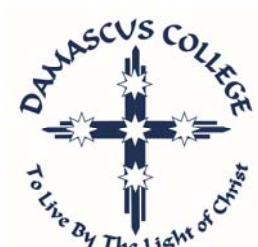


# ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY

2017



**DAMASCUS COLLEGE**  
**1412 GEELONG ROAD, MT CLEAR**



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E NUMBER	E2075
FEDERAL DET NUMBER	14006

## Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Matthew Byrne, attest that Damascus College 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 2017 school year under the Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth) and the Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)

18<sup>th</sup> May 2018

## Our College Vision

Damascus College is a dynamic Christ-centred learning community that values each member, and is committed to inspiring and challenging students to reach their potential and contribute confidently to the global community.

## College Overview

Damascus College is Ballarat's only Catholic co-educational Secondary College providing education for the whole family. Damascus is co-sponsored by the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG) and the Parishes of Greater Ballarat to serve the community and surrounding areas.

Damascus College was established in 1995, from the amalgamation of its three predecessor Colleges; Sacred Heart College, St Martin's in the Pines and St Paul's College.

At Damascus College our Catholic faith tradition is at the core of who we are and is reflected in our motto, 'To live by the light of Christ'. Our school is a Christ-centred learning community committed to a culture of excellence that values each member. We are committed to inspiring and challenging our students to reach their potential and to contribute confidently to the world around them.

Damascus College has a shared vision and values inspired by the Catholic tradition, and there are numerous opportunities to explore your faith, whatever that may be. We are proud of our Mercy heritage and traditions, and are mindful of our place in the global community, and we will continue our commitment to helping people less fortunate.

We offer progressive and innovative learning that maximises educational outcomes. Our students are inspired by high expectations to become self-directed and motivated global citizens. Our diverse curriculum caters for various post-secondary pathways, providing young people with a solid foundation on which to build their lives, by providing high quality, well rounded education that focuses on the development of the whole person.

Our students and staff enjoy modern facilities in an inspiring 20 hectare bush setting, only 7km from the Ballarat CBD and we are committed to providing a safe and sustainable environment, cared for by all.

The Damascus community is a strong and vibrant one, where the contribution of all is optimised. We genuinely nurture respectful relationships that value all members in an inclusive and welcoming community. We have great commitment and pride in contributing to our College, and we celebrate diversity in a safe and supportive school.

Our parents are engaged in College life and they contribute confidently to the growth of the College, our students and the broader community.

We are confident of a bright future for all the young people of Damascus College and we will continue to inspire our Damascus community to reach our potential and place in the world.

Students graduate from Damascus with a clear sense of their own identity and worth, and an appreciation of Christianity in the Catholic tradition.

### **Learning & Teaching at Damascus College**

Damascus College strives to provide a learning environment for its students that is dynamic, engaging, challenging and supportive. We understand that each student has individual learning needs and we aim to provide classroom activities that differentiate the abilities and learning styles of our students.

At Damascus College we encourage our young people to become flexible, creative and analytical thinkers. Our central goal is for students to reach their full academic, emotional and social potential and we do this by providing them with the tools and support they need to achieve this outcome.

Damascus College students progress to a wide range of post-secondary pathways and, as such, the curriculum opportunities offered reflect this diversity. Commencing in Years 7 and 8, the academic program exposes students to an extensive variety of subject matter. In these junior years, students will study Religious Education, English, Mathematics, Humanities, Health & Physical Education, Science and Languages (French or Indonesian) for the entire school year. They will also undertake a semester of Food Technology, Textiles, Wood, Metal, Art, Visual Communication, Drama and Music in both Years 7 and 8.

When students' progress to Years 9 and 10, they continue to follow the core subjects of Religious Education, English, Mathematics, Humanities, Science and Health & Physical Education alongside a range of pathway choices. In addition, students have the opportunity to enrol in vocational courses that link to and enhance employment opportunities.

In the senior year levels of 11 and 12, students can choose to complete the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) in conjunction with Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) courses or School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs).

## Principal's Report

2017 has seen 50 years of Mercy education on this beautiful site here at Mt Clear. Today, Damascus College is a vibrant community serving over 800 families and this year, through the labours of 135 staff, the College has educated 1042 young men and women.

As you move around our beautiful site, you gain an appreciation of Damascus College as a contemporary Catholic co- education provider in the spirit of Catherine McAuley and local parishes of the Diocese of Ballarat. This year our College theme has been our College motto – 'To Live by the Light of Christ'. That light has shone brightly this year through the hearts, minds and souls of the young people of this great community.

And while we celebrated 50 years of Mercy educational vision and leadership, we concurrently celebrated the conclusion of Sr Marie Davey's educational vocation which has spanned 53 years. Sr Marie was the final Principal of Sacred Heart College and she has been Principal or Deputy Principal of Damascus College since its inception in 1985. Marie was the key driver of the decision to bring the College to a single campus and has continued the vocation of the Sisters who preceded her by always being responsive to the demand for change to meet the needs of the young people of the day – and across her 53 years of education, Marie has seen some very significant educational and societal change that has required schools to respond.

I acclaim and acknowledge the educational leadership, pastoral support and friendship offered to so many over Marie's life as a teacher within Mercy education and at Damascus College. She is a proud past student of Sacred Heart College and her ministry in the service of God and in the image of Catherine McAuley has been remarkable. I thank her for all she has been to the students, their families and the staff who she has worked alongside for generations. On behalf of all at Damascus – Thank You, Marie!

This year we also farewell Donnie Davidson after 32 years of wonderful service as a Health, Food and Textiles teacher. Donnie has been a great leader within the College including many years as McAuley House Leader and as a Professional Practice Leader for the staff. Jenny Kinghorn has also provided 27 years of Technology teaching in the areas of Food and Textiles and school leadership across Sacred Heart, St Paul's, St Martins and then Damascus College. Mollie Cleary also finishes up after 21 years of Food, Textiles, Humanities and RE teaching at Damascus College. Donnie, Jenny and Mollie will leave a significant hole on the experience register in the Technology Learning Area.

Bronwyn Strachan is also leaving Damascus to pursue her artistic goals following 30 years at Sacred Heart and then Damascus as an Art, Graphics and Visual Communication teacher. Bronwyn has brought a sense of fun and commitment to her work across those three decades.

Catriona Sexton concludes her service after 36 years of Mathematics teaching at Sacred Heart and Damascus College. Catriona has been a wonderful Mathematics teacher, leader and supportive colleague across those decades.

This year we also farewell Matt Rea, who while his service is significantly shorter, his contribution as the Sports Coordinator has been outstanding. Among Matt's many achievements are the growth in the College rates of participation in sport and the introduction and buildup of the Rowing program to where it is today with nearly 100 rowers!!

Carmel Russell has joined the Catholic Education Team in the area of VCAL and Applied Learning for 2017 and took a year of leave from Damascus. She has decided to continue her role to the benefit of all the Catholic schools of Victoria and will finish up as a staff member of Damascus following her ten years here.

We have also been joined by our Canadian's this year - Colin Schroeder and Brian Verlaan have been wonderful additions to the staff team and I thank them for the fun and professionalism that they have brought to our community.

Kate Hillery has been with us this year and I thank her for her part and I wish Laura Kimm and her husband Jason well for the safe arrival of their first child.

The loss of Bill O'Loughlin from our community following his sudden and unexpected death was a very difficult time for all associated with the College. Bill was a trusted and respected educator and there have been beautiful tributes in the wake of his death. Bill's gifts as an educator will remain in the hearts and minds of all those associated with our College this year.

I am very fortunate to receive wise counsel for my role from some very experienced educational leaders. College Co-Governors; Sr Berenice Kerr of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG) and Fr Adrian McLnerney on behalf of the local parishes are exceptional in their vision for our College. This vision is enacted by the Damascus College Board and I thank current Board Chair, Joe Cahir and Board Directors; Brett Bryant, Stephen Carey, Sr Liz Dowling, Lucy O'Beirne, Mark Amos, Michael Myers, Amanda Western, Fr Peter Sherman, Paulene Barton, Bill Slatter, Ray Wright 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. Jane Collins moved off the Board throughout the year and we are very appreciative of Jane's service and Brett Bryant will conclude after 17 years of voluntary support and legal counsel to the College. Joe Cahir has been a tremendous support in his role as Chair and I thank him on behalf of the entire community for his vision and leadership.

Brendan Maher will finish up on the Damascus Board as he moves from Emmaus Catholic Primary School to St Mary's Yarram. Brendan is in his 11<sup>th</sup> year of Principalship at Emmaus and when he was first appointed his office was at Damascus College. It has been great to see Emmaus grow under Brendan's leadership and his contribution to our College as a committed Primary Principal and active leader of the Learning and Teaching subcommittee of the College Board has been nothing short of outstanding. On behalf of the entire Damascus community – thank you Brendan.

