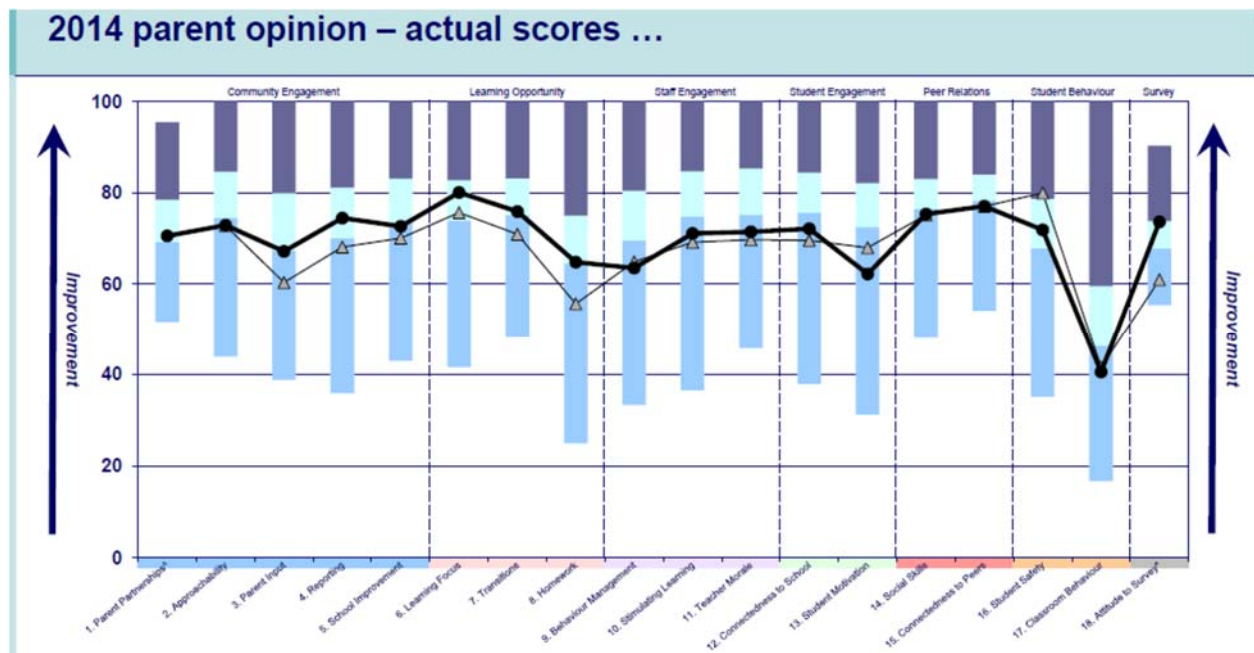
The College's 20 year anniversary celebrations were a prominent feature of the 2015 calendar, with two of the major events taking place in Term 1. The Opening School Mass followed by the 20 Year Anniversary Dinner a few days later were a great success, with nearly 200 people attending the dinner held in the JSC. The Opening School Mass was conducted by Bishop Paul Bird and was well attended by parents and special guests. Following the mass, a time capsule was prepared and later buried near the cherry blossom tree and a large cake was distributed to the students. The dinner event was a wonderful occasion of celebration, with students past and present providing the evening's entertainment as well as speeches reflecting on the College's role in their lives. The Hall of Fame refurbishment was also completed in time for the dinner event, which has given a new life to the link way area outside the JSC. Other initiatives such as the

planting of four water gums outside the JSC to represent each of the four houses, the planting of 40 spotted gums out the front of the College as well as the commemorative sponsorship plaque and the sale of a Damascus College 20 Year Anniversary Rose were also a great success.

Alongside the 20 year celebrations, the College was promoted in line with the Communications and Marketing Plan through various channels. This plan has been in place for several years now and the College has started to see a shift in community perceptions which has also translated to unprecedented enrolment applications for Year 7, 2016. The College has continued to build relationships with the local parish schools, however at this stage enrolment numbers from Catholic primary schools still remains low, with the exception of Emmaus Catholic Primary School which is a very strong feeder school for Damascus. Buninyong Primary School remains the number one feeder primary school in regards to enrolment applications at Year 7.

The Rowing Program has also continued to grow in size and strength in 2015. Commencing with 6 crews in the 13/14 season, then growing to 9 crews in the 14/15 season, the 15/16 season sees 13 crews competing. The continued growth of the Rowing Program has had a positive impact on the image of the College and has also had great benefits in terms of parental participation in the life of the College.