The work of the Board has been focused on the implementation of the strategic directions of the College and confirming the needs of the College Master plan for 2018 and beyond. The

subcommittee structure continues to be a great strength of this College and a wonderful interface between the strategic and operational dimensions. Key aspects of the Board function and Directors roles have been in considering the future needs of the College through; the Damascus 2030 working party; the continued refining of the policy framework of the College; the strategic approach to the building up of the Risk Management framework; continued oversight of the financial and academic performance of the College; refining structures for Director succession planning, role clarity and support; looking at the strategic components of the changes with learning and teaching to support non-cognitive learning and growing higher order thinking skills; and consideration of the public policy implications of the funding of Catholic education. These were but a few of the many aspects of the work of the College Board.

There have been many highlights to 2017. We began the year with 205, Year 7 students to make up a total of 1042 students, over 800 Families and 135 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 SRC led activities as we travelled around the world, great camps and retreats across the year levels, excellent debating team efforts, remarkable achievements of our Energy Breakthrough Team (EBT) in both Maryborough and Wonthaggi, the fantastic VCE Visual Arts exhibition, 'Dancing with the Stars' in the John Shannon Centre, the SRC Active Wear Day, excellent House celebrations, generous financial contributions to social justice causes such as Project Compassion and Shave for a Cure, Book Week activities, the Numeracy Week Games Day for primary schools, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day liturgies and breakfasts, the Science Career Expo, the great activities of Enviro week, the VCAL camp to the Mornington Peninsula, the VCAL Courageous Conversations evening, wonderful socials and formals, an excellent Year 12 final assembly, Graduation Mass and Dinner, a great ski trip, a varied raft of learning excursions, and extraordinary academic achievements - these are but a few of the very diverse opportunities that supported classroom learning throughout 2017.

For the first time Damascus Rowing sent two crews to Sydney for the Rowing Nationals and those crews were wonderful ambassadors for our College. Our Intermediate boys were very successful at the Head of the Lake, as were our senior girls. The College fielded 16 crews in this year's Head of the Lake and competed strongly across all classes. I thank Sharon Waters for her leadership of the program and student leaders, Eleanora Bonazzoli and Ryan VanderLinden for their part in leadership. In 2017 we won four Ballarat Associated Schools (BAS) premierships.

Sports Coordinator Matt Rea has really supported Damascus College students in raising the profile of sporting achievement over recent years and I thank him for his leadership.

Rice House were the Ron Mathews Shield Champions again in 2017, in a fiercely contested competition where they tied the Swimming Carnival with O'Collins House, winning the Lap of the Lake and Athletics carnivals throughout the year. Congratulations Rice!

Among the many amazing opportunities for the students of the College was the trip to Indonesia in June. Students came home enthused for their study of language and particularly by the people that they met. I extend my appreciation to Brendan Bawden for his work preparing for and leading this trip. The Damascus College community also welcomed six students and their teacher from Angers in France. These students were billeted with Damascus families and became a part of



the College community for the month of July. Alysoun Smalley facilitated this opportunity for the College exceptionally!

This year I had the opportunity to travel to Timor Leste to plan for the student immersion – what a privilege it is to be immersed in the culture of the Timorese. This was echoed by the students who visited in June and made many new friends across the Timor Sea.

This year we welcomed to the staff team; Ashwin Pillai, Ashleigh Brown, Jayde Tangey, Jason Harrison, Tom Inverarity, Brian Verlaan, Colin Schroeder, Simon Jinks, Irene Polglase, Danielle Skewes, Sue-Ellen Jirik, Sue Leaney, Rachel Beardall, Andrew Plews, Claude Akakpo and Deanne Busuttil to the staff team.

The production of 'The Crucible' was mesmerising this year and it was easy to forget that you were watching adolescents performing a challenging and complex play. I congratulate all those who were involved in any way.

Every two years the Damascus community performs a production of 'The Final Hours'. This production captures Jesus' final hours on earth and is a contemporary dramatic representation of the Stations of the Cross. This 14<sup>th</sup> production was again directed by Andrew Seary and has been a part of our story for the past 27 years. It has been wonderful to see the young men and women of the College engaged in learning the scriptural story that is the foundation of our existence. The production demonstrated wonderful engagement by the young men and women of our school in the week preceding Easter.

One of the great events of 2017 was the celebration of 50 years of Mercy on this site. It was fantastic to have over 400 members of our founding communities return to the College to celebrate this remarkable milestone. The legacy of this event is the beautiful Commemorative Walk as a place to remember, reflect and celebrate those who have gone before us and to give thanks for the opportunities that we have.

The 2017 School Captains, Flynn Jamieson and Eleanora Bonazzoli have been young leaders with outstanding skill and humility. It has been a pleasure to work with them and all the Year 12 student leaders and all the members of the SRC in 2017. I extend my congratulations and appreciation to those students who assumed formal leadership positions this year. I feel very confident that the young men and women who we are sending out as the graduates of Year 12 are intelligent, considerate and connected. I hope that the light of Christ continues to burn strongly in each one of them. I thank those families who conclude their time with Damascus College for being a part of our community.

It is a genuine privilege to fulfil the role of Principal of Damascus College and I thank all the members of the College community for their contribution in 2017 as we have worked together to Live by the Light of Christ!

Matthew Byrne

## Catholic School Culture

### Goals, Intended Outcomes and Achievements

In the area of Catholic Identity the Strategic Directions of the College 2016-2020 state that;

*At Damascus College we are committed to a shared vision and values inspired by biblical and Damascus College traditions, demonstrated by;*

- *providing leadership-in-faith opportunities for students, staff and the broader community;*
- *ensuring that the Gospel and Catholic traditions are understood as guidance and support for life;*  
*and*
- *personal and community responses to God’s call in today’s world expressed as social justice.*

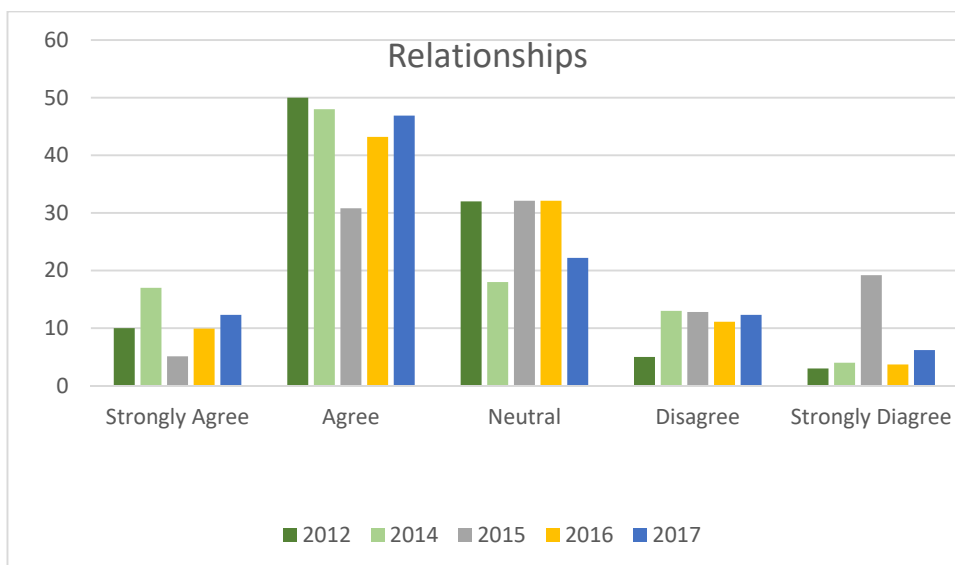
In 2017 the idea of providing leadership-in-faith opportunities for students, staff and the broader community was considered at leadership level and Board sub-committee level. A paper produced by Tony Haintz based on Bernard Lonergan’s approach to discerning meaning was used to guide broad-based discussion of the many aspects of Catholic Identity.

#### Goal 1: Shared Vision and Values inspired by biblical and Damascus College traditions

The vision of the College and the values that underpin it are critical to the life of the College and need to be named, proclaimed, understood and strategically worked toward. The evaluation of this is not easy. Some of the system wide tools already spoken of may offer the best way forward in this process.