Anecdotally, the message coming back to the College is that the community perception of Damascus College is changing in a very positive way and for many families, we are now certainly considered their school of first choice.



PARENT SATISFACTION

The most recent parent feedback data shows positive growth in the areas of parental satisfaction and these are consistent with the other data sets across the College. Data collected from Year 7 students' parents bears this out across Damascus. The negative growth for both student motivation (13) and safety (17) items may be attributable to the work in growing awareness of student safety and well-being. Motivation is an area that we are looking to address in creating more motivated and self-directed learners for the future and promoting a climate of support for this. Student enrolment applications have exploded over the 2015 reporting year indicating high levels of parent confidence.

Leadership and Stewardship

Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

Actions:

- Undertake a whole school review

Achievements:

The School Review process feeds into the compliance requirements of the funding agreement between CECV and the state and federal Governments. As 2015 was a year critical to the development of our future strategic directions, the school review was focused on understanding the achievements and areas for improvement under the existing school improvement framework. Staff worked with the Leadership Team members in a process of review which was audited and affirmed by school reviewers, Bill Slatter and Helen Goode over panel days in August.

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

Actions:

- Grow a culture of high performance amongst the staff team
- Undertake POL review

Achievements:

Over recent years as the leadership team we have grappled with the organisational culture of the staff team. In order to further optimise the impact of this critical resource within the College, the Leader of College Development, put forth a proposal to assist us to formulate an understanding of the existing culture. The desire to understand our existing culture was intended to allow us to articulate a more desirable and therefore attainable culture into the future. Local facilitator, Gary Trotter presented to the Leadership Team regarding a framework to assist the understanding of the culture in order to create a language and framework to address it in the future.

Gary led a process of data collection and review, followed by a series of workshops that ultimately fed into the strategic plan for 2016-20. He worked with a staff team to develop some strategies to bring about or enhance positive cultural change within the sub groups of the College and the organisation as a whole. The assessment tool was developed by a company titled Human Synergetics and the tool called the Organisational Culture Inventory (OCI) was utilised to establish the bench markable metrics. The OCI data and outcomes will inform many of the College decisions moving forward.

Within the multi-enterprise agreement, the school is cyclically required to review its leadership structure and the time allocation and resources attributed to it. In 2012 the College appointed consultants to review the POL structure and put forward possible models for the delivery of leadership across the College in accordance with the goals of the strategic plan and to strengthen role clarity and accountability across the College. The existing model was established and implemented. Given the very significant changes that took place for 2013, the Consultative Committee confirmed a process of review of the structure with the intent of refining the existing model. This review was undertaken by members of the Consultative Committee with input sought of staff electronically and through workshops before school, at lunch and afterschool to optimise the opportunity for staff feedback.

Positions were advertised internally, and then following discernment of those applications, externally. A transparent process of application and appointment was then undertaken. New appointments were made to begin the 2016 College year.

Goal 3: to provide programs that promotes and affirms staff and student

Achievement

Actions:

- Review how VCE high performance is recognised

Achievements:

In considering the College's Awards and Achievements processes, the College identified that it would support student achievement by showcasing high achievement within the VCE and VCAL. It was felt that a formal proposal considering all the implications needed to be established with the intent of making these changes for 2017. As an interim step, it was decided to identify high achievers and invite them to be acknowledged for their academic success at the Opening School Mass in 2016.

.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.
- Consolidate the Performance and Development model for staff

Achievements:

Throughout 2014 20 staff took part in the pilot project *Shaping Effective Teaching* - the Teacher Professional Development Model at Damascus College.

The **purpose** of the Teacher Performance & Development Model [TPDM] Project [TPDMPP] was premised on performance and development being a process to assist teachers improve their teaching practice, and to demonstrate that teachers are meeting the obligations and requirements of being professional educators. Damascus College's performance and development model integrates the two of these, into a process that is based on evidence, mutual trust and respect.

Instead of putting the full staff through the project in 2015 a further 26 staff volunteered to take part, so it was determined to rollout the project further and refine the model throughout the year. Work was done to reduce the administrative and record keeping burden and participants worked collegially to improve their practice. 2016 will engage the remaining 50 staff in a trialed a resourced program over the course of the year.

The Annual Review Meeting (ARM) meeting structure was reviewed to empower Learning Area Leaders and Professional Practice Team Leaders to more directly engage with the staff members in their teams. The College moved away from the documentation used previously to frame the interview around teacher's self-reflection on the AITSL professional standards tool. The 2016 intention is to support staff to develop their own document professional growth plan, tied into the AITSL standards.