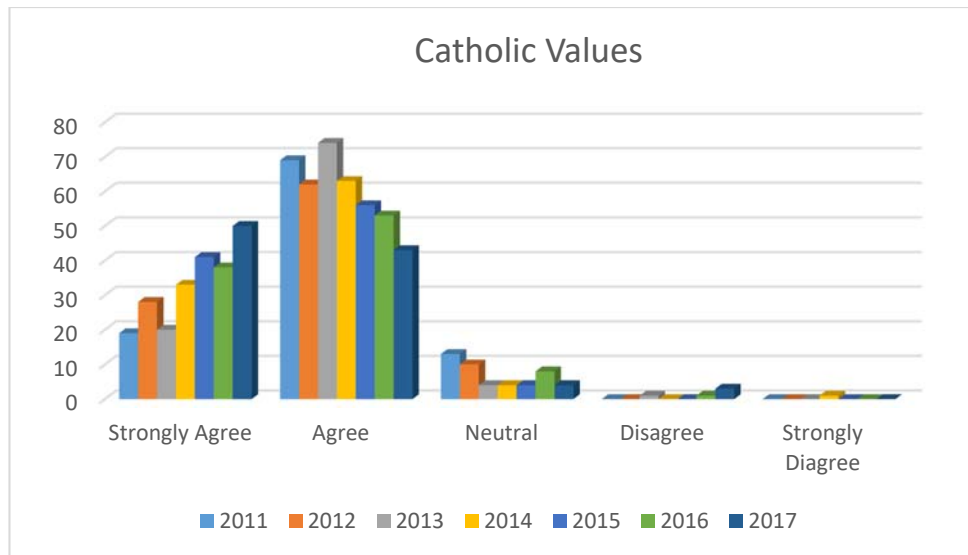
#### Fostering Relationships

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



### Authentic In Teaching of Catholic Values

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



### Goal 2: Providing Leadership-in-Faith Opportunities for Students, Staff and the Broader Community

The discussion of Leadership-in-faith raised some contemporary possibilities for understanding the parameters of our task. The headings, Encountering Christ, Growing Spirituality and Encountering the Other, appear to be well attested in the Catholic Schools Youth Ministry Australia (CSYMA), Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) youth programming as well as in Australian Catholic University catholic school staff development initiatives. They can offer a model for considering leadership-in-faith opportunities for students, staff and the broader community. They are intuitively mindful of the reality of the process that we have been following in this document. The journey begins in experiences that require depth understanding before truth and goodness and beauty can be affirmed and realised in the person. The experiences, the understanding, the judging and the deciding are imbedded in the Christian journey that we call discipleship. This provisional model can be used to imagine a future in leadership-in-faith.

- Encountering Christ (Retreat experiences; pilgrimage; encounter groups; scripture groups)
- Growing Spirituality (Prayer in Daily life; Meditation; Short and long courses; Prayer groups)
- Responding in Mission (Mission; Outreach; Works of Mercy)

There is a great deal of work to be done in the ensuing years of the Strategic Plan. A comprehensive induction and ongoing formation process is in development for 2018 and beyond.

### 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 since then the Chapel has become a focus for significant liturgy and prayer experiences. This includes 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 2017. More staff were involved in Year Level Mass experiences in 2017 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 which saw increased support in 2017. A full Liturgical Calendar for 2017 is included as an appendix.

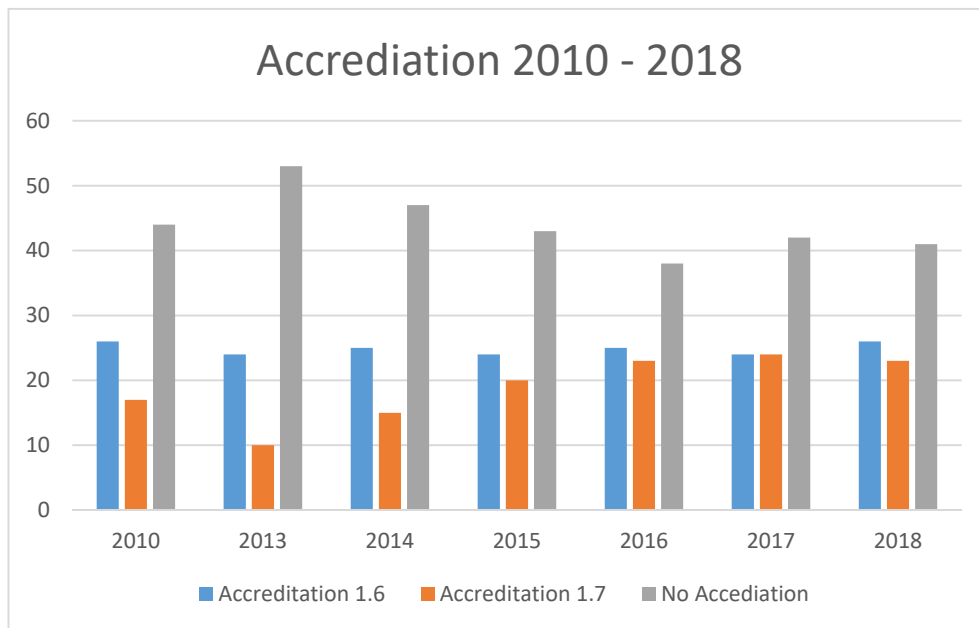
**Mercy Ethos**

The Mercy Ethos office closed at the end of 2017 and the College waits to hear about the next approach of ISMAPNG in this critical area of formation.

**Accreditation**

The last two years have seen the intake of teachers new to Catholic education and the retirement of some longer term staff members. The requirement that teachers become accredited to Teach in a Catholic School (CECV Policy 1.6) is ordinarily achieved in the first five years in the Catholic system. Some have taken up locally available accreditation courses but further internal offerings are needed to make a difference.

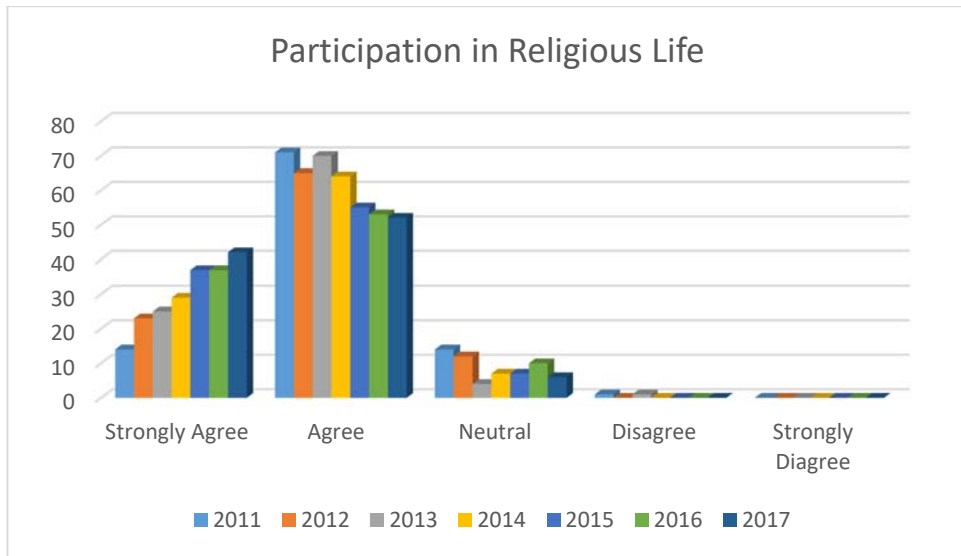
Accreditation to Teach Religious Education (CECV Policy 1.7) saw another current staff members take up external study through the Religious Education Accreditation Program (REAP) program.



**Goal 3: Ensuring That the Gospel and Catholic Traditions Are Understood As Guidance and Support for Life**

**Participation in the life, prayer and ritual of the Catholic Church**

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.