Goal 5: to develop appropriate management and Governance structures

Actions:

- Move Damascus College from an Incorporated entity to a Company Limited by Guarantee
- Support the Governance of ISMAPNG and the Association of Canonical Administrators
- Establish a mechanism for managing Risk

Achievements:

Following the 2014 development of a revised constitution for Damascus College as an incorporated body, ISMAPNG requested that the Board consider moving to a Company limited by guarantee. The Board worked with the Sisters and the Canonical Administrators supported by BJT Legal. In December 2014 a motion was passed for the College to transition from an incorporated entity to a company limited by guarantee. The movement to the company was effected in 2015.

The foundational documents for the Association of Canonical Administrators were revisited and a draft set of rules for the association as a Public Juridic Person was commenced. Fr Adrian McInerney is the appointed member for the association. Sr Berenice Kerr is the member for ISMAPNG for the newly formed company.

The Board continued to seek a mechanism to protect the College from foreseeable incidents. The Finance and Facilities subcommittee changed title to become the Finance, Facilities and Risk

subcommittee of the Board. Paul Jans presented to the Board a risk management framework that began to guide the operational practice of the College.

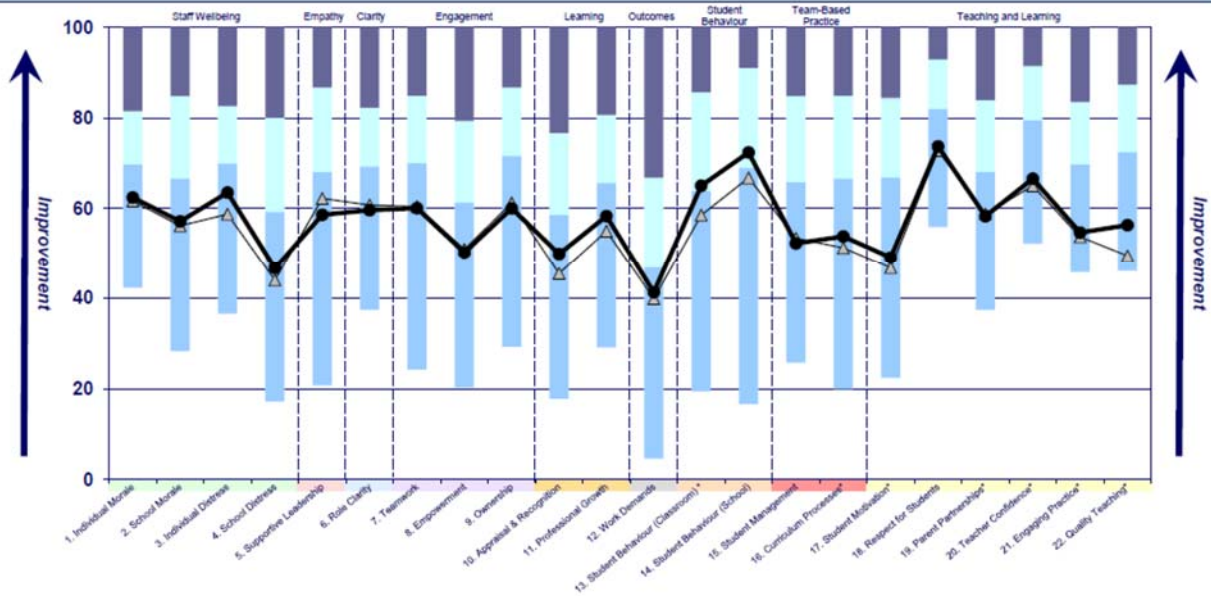
EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

DESCRIPTION OF PL UNDERTAKEN IN 2015

Teachers undertook a range of internal and external professional learning throughout 2015 with a very strong focus on the internal Teacher Performance and Development Module (TPDM) which is strongly documented in this and earlier reports. External activities were provided through subject association and private providers. A raft of whole staff and role specific professional learning opportunities were provided.

NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN PL	85
AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER TEACHER FOR PL	\$1967.00

2014 staff climate – actual scores ...



TEACHER SATISFACTION

The context of professional growth has been specifically addressed within the learning and teaching elements of this report, and it is pleasing. There has not been a significant change to the staff satisfaction data to insight SRC on previous reports. This has resulted in the execution of an Organisational Culture Inventory which has been extensively accounted for throughout this report and will influence the future directions of the College.

Learning and 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. A number of staff new to significant roles, such as the Learning Area Leaders and House Leaders, took part in 2015.