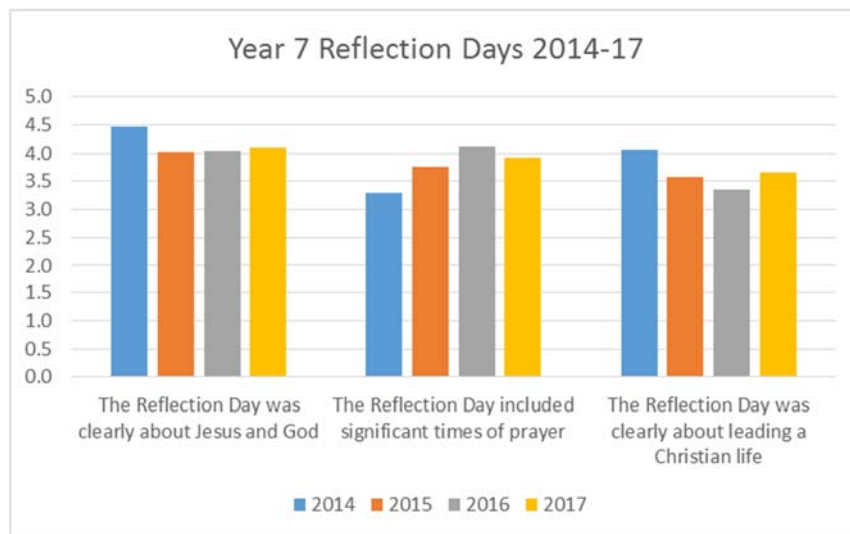
**Retreat / Reflection Day program**

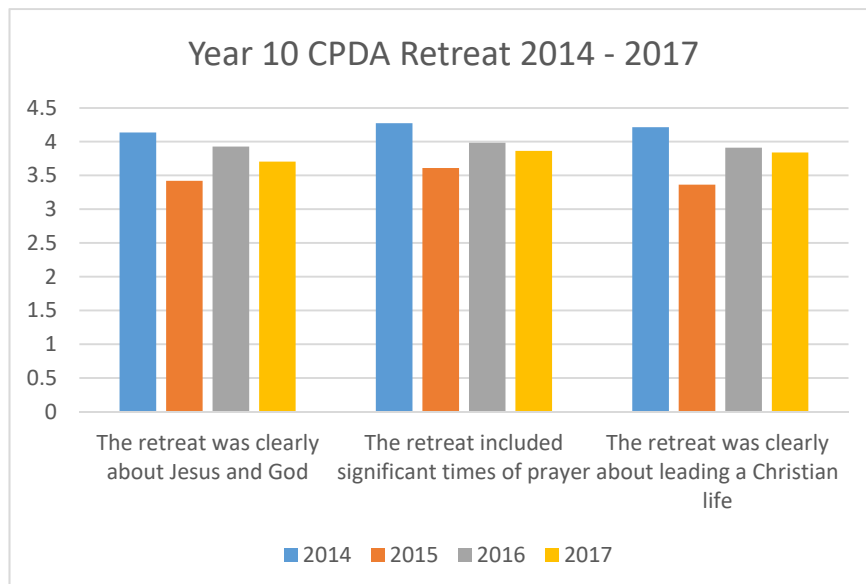
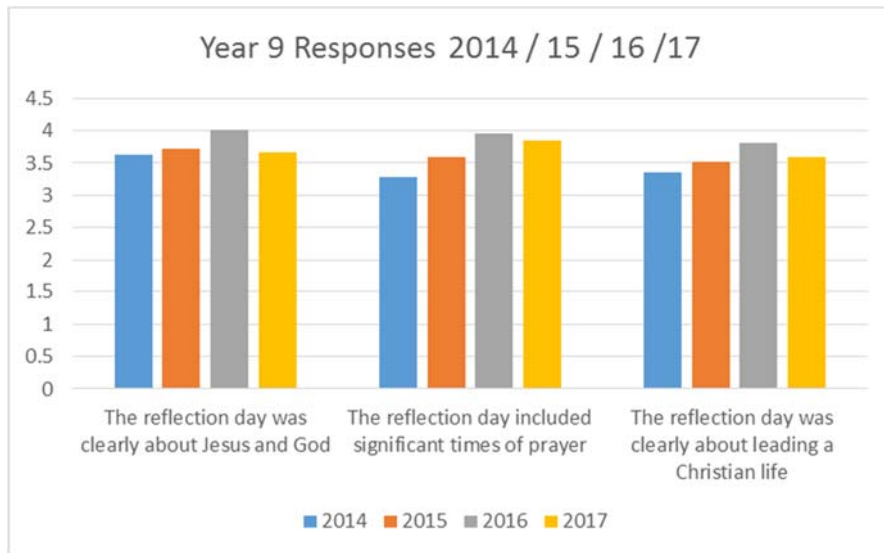
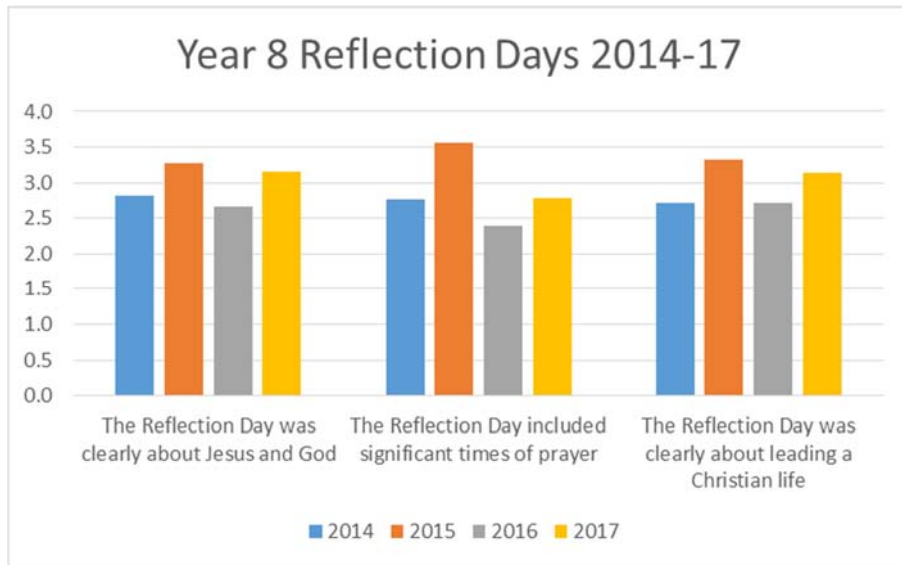
From early in 2014, student attitudes to the retreats and reflection days began to be evaluated using an online survey instrument. Along with some general questions about venue, process, outcomes and the presenter, three key content statements were put to students in each survey with a ranking system. Responses were sought on a five point scale.

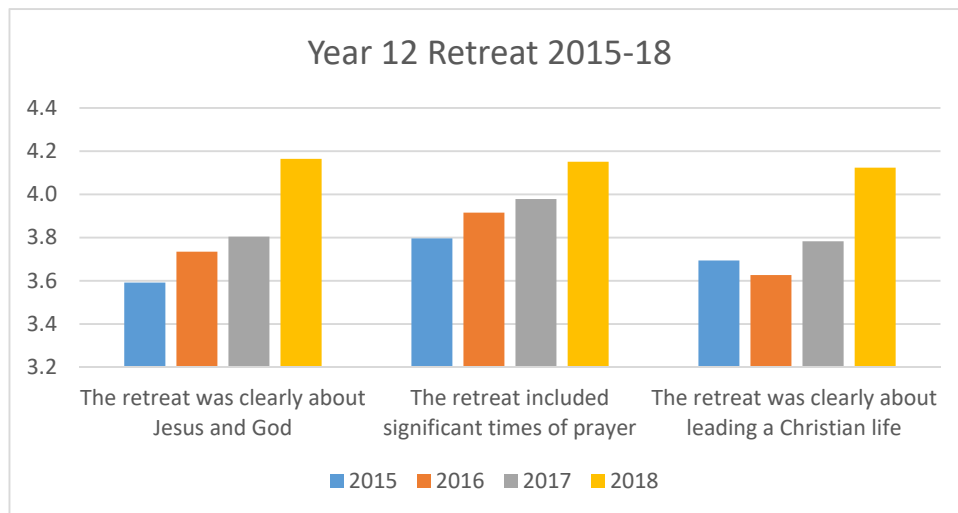
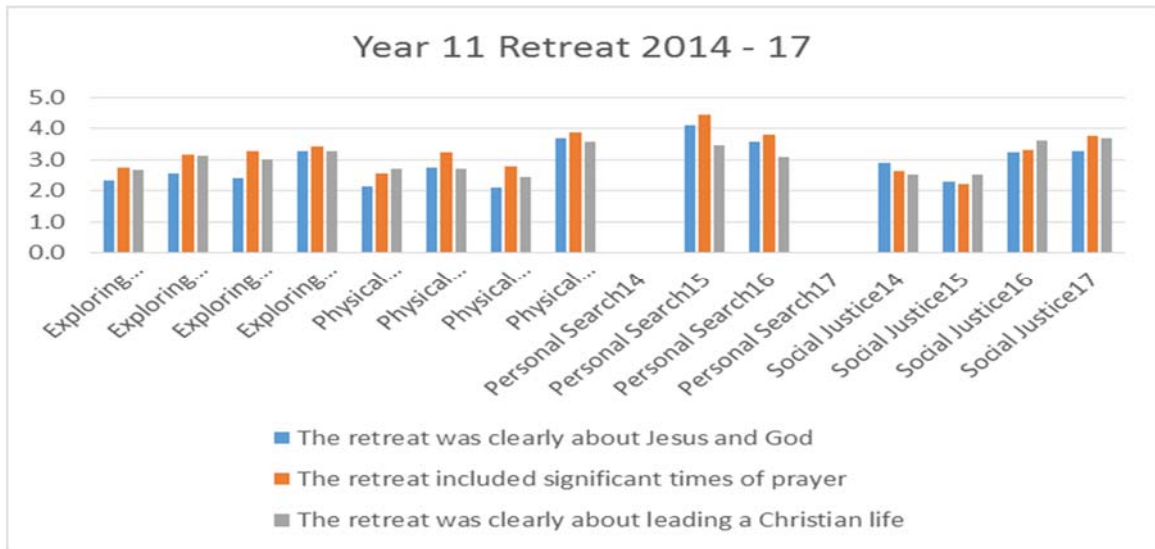
- The retreat/reflection day was clearly about Jesus and God
- The retreat/reflection day included significant times of prayer
- The retreat/reflection day was clearly about leading a Christian life

The longitudinal data is demonstrating positive return in these intentions that are so central to the retreat and reflection day process.

The statistics are given to the year level teams as part of the planning process so that they can consider the possibilities that are at their disposal to make specific and explicit these intended outcomes of the day.







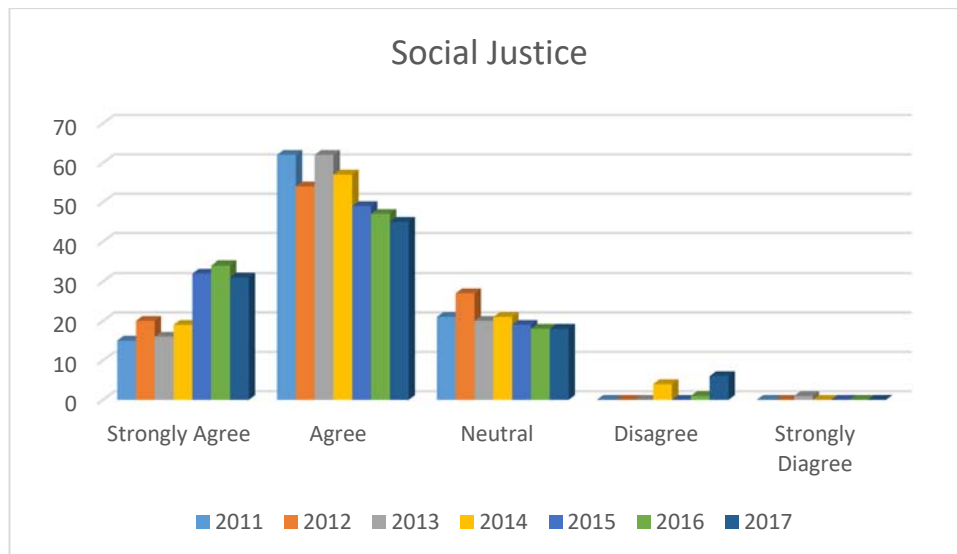
**Goal 4: Personal And Community Responses to God’s Call in Today’s World Expressed as Social Justice.**

**Damascus Day Mass**

For 22 years the College has held this major event that is a primary expression of our heritage. Under the significant leadership of Ms Sally Murphy and with the College theme ‘To Live by the Light of Christ’ well at the fore, this is the most significant liturgy of the year.

**College’s Commitment to Social Justice**

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 and Year 8 Justice and Eucharist Program

The programs take Year 7 and 8 Religious Education classes respectively to the Sisters of Mercy and to the St Vincent de Paul Service Centre in the Cathedral Precinct on a day that the centre was not open to the public. Students learn about the founder of the Sisters of Mercy and the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society before the students attend the 12:05pm Mass at St Patrick’s Cathedral. Investigations are underway for a similar Year 9 Program.

### Supporting our friends and neighbours in Timor-Leste

Over the past twelve 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 College 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 led directly to 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.



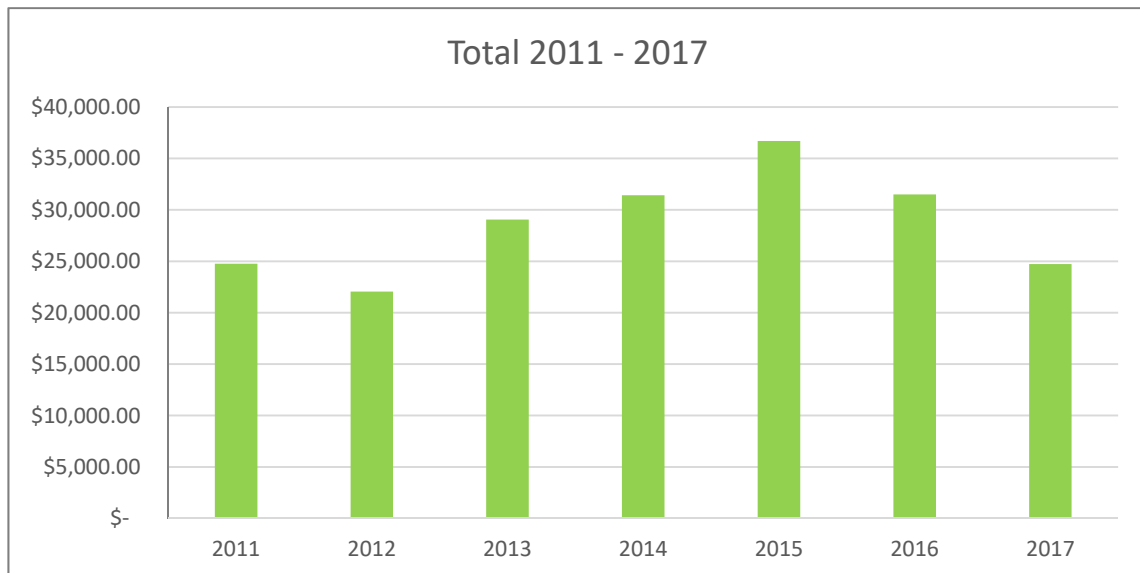
Planning is already underway for the eighth group of Damascus students to visit Ainaro in June 2018. The twenty members (15 students and 5 staff) of the group were brought before the College community at the Damascus Day assembly.

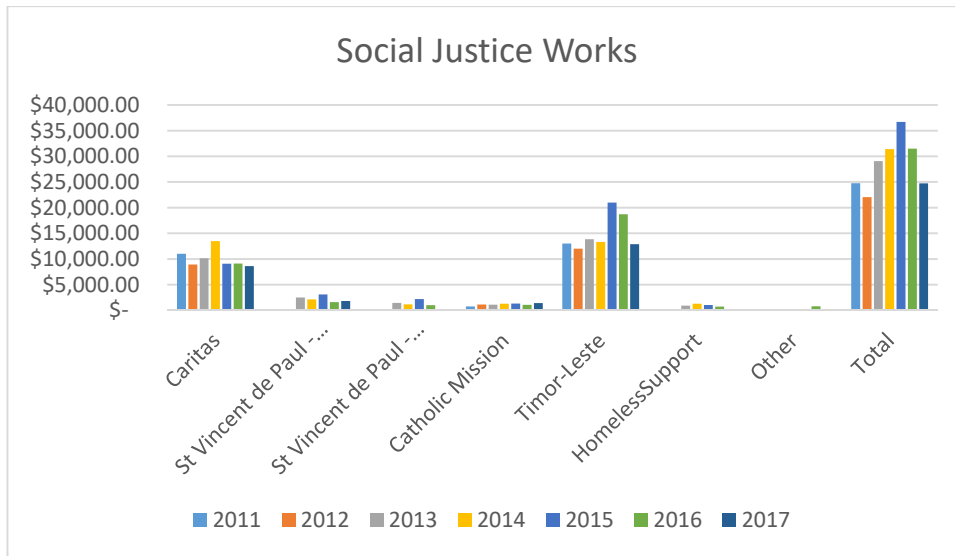
**Seeds of Justice Program**

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 August 2017 was ‘Mercy – There is always room.’ After the *Seeds of Justice Experience* at Anglesea, many *Justice Action Group* members came to believe that we needed to act on *support for the Ballarat Shower Bus*.

**Annual Collections for Social Justice and Mercy**

In 2017 the Lenten Project Compassion appeal for Caritas Australia was comparable to recent years. The winter collection of 2017 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. This collection was up on previous years. The St. Vincent de Paul Christmas collection to share with the needy families of Ballarat was again badged as “Credit for Christmas”. Almost \$25000 was raised and distributed by the College Community under the banner of Social Justice. A smaller total for Timor-Leste Immersion and the inability to schedule some work for the homeless of Ballarat contributed to the overall fall in the total.





**Christian Personal Development Award**

The Christian Personal Development Award (CPDA) began at Damascus College in May 2003. The 30th Year 10 CPDA Introductory Program concluded in October 2017. 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 2017 were the thirteenth 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-curricula experience in the senior school. The Awards were presented at Graduation.