An Induction session was conducted for new staff at the beginning 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 2015 Staff RE day was held on 13th July with Father Richard Leonard with a focus on the presence of God in the modern media and the challenges that faith confronts in a constantly connected society.

Goal 2: to create independent thinkers with enthusiasm for learning

Actions:

- Continue team planning and shared teacher preparation to improve student engagement within the classroom
- Develop student learning through our 1:1 program

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 for others they have been documenting they're existing curriculum, and keeping an eye on the developments at ACARA and VCAA. Data on student engagement from the Insight SRC survey indicates that our improved results from 2012 are holding steady in all areas, and have continued to improve in a few.

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 to the Executive and a decision was made to proceed with rollout in 2015. Students and staff

in Years 7 & 8 had access to electronic versions of their texts and a range of collaborative resources. Moving from a physical to a digital learning environment has presented a range and challenges and rewards, both anticipated and unexpected.

A second year of the Professional Learning Program (Called the Teacher Performance Development Model) was implemented and evaluated by the Professional Practice Team in 2015. We continued with an Action Research approach to trialling strategies for 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. A number of staff elected to involve themselves for a second year in a row, evidence of their support of the approach. In 2016, all staff who have not been part of the program in 2014/2015 will become involved

Learning Area Leaders continued to work on 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:

- Continue the use of our Shared Vision of Learning and Teaching to inform both teaching practice and planning

Achievements:

The Vision of Learning and Teaching is part of planning documentation, and it is a central theme of whole school discussions on student learning. 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. 2015 saw us focus on the key aspects of 'inspiring' and 'challenging' individuals to 'reach their full potential' as learners.

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
- Development of a data analysis tool for staff

Achievements:

TA's continue to work with the students and families to form learning goals, and the latter half of 2015 saw us introduce a student achievement monitoring system. For students, parents and teachers, it means that we now have live access to student results through our College internet resource, Simon. This has proved useful for the TA partnership, as all parties now have regular access to results and feedback to better inform discussion and goal setting. 2015 also saw the

College appoint staff member as TA Leader off the back of the 2014 TA review to better shape the continuing development of the TA program. Angela Hoban took up this role and has made an excellent contribution to the TA goals of partnerships in learning.

Rod Mathews as part of the Professional Practice team worked with the College intranet developer to create a “dashboard” to enable classroom teachers to access information on the learning profile of the individuals within the class. This tool is critical to the differentiation process to allow staff to identify the preferred learning style of the student and to access information about their literacy and numeracy capability.

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

Actions:

- Continue to develop the Awards Evening and Class Awards

Achievements:

The Awards Evening was conducted for the fourth year in 2015 in a revised structure which incorporated the Sports and Academic Awards, with Grant Wyatt as a guest speaker, and musical and dramatic performances by College students as part of the evening. 2015 also saw the introduction of a new award, the Jo Reilly Award, named in honour of Jo Reilly, an esteemed staff member who passed away whilst on staff in 2009. The evening continues to be well supported by parents.

The less-formal Class Awards are given by each class teacher and distributed at House assemblies. The basis on which teachers’ award these certificates are academic excellence and endeavour, two areas we encourage as a College community.

Goal 6: To facilitate individual pathways that enable student success

Actions:

- Continue to develop the subject selection process
- Implement recommendations of the Special Needs Review

Achievements:

2015 saw a significant change in the way we managed subject selection. Previously students had worked with their TA and parents to make their selections. In 2015, we moved away from this as TAs felt that they lacked the confidence and the required expertise to advise students on career pathways. TAs continued to support the process, but the role of advising and consulting with students was taken up by a specialist group from the College’s Pathways Committee.

The Taster Day was run again in 2015. Students chose from a range of subjects available to them in 2016 and then experienced a day of single lessons based on the content and activities of those classes. 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 Information Evening with some revisions to the format in line with feedback gained in 2014, and surveyed students and parents afterwards. The results indicate that this evening was much more effective and valued but still has room for improvement.

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/parents at this point.

Cathy Prunty commenced in the Role of Special Needs Coordinator and worked to establish a clear focus on the needs of the individual learner as opposed to the content. With the support of learning consultant, Leonie Saundry – stronger structures were established to facilitate PSG meetings, Individual learning plans were more purposefully written to support individual student's improved outcomes and a series of fact sheets were made available to staff to provide support regarding the different learning inhibitors and how to respond to them.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Over the past 3 years Damascus has continued to perform consistently against state standards in reading. Student performance in Writing and language conventions has improved in line with state growth, however the exceeding median growth in these areas in order to bring the student population in line with state performance continues to challenge the Damascus community.

Our numeracy data has shown positive growth over recent years, the introduction and consolidation of the Quicksmart numeracy program, together with improved collaboration opportunities for teachers we believe to be significant factors in this improvement. VCE results reflect the student cohort's performance in standardised testing across earlier years of their education. Tables of values and graphs are later in this report.

POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS	
TERTIARY STUDY	38%
TAFE / VET	9%
APPRENTICESHIP / TRAINEESHIP	9%
DEFERRED	18%
EMPLOYMENT	18%

Wellbeing

Goals & 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

- Introduction of a Position of Leadership to oversee the TA process
- Continue to development and implement a school approach to Restorative Practices with professional development for new staff
- Introduction of 2 new Counsellors to the Wellbeing team
- Develop relationships with external organisations for student and parent referrals
- Continued development of student management procedures

Achievements

The Teacher Advisor Program was evaluated at the end of 2014 and one of the recommendations was to introduce a position of leadership to oversee the Teacher Advisor program. Angela Hoban was selected to take on this position for 2015 and beyond. Angela introduced a weekly newsletter for TA teachers with material that could be used to stimulate discussion in TA time each morning. This newsletter included prominent days of the year, word of the week, fun facts and even a short YouTube clip called 'Friday funny' for the TA to watch. Angela developed a theme for each of the TA interview days beginning with the introductory interview at the start of the year. She provided the staff with stimulus material and ideas for discussion with parents. This was different to past years as parents were not coming in to the interview to discuss a report, they were coming in to discuss the student progress in general.

As we continue to develop our school approach to Restorative Practices we inducted all new staff into the use of this in dealing with student issues. This year we also approached staff who were having difficulty gaining an understanding of this process and asked them to complete some professional development in this area. The staff who attended came back with a much better understanding of how to deal with students restoratively.

Another recommendation from the Teacher Advisor evaluation was to have two TA assembly times per term devoted to TA time only. Angela made sure that no other activities encroached on these TA assembly times. She provided a theme for each term for TA teachers to take students through a range of activities, some of these themes were getting to know you, student wellbeing and resilience as well as goal setting for students.

In 2015 we saw 2 new counsellors employed at the College, Jessica Dunstan and Christie Stevens. They had 244 individual students from all year levels referred throughout the year for family issues, peer issues, developmental/personal growth issues, mental health issues, school related stress, negative behaviours (school and home) and other (including the school protocol of following up after any incident). Many of these students saw them for multiple appointments. It was great to see the counsellors involved in camps at all year levels with some students attending because they knew that there was a familiar counsellor to help them through the camp activities.

We continued to strengthen our external community relationships throughout the year in particular our relationship with headspace. As a staff we were given an introduction to the services of headspace during a staff meeting which now allows staff to provide this information to students in their TA and their parents when required.

In 2014 we developed a set of student management procedures which were given to all teaching staff. Throughout 2015 the House Leader team worked with individual staff to use these procedures as well as set their own procedures to use when they were having difficulty in the classroom.

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

Actions

- Provide PD for student leaders at all levels
- Introducing student commendations within the individual student profiles
- Continue to celebrate student of the fortnight at House Assemblies
- Year 10 boys ambassadors for white ribbon day
- Year 8 and 9 girls working with Ballarat City Council on the 'media champs' project

Achievements

At the end of 2014 the incoming student leaders attended an introductory day led by the House Leader team. They improved their leadership skills and teamwork as they worked their way through what they wanted to achieve during 2015. During 2015 the senior leaders attended the GRIP conference at Creswick. They worked with other secondary school leaders throughout the region on topics including: working as a team, making meetings effective, making speeches and how to motivate. The junior leaders attended a Student representative council workshop in Melbourne. At this conference students were inspired by the personal journeys of other leaders and return to our school community eager to make a difference.

Each student has an individual profile within the SIMON homepage. This profile includes information on each student including their transition notes, reports, assessment information and

behavioural incidents. Last year we introduced student commendations into the student profiles and TA teachers were asked to provide information on student involvement in school and community activities. This information collated throughout a student time at the school will provide a valuable resource for staff when writing student references. With last year being a trial year we hope to further develop the concept of student commendations in the future.

In keeping with the concept of commendations each House continued to celebrate students within their House who had been shown initiative or gone above and beyond while at school. The students were presented at the fortnightly House assembly and presented with a movie ticket. As the year progressed it became more and more difficult to single out only one student in each House as so many students were being nominated by the staff within the House.