**Areas of ongoing focus areas in 2018**



- Acknowledgement of Indigenous Heritage
- Making appropriate use of the Commemorative Walk
- Induction and Faith Formation Processes
- Staff Formation: Fr Richard Leonard SJ - Friday 17th August 2017
- Awakenings Religious Education Curriculum
- Family Faith Formation
- Year 9 Nazareth House and Eucharist Program

## **APPENDIX: Liturgical Calendar 2017**

### **2017 TERM 1**

Our Lady of Mercy Chapel

Celebration of the Eucharist

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March Year 10 at 11.15 a.m. (Fr. Adrian McInerney)

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March Year 12 at 9.20 a.m. (Fr. Justin Driscoll)

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March Year 11 at 11.15 a.m. (Fr. Barry Ryan)

### **Other Liturgical Events in Our Lady of Mercy Chapel**

Every Thursday Morning: Staff Prayer

### **Liturgical Events in other Venues**

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February Shrove Tuesday Mass for Student Leaders of Ballarat Secondary Schools with the Bishop at St Patrick's Cathedral

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March Ash Wednesday Ceremony - Distribution of Ashes in House Area's 9:00am

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February Opening Mass 11:30a.m. in JSC (Bishop Paul Bird)

Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March Stations of the Cross in JSC at 1.40p.m.

### **2017 TERM 2**

Our Lady of Mercy Chapel

Celebration of the Eucharist

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May 7:30 am Mother Day – Fr Justin Driscoll

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May Year 9 1:40pm. – Fr. Marcello Colasante

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> May Year 7 9:10am – Bishop Peter Connor's

### **Other Liturgical Events in Our Lady of Mercy Chapel**

Every Thursday Morning: Staff Prayer

### **Liturgical Events in other Venues**

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June Year 8 11:45am at St Peter's and St. Pauls, Buninyong (Fr Barry Ryan)

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April 9:00 a.m. Anzac Day Commemorative Service Grass Area facing the Australian Flag

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 11:00am Annual Mass held at Sovereign Hill to celebrate Catholic Education week 2017 - Year 9 SRC (Sr Marie Davey)

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May Timor-Leste Planning Day commencing with Eucharist at St Alipius

Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June Acknowledgement of the Feast of the Sacred Heart and the St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal Collection in House Areas

**Year 7 Eucharist and Mercy Program**

Monday, 15th May 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral  
Wednesday, 17th May 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral  
Friday, 19th May 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral  
Monday, 22nd May 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral  
Tuesday, 23rd May 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral  
Thursday, 25th May 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral  
Friday, 26th May 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral

**2017 TERM 3**

Our Lady of Mercy Chapel  
Celebration of the Eucharist  
Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> August 7:30am Father's Day followed by Breakfast - Fr Adrian McInerney

**Other Liturgical Events in Our Lady of Mercy Chapel**

Every Thursday Morning: Staff Prayer

**Liturgical Events in other Venues**

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 10:30 am Damascus Day Mass in the John Shannon Centre (Fr. Justin Driscoll)

**Year 8 Justice and Eucharist Program**

Tuesday, 18 July 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral  
Tuesday, 1 August 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral  
Tuesday, 15 August 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral  
Tuesday, 29 August 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral  
Tuesday, 12 September 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral  
Tuesday, 10 October 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral  
Tuesday, 24 October 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral  
Tuesday, 7 November 2017, St Patrick's Cathedral

**2017, TERM 4**

Our Lady of Mercy Chapel  
Celebration of the Eucharist  
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December Staff Final Mass 9:30 am (Fr. Adrian McInerney)

**Other Liturgical Events in Our Lady of Mercy Chapel**

Every Thursday Morning: Staff Prayer  
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November: Remembering Our Loved Ones – 1:05 pm

**Liturgical Events in other Venues**

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 9:00 Graduation Mass Rehearsal  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November for Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November Remembrance Day under the Flag Pole arranged by Humanities (Gerard Macklin)  
Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November Year 12 Graduation Mass 5:30 pm at St Patrick's Cathedral  
Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December Years 7-11 Final Mass 9:30 am in the John Shannon Centre (Bishop Peter Connors)

## Community Engagement

### Goals, Intended Outcomes and Achievements

#### Goal 1: Confident and clear communication processes giving voice to the wisdom of all

- Implement the Damascus College Marketing & Communications Plan
- Improve communication processes from the Leadership Team to Staff
- Improve communication to parents re use of the Parent Access Module (PAM)
- Communicate to parents via newsletter, what restorative processes mean and maybe run a session
- Update website with new pictures, social media platforms and increased key messages
- Communicate with local media to promote events, achievements and activities on an on-going basis
- Regular posts and engagement on Damascus College and Alumni Facebook pages and Twitter
- Coordinate the Digital Student Ambassador Program
- Follow up Info Session, Open Morning & Campus Tour attendees and Enrolment Pack email requests
- Consistently communicate the key selling points as identified in the Marketing Plan of Damascus College to the local community
- Communicate regularly to Damascus College Alumni e.g. Facebook, advertisements, emails, newsletter
- Host Reunion events earlier in 2017 and promote Friday Welcome Reception
- Increase Alumni engagement and events throughout the year
- Implement new Communications Style Guide
- Develop TV commercials to promote Open Mornings and Information Sessions throughout the year. The best start for a bright future campaign
- Improve the management of College archives

#### Achievements

Throughout 2017 Damascus College was promoted in line with the Strategic Directions 2016 – 2020, where the key directions were promoted consistently as key messages, including the promotion of the Damascus tagline: The best start for a bright future, which formed the 2017 campaign. Reinforcing our key messages and tagline consistently throughout the year in all forms of promotion to the community aims to improve the overall perception of Damascus College by the wider community. All marketing promotion undertaken within this campaign has been clear and confident, with the aim of building a strong and easily recognisable brand in the community.

Whether we like it or not Damascus College is a brand, and our brand needs to be professional, consistent, effective and protected. Throughout 2016, the Damascus brand was reviewed and it was decided to develop and introduce a Communications Standard Guide (CSG). Throughout 2017 this CSG was refined and updates made to it as the Damascus College brand evolved. The CSG was launched and implemented for staff in March 2017 and continues to be communicated to staff to ensure the consistency of the Damascus College brand in to the future.

This CSG is to be used by ALL staff and suppliers as an important resource that outlines the design specifications for the Damascus College brand in all forms of communication. It helps to

maintain a consistent and professional look and feel when creating new marketing material, and all forms of communication external to Damascus. A CSG is integral to keeping communication and branding consistent across a variety of media channels, including, websites, emails, letters, advertisements, PowerPoint presentations, social media and other publications.

Our brand is the message we are sending to the community telling them who we are, what we stand for and what our personality and style is. Each time consumers come across our brand, they get an impression and first impressions do count. All staff and students of Damascus are in fact brand ambassadors. When we engage with others in the community as staff or students, or we are seen wearing branded uniforms in the supermarket, this is an opportunity (whether we realise it or not) where we are promoting the Damascus College brand and this impression we build, resulting in word of mouth is extremely powerful. The community connects with our brand by recognising who we are and what we can offer, where they build an emotional connection (either good or bad) and an attitude toward our brand, this establishes brand reputation and value in the minds of the community. We all play an important role as brand ambassadors, and it is imperative that the Damascus College brand is promoted in a positive, consistent and professional way at all times.

The CSG ensures;

- Consistency – across all mediums that creates an immediate and lasting impression and that is recognisable;
- Perception – everything we do at Damascus College creates a perception, a style guide is crucial to ensure we portray a perception in the way we intend;
- Professionalism – first impressions are important, let's make it a positive one;
- Saves time and money – becomes a 'bible' for new employees and suppliers, reduces mistakes by suppliers when using logo etc.; and
- Integrity – ensures the investment we make in the Damascus College brand is maintained and not weakened through improper usage.

The forms of promotion used throughout 2017 included;

- TV advertisements;
- Newspaper advertisements;
- Facebook advertising – new for 2017;
- Website;
- Road Sign;
- Printed collateral; and
- Facebook and Twitter accounts

In order to build the Damascus College brand within the community it is also important to provide consistent, clear and constant communication to local media, building those local community links. 23 media releases were developed throughout 2017 that generated media coverage throughout the year. The relationship between the College and the media is a very important one, and these relationships have been nurtured throughout the year, to ensure that Damascus College is front of mind, and responsive to the media's needs and wants.

It is just as important to build and maintain strong relationships with the local Catholic media, including Our Diocesan Community and Just Mercy, who distribute regular newsletters and

publications. Damascus College has had strong coverage in both Catholic newsletters, thus strengthening our brand within the Catholic community.

Media coverage:

- Ballarat Courier – 29 articles
- WIN News
- ABC Radio
- Our Diocesan Community – 11 articles
- Just Mercy – 5 articles

Some notable coverage throughout 2017 have been;

- consistent coverage in Our Diocesan Community and Just Mercy newsletters, including lead story for 50 year Mercy celebration in October 2017;
- front page of the Ballarat Courier for Speed Date a Scientist Expo 9/5/2017; and
- Sr Marie Davey 3 page feature, including front page of the Weekender, in the Saturday Ballarat Courier 2/12/2017

The relationships built throughout 2016 with local media has positively improved to the point where the media now contact Damascus College for comment and stories, rather than vice versa, which is a fantastic result.