Matt Hallowell and Joe Cahir introduced the concept of white ribbon ambassadors to a group of year 10 boys elected from each of the four Houses. The boys met on a regular basis to discuss issues and to work on promoting “white ribbon day”. At the final assembly of the year the boys were introduced to the school community and the purpose of white ribbon ambassadors was introduced to the student population. Another group of year 10 students are being mentored by the initial group of boy this year to organise a “white ribbon day” event in 2016. The team have also working closely with other schools to investigate how they have promoted white ribbon events in their school communities.

Fifteen of our year 8 and 9 students were asked to volunteer to join a pilot cyber safety program “Media Champs” introduced by the City of Ballarat after they received a government grant to run the program. The students, all girls, worked with students from Phoenix College, Mt Clear Secondary College and the Aboriginal co-op to develop a cyber safety program for primary school students. Our girls worked regularly with students from several local primary schools at the Ballarat library to encourage them to be safe when using the internet. At the end of the program Damascus College received \$2000 from the initial grant to use for the promotion of internet safety. We are pleased to be using this money in 2016 to provide student information sessions for the year 7 to 10 students on the safe use of the internet and in particular the safe use of social media sites.

Goal 3: to provide a safe and welcoming physical environment

Actions

- Wellbeing team meetings fortnightly
- Closer links made between the Wellbeing team and the Special Needs co-ordinator
- Emphasis on a smooth transition for all students who are new to the school

Achievements

The Wellbeing team consisting of the counsellors, special needs co-ordinator, first aid officer and the Assistant Principal of student wellbeing meet fortnightly to discuss student issues that have

arisen. Individual students including the special needs students are discussed and pathways outlined for them. The team also began discussing processes for dealing with students who are school refusers as this seems to be a growing problem.

In 2015 the Special needs department went through a review and one of the things that came out of this was the need for closer ties to the wellbeing department. Cathy Prunty the special needs co-ordinator at this time came onto the wellbeing team as an expert in dealing with issues presented when students have particular special needs. Whenever students with special needs present to the counsellor or House Leader then Cathy is briefed and both Cathy, the House Leader and the counsellor work together on a plan for the future of the student. Cathy has also assisted the counsellors when they have dealt with students who do not have special needs but are having learning or discipline issues.

We have put a lot of work into the transition of students into the school at all year levels. New students at all levels are interviewed before they begin at Damascus, grade 6 students are given extra transition opportunities especially if they are coming from a small school or the only student coming from their school. Year 7 students are mentored by year 10 students for the first semester at the College and have regular meetings with these students. The mentors also attended an evening at year 7 to work with the students in their mentor group.

Goal 4: To provide opportunities for participation in activities that support family and student well-being

Actions

- Hugh Van Cuylenberg, the resilience project and gratitude
- Introduction of a gratitude wall
- Staff Relax sessions after school
- Minecraft group
- Nazareth House pampering group
- Green group

Achievements

Our major speaker in 2015 was Hugh van Cuylenberg who was inspired by his experiences travelling in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Hugh returned to Melbourne and commenced working on his own program for schools called 'The Resilience Project'. Off the back of his post grad studies into mental resilience, Hugh's presentation emphasised the value of gratitude, empathy and mindfulness. Hugh presented to all year levels throughout the day and then presented to 400 school and community in the evening. The feedback from students, staff and parents was very

positive with many families making a gratitude list every evening. Even today we still remind students who might be doing it tough to remember what they are gratefully for and to make a gratitude list each night.

Angela Hoban was the person behind the introduction of a gratitude wall that now sits in the courtyard. The wall is painted with blackboard paint so that students can write in chalk what they are grateful for. The wall is cleaned regularly so that new additions can be made to the wall. It is great to see students stop and think about what is happening for them and in particular what they are grateful for.

Simon our First aid officer has been running weekly staff relaxation sessions which are in the format of a mindfulness session. It has been fantastic to see so many staff take up this opportunity at the end of a hectic day.