Facebook has been a strong form of promotion throughout 2017, and for the first time Damascus used Facebook advertising to promote key events such as:

- General campaign branding – The best start for a bright future with key messages
- Guest Speaker – Nathan Hulls
- 50 year celebration of Mercy and reunions
- Alumni – update details and reunions
- Information Sessions and Open Mornings
- Enrolment deadline and Open Mornings
- Deputy Principal position

The aim of Facebook advertising was to promote key events, seek event registrations, drive traffic to the College website, but to also increase the number of likes to the Damascus Facebook page. The engagement was positive, as per below:

2017 Facebook Advertising Analysis

Campaign	Period	Took action	Reach	Event Responses	Comments	Shares	Click link	Demographics	Likes to DC page
Guest speaker	35 days	136	6,082	57	14	10	25	95% female 5% male	20
Deputy Principal Job	19 days		18,947	NA	38	13	293	65% female 30% male	11
50 year celebration of Mercy	86 days		26,662		41		548		17
Info Session & Open mornings	201 days (3 ads)	5,124	26,062	NA	24	27	1,062	72% female 27% male	16
Alumni reunions and update details	204 days		39,662	NA		11	155	52% female 47% male	42
General campaign branding	203 days (3 ads)	1,700	10,641	NA			42	60% female 40% male	27

Below are the Facebook ads used for general branding purposes, communicating our key messages to the community:





The Damascus College Facebook page has been updated regularly throughout 2017, all updates are also linked to the Damascus College Twitter page. At the end of 2017 there were 2,969 followers of the Damascus College Facebook page, compared to 2446 at the end of 2016, which is a healthy annual increase of 21% (523 followers). The below graph shows the consistent growth in Facebook likes of 1.6% per month for 2017, which is achieved by regularly posting interesting posts and a new initiative for 2017, engaging in Facebook advertising.




Throughout 2017 the Total Reach (no of activity, posts, comments, likes, mentions) on Facebook was excellent, with the following posts generating 5,000+ in reach:

Post	Date	Reach
Mystery to solve – stone found on campus	24/3/2017 at 2.30pm	12,780
Announcement of 2018 School Captains	9/11/2017 at 7.10pm	12,613
Rowing Chant for Head of the Lake	22/2/2017 at 2.10pm	9,327
Damascus Day Zumba video	20/6/2017 at 7.35pm	8, 839
Year 12 exams WIN News footage	3/11/2017 at 10.53am	8,445
The Crucible competition to win tickets	13/6/2017 at 9.30am	6,975
Damascus Day Zumba video	20/6/2017 at 5.26pm	6,836
Sam Rizzo receives donation for World Para-athletics Championships	28/7/2017 at 9.20am	6,266
Rowing crew wins Victorian State Championships at Nagambie	4/3/2017 at 12.35pm	6,037
Wellbeing WIN news video on anti-bullying	20/3/2017 at 10.52am	5,875
Nazareth House WIN News video	21/3/2017 at 4pm	5,805
Sean O’Beirne awarded Royal South Street prizes	10/8/2017 at 1.09pm	5,653
Year 12 Retreat pics	20/2/2017 at 1.52pm	5,317

In 2017 the two highest posts for reach were:  
 24<sup>th</sup> March 2017 – Mystery to solve with 12,780 reach

**Damascus College, Ballarat** added 2 new photos.  
Published by Development Officer (?) · March 24 ·

#damascuscollege  
 Okay Damascus community.....we have a mystery to solve! Who doesn't love a little bit of intrigue on a Friday afternoon.  
 Shout out to all past students of St Martin's in the Pines and Damascus College.... See More



Get More Likes, Comments and Shares  
 Boost this post for \$4 to reach up to 1,100 people.

12780 people reached Boost Post

101 Reactions 27 Comments 76 Shares

**Performance for Your Post**

**12,780** People Reached

**312** Reactions, Comments & Shares

165 Like	97 On Post	68 On Shares
1 Love	0 On Post	1 On Shares
1 Haha	1 On Post	0 On Shares
3 Wow	3 On Post	0 On Shares
65 Comments	47 On Post	18 On Shares
78 Shares	76 On Post	2 On Shares

**4,239** Post Clicks

1,046 Photo Views	2 Link Clicks	3,191 Other Clicks
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**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**


4 Hide Post	5 Hide All Posts
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

9<sup>th</sup> November 2017 - Announcement of 2018 School Captains with 12,613 reach

**Damascus College, Ballarat** added 2 new photos.  
Published by Development Officer (?) · September 11 ·

#DamascusCollege #DamascusPride  
 I am pleased to announce that the 2018 College Captains will be Sean O'Beirne and Ellie Carroll. Sean and Ellie were appointed from an exceptional field of candidates and as a College we congratulate them and wish them well for this key student leadership role. I thank all those students who had the courage to put themselves forward as potential Captains.  
 Matthew Byrne, Principal, Damascus College



Get More Likes, Comments and Shares  
 Boost this post for \$4 to reach up to 1,100 people.

12613 people reached Boost Post

**12,613** People Reached

**910** Reactions, Comments & Shares

624 Like	343 On Post	281 On Shares
115 Love	50 On Post	65 On Shares
4 Haha	0 On Post	4 On Shares
8 Wow	5 On Post	3 On Shares
2 Sad	0 On Post	2 On Shares
1 Angry	1 On Post	0 On Shares
154 Comments	101 On Post	53 On Shares
4 Shares	2 On Post	2 On Shares

**2,630** Post Clicks

199 Photo Views	0 Link Clicks	2,431 Other Clicks
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**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**

9 Hide Post	2 Hide All Posts
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

## 2017 TV advertisements

Three TV advertisements were developed for use throughout 2017 to promote Information Sessions and Open Mornings, which were broken up in to 30 sec and 15 sec advertisements. The footage that was filmed for the launch of the Strategic Plan in 2016 was used to formulate these TV advertisements, which were also promoted on the website and Facebook page.

The TV advertisements were placed with Prime 7 and Channel 9, and the demographic for these ads were defined as Grocery Buyers throughout Western Victoria. These TV ads were successful in raising the profile of Damascus College, as well as promoting the events to increase attendance.

Campaign	Start	Finish	Days	Ad duration
9 Feb Open Mornings	2-Feb	8-Feb	6	30 sec, 15 sec
16 Feb Open Mornings	9-Feb	15-Feb	6	30 sec, 15 sec
6 Sep Info Sessions	23-Aug	6-Sep	15	30 sec, 15 sec
26 Oct Info Sessions/Nov Open Morning	12-Oct	26-Oct	15	30 sec, 15 sec

The TV advertisements concentrated on the following key messages from the Strategic Directions:

### Ad 1

- Ballarat’s only Catholic co-educational secondary college, providing education for the whole family
- Committed to a culture of excellence, inspiring and challenging our students to reach their potential, and to contribute confidently to the world around them
- Progressive and innovative learning and teaching, and our diverse curriculum catering for various post-secondary pathways
- Modern facilities in an inspiring 50 acre bush setting, only 7km from Ballarat CBD

### Ad 2

- Ballarat’s only Catholic co-educational secondary college, providing education for the whole family
- Proud of Mercy Heritage, and committed to social justice and helping others less fortunate
- High quality, well rounded education that focuses on the development of the whole person
- Students are inspired by high expectations to become self-directed global citizens

### Ad 3

- Ballarat’s only Catholic co-educational secondary college, providing education for the whole family
- Strong and vibrant community, where the contribution of all is optimised
- Nurturing respectful relationships that value all members in an inclusive and welcoming environment
- Great commitment and pride in contributing to the College, celebrating diversity in a safe and supportive school

Attendance numbers grew considerably for Information Sessions in 2017 when compared to previous years, which can be attributed to the increase in marketing of these events.

Below are attendance statistics for Information Evenings throughout the years:

	Sept	Oct/Nov	Total attendance	Sep % increase/decrease	Oct/Nov % increase/decrease	Year to Year Increase/decrease
<b>2017</b>	119	116	235	40%	18%	28%
<b>2016</b>	85	98	183	-13.2%	3.15%	-5%
<b>2015</b>	98	95	193	38%	31.9%	35%
<b>2014</b>	71	72	143	12.7%	-15.3%	-3%
<b>2013</b>	63	85	148			

### Open Morning Attendance Comparison

Open Mornings								
	First Nov event	Second Nov event	First Feb event	Second Feb event	Total attendance	Nov % increase/decrease	Feb % increase/decrease	Year to Year Increase/decrease
<b>2018/19 for 2020 start</b>					0			
<b>2017/18 for 2019 start</b>	33	35	16	33	117	134.5%	-26.80%	21.87%
<b>2016/17 for 2018 start</b>	6	23	27	40	96	-9.0%	36.70%	18.50%
<b>2015/16 for 2017 start</b>	17	15	19	30	81			

In 2017/18 the above statistics show that attendance for Open Mornings was higher in November, than it was in February for 2020 enrolment, and the overall attendance was up by 21.87% when compared to the previous year. Anecdotally, this change in attendance structure could be attributed to prospective families being more prepared and organised for their child’s enrolment earlier, and therefore they attended the November event rather than the February event, so that they could submit their application earlier rather than later.