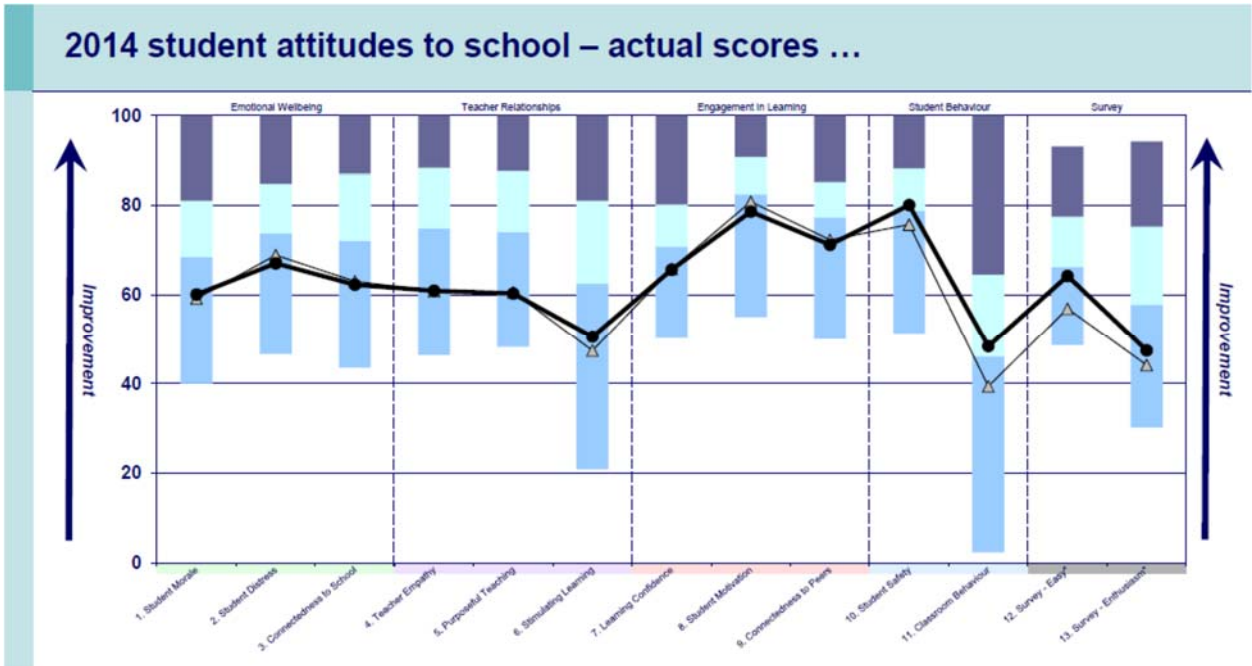
Last year we introduced several new groups into the school for the quieter students who are not into team activities such as sport or the performing arts. Sr Marie has been kept busy every Friday afternoon with the Minecraft club. This group of boys led by Felix Osborne (one of our special needs students) are extremely happy to come together on their devices each Friday afternoon for 1.5 hours. This has been a new initiative for students who enjoy working on their devices and in particular playing on Minecraft. I am sure that Sr Marie has gained some new skills while working with this group.

Trish Brown has also put together a group of hardworking volunteers who have visited Nazareth House fortnightly after school. This group of girls enjoy interacting with the elderly ladies and the ladies love to get their nails painted.

David Neate has a group of students who call themselves 'the green group' who are working around the school to ensure that recycling is happening and the grounds are kept neat and tidy. The group spent an afternoon out the front of the school on Geelong road picking up rubbish for 'Keep Australia Beautiful' day.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Student attendance data is stronger over recent years and we have become more accurate in our reporting of school based learning activities and this has ensured that the overall attendance rates are improved. The College uses a daily communication system through our Parent Access Module (PAM) and text messages to communicate non-attendance to families. Absences are followed up by the Teacher Advisor and then House leader where they persist. Support structures are in place for those missing over the longer term. Where absence persists we work with Child First, DET and the CEB to support the student and family regarding educational continuity.



STUDENT SATISFACTION

Statistical ratings of student satisfaction are relatively consistent over recent years. General connection to the school appears to be stronger than this tool suggests with increasing rates of student retention and record rates of enrolment applications across all levels. Year 12 graduate surveys bear out strong connection to the College but add validity to the emphasis of an increased focus on learning and teaching over the years to come.

Financial Performance

REPORTING FRAMEWORK	MODIFIED CASH \$
Recurrent income	Tuition
School fees	4,762,648.00
Other fee income	29,560.00
Private income	303,328.00
State government recurrent grants	2,607,337.00
Australian government recurrent grants	8,758,520.00
Total recurrent income	16,461,393.00
Recurrent Expenditure	Tuition
Salaries; allowances and related expenses	10,830,792.00
Non salary expenses	4,345,361.00
Total recurrent expenditure	15,176,153.00
Capital income and expenditure	Tuition
Government capital grants	0.00
Capital fees and levies	310,157.00
Other capital income	0.00
Total capital income	310,157.00
Total capital expenditure	1,186,862.00
Loans (includes refundable enrolment deposits and recurrent, capital and bridging loans)	
Total opening balance	4,843,347.00
Total closing balance	4,340,015.00

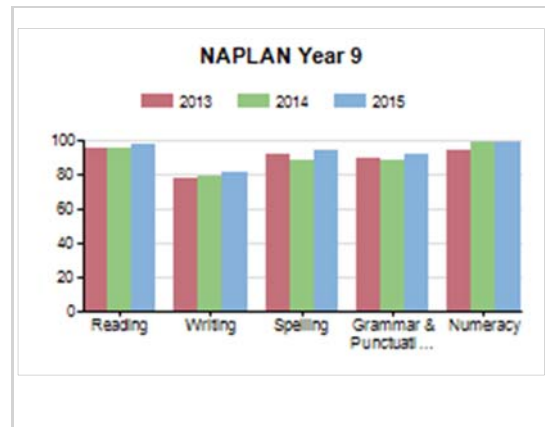
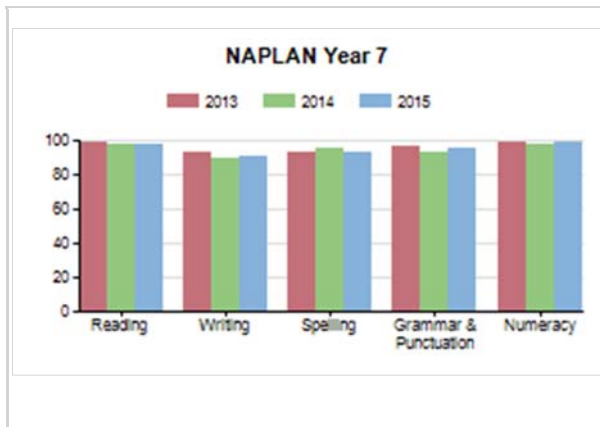
The information provided above does not include system levies charged to individual schools, intra-systemic transfers and, for primary schools, the diocesan supplementary capital fund supporting primary schools' capital borrowings.

The information provided in this VRQA template is not comparable with other educational sectors or to ACARA school-level income reports displayed on the MySchool website. ACARA school level reporting requires system level income from Government grants and some private income to be allocated to each school resulting in a small adjustment to the total level of school resources. Currently, recurrent income from Government sources, school generated income and capital expenditure are reported by schools. When assessing the private income of the school, both recurrent and capital school fees are included.

VRQA Compliance Data

E2075 Damascus College, Mount Clear
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PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2013 %	2014 %	2013–2014 Changes %	2015 %	2014–2015 Changes %
YR 07 Reading	98.9	97.4	-1.5	97.4	0.0
YR 07 Writing	92.6	89.6	-3.0	90.6	1.0
YR 07 Spelling	93.6	95.8	2.2	92.7	-3.1
YR 07 Grammar & Punctuation	96.3	93.7	-2.6	95.8	2.1
YR 07 Numeracy	99.5	97.9	-1.6	98.9	1.0
YR 09 Reading	95.8	95.5	-0.3	97.7	2.2
YR 09 Writing	77.6	78.5	0.9	81.9	3.4
YR 09 Spelling	92.4	88.7	-3.7	94.8	6.1
YR 09 Grammar & Punctuation	90.0	88.1	-1.9	91.9	3.8
YR 09 Numeracy	93.8	99.4	5.6	99.4	0.0



YEARS 9–12 STUDENT RETENTION RATE	
Years 9–12 Student Retention Rate	69.41%

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	%
Y07	92.13
Y08	92.00
Y09	89.52
Y10	89.64
Overall average attendance	90.82

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE	
Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	93.52%

STAFF RETENTION RATE	
Staff Retention Rate	94.05%

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	
Doctorate	0.00%
Masters	17.65%
Graduate	54.12%
Certificate Graduate	4.71%
Degree Bachelor	82.35%
Diploma Advanced	31.76%
No Qualifications Listed	1.18%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class	2
Teaching Staff (Head Count)	89
FTE Teaching Staff	80.438
Non-Teaching Staff (Head Count)	51
FTE Non-Teaching Staff	42.995
Indigenous Teaching Staff	0

MEDIAN NAPLAN RESULTS FOR YEAR 9	
Year 9 Reading	577.80
Year 9 Writing	546.20
Year 9 Spelling	583.70
Year 9 Grammar & Punctuation	554.10
Year 9 Numeracy	587.50

SENIOR SECONDARY OUTCOMES	
VCE Median Score	28
VCE Completion Rate	100%
VCAL Completion Rate	80%

POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS AT AS 2013	
Tertiary Study	81.9%
TAFE / VET	8.3%
Apprenticeship / Traineeship	7.5%
Deferred	20.0%
Employment	24.9%