In order to give voice to the student body, a Digital Student Ambassador Program was continued throughout 2017, which saw 2 junior and 2 senior members of the SRC from each of the 4 Houses become Digital Student Ambassadors, where they regularly contribute weekly posts on Facebook about Damascus student life.

At each student recruitment event (Info Session, Open Morning and Campus Tours) these contacts are followed up with an email to thank them for their attendance and to see if there is anything further we can assist them with. This increased contact after an event, is aimed at increasing engagement, communication, and ultimately enrolments.

### Alumni

Alumni engagement has been strengthened throughout 2017 with the below table showing the improvement in alumni data accessible on the alumni database. Of considerable note, the number of alumni with contact details has grown 16% and the overall accuracy of the data has improved when compared to 2016. Throughout 2017 there were numerous alumni events, newsletters, emails, publications and advertising to encourage alumni to update their details. This increased effort has resulted in an increase in useable alumni data, in particular email addresses which can be used to further improve alumni engagement and attendance at events. The alumni with email addresses has improved by 51% when compared to 2016, which is an excellent result and assists when communicating to alumni in the future. The bottom four sets of statistics in the

below table demonstrate the reduction in data that is unusable, so having these reduce throughout 2017 is an excellent result, and testament to the increased marketing and communications activity that has occurred with alumni throughout 2017.

Type of Data	2015	2016	2017	2015/16 Improvement	2016/17 Improvement
Unique records in database	10,827	11,272	10,261	4%	Reduced by 9%, but increased accuracy
Alumni with contact information	5,145	5,428	6,287	5.5%	16%
Alumni triggered edit to data	78	302	647	287%	114%
With Email Address	2,527	3,078	4,667	22%	51%
With Mailing Address only	4,621	3,717	2,978	Reduced by 20%	Reduced by 20%
Record with Student Name Only	802	604	305	Reduced by 25%	Reduced by 50%
Record with only Name, School & Last Year attended	4,381	3,745	3,123	Reduced by 14.5%	Reduced by 17%
Duplicate Name, Inconsistent Data	1,206	784	602	Reduced by 35%	Reduced by 23%

Alumni reunions were changed to be hosted early in the year for 2017, rather than later in the year, and Welcome Receptions were added to the structure of Friday night reunions. These welcome receptions on a Friday night were promoted to each of the reunion groups, with some taking up the opportunity. Below are the dates and attendance numbers for reunions:

Reunion	Date	2017 Attendance	2016 Attendance	Year to Year Increase/decrease
10 Year	Friday 5 May 2017	60	30	100%
20 Year	Friday 28 April 2017	42	40	5%
30 Year	Friday 19 May 2017	40	40	0%
40 Year	Saturday 29 April 2017	44	4	1000%
50 Year	Saturday 28 October 2017	36	NA	

Damascus College hosts an Alumni Facebook Closed Group that we have strengthened throughout 2017 as a way to re-connect with past students of Sacred Heart, St Paul's, St Martin's in the Pines and Damascus College. The 50 year celebration of Mercy was a great way to build the alumni database for Sacred Heart past students, however we continue to attempt to engage the past students of St Paul's Technical College. In 2017 we introduced a St Paul's Facebook

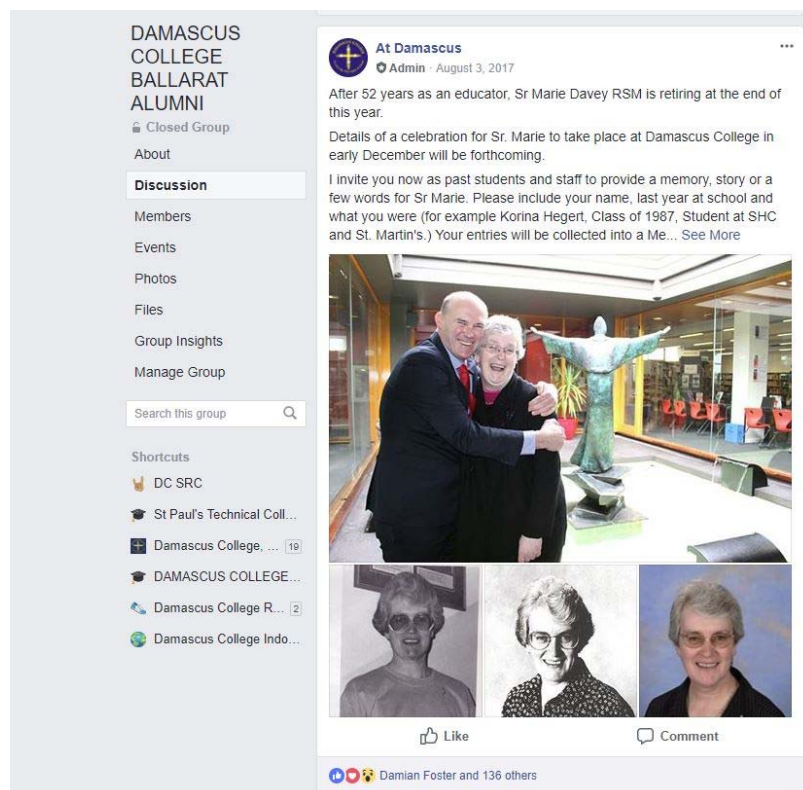
Closed Group, as they do not identify with Damascus College at all. This is starting to gain momentum, and as a way to build the St Paul’s database, we intend to host a whole of school St Paul’s reunion in 2018, similar to the 50 year Mercy celebration.

Below are the engagement statistics for the Damascus College Alumni Closed Group and the St Paul’s Closed Group:

Group	2015	2016	2017	2015/16 Growth	2016/17 Growth
Damascus College Alumni	302	780	1,202	158%	54%
St Paul’s Technical College	n/a	n/a	92		

The Damascus Alumni Facebook group continues to grow its members each year, with a 54% growth compared to 2016. The increase in members can be attributed to events run at Damascus College, in particular the 50 year anniversary and retirement of Sr Marie Davey held throughout 2017. These two events boosted engagement with alumni and saw them update their details on the alumni database, as well as join the Facebook group to stay connected with the College. Throughout 2017 we targeted past students with newspaper and Facebook advertising asking them to update their details and to join the Facebook group, which has had great results.

On 3 August, 2017 it was announced on the DC Alumni Facebook group that Sr Marie Davey was retiring at the end of 2017. This post was well received (liked, loved or wowed) by over 135 alumni as well as generating more than a dozen comments and 14 follow up emails.



The 50 year anniversary celebrations of Mercy education on the Mt Clear site, was an excellent event to grow the alumni database and build connections with the community. This event was attended by over 500 members of the Damascus College community drawn from past and current students and staff, as well as members of the community. It was an incredible opportunity to bring together Sacred Heart, St Paul's and St Martin's alumni on the Damascus campus. As this event was a celebration from 1968 it attracted Sacred Heart and St Martin's in the Pines students, so in 2018 we plan to hold another whole school reunion event targeting the St Paul's past students.

As a result of the 50 year anniversary, there were a number of alumni items donated and added to the Damascus archives. Items included a set of Sacred Heart College china used in the boarding house at St Martin's in the Pines, school uniforms from Sacred Heart in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's. In addition, there were a variety of documents, yearbooks and other school paraphernalia that were collected throughout 2017 as a result of considerable and planned engagement with past students.

## **Archives**

The College archives management is progressing along well, with the appointment of the College archivist 2 days per week. Throughout 2017 the following was achieved;

- cleaning and tidying the archives area to be more workable;
- sorting, cataloguing and disposing of 113 unsorted archive boxes that had been left unsorted from previous years;
- disposal of material in line with the retention schedule, using nine secure disposal bins;
- introduction of a new process for receiving new archive material, specific shelf to be filled and checked;
- reviewed the Damascus retention schedule using the Australian Society of Archivists Retention Schedule for non-government schools as well as the guidelines provided by the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat;
- welcomed new items to archives via the Alumni Officer, with past students donating valuable items e.g. uniform items from Sacred Heart and St Martin's from the 1960s and 70s;
- Archivist has posted numerous photos on the Damascus College and St Paul's Facebook pages to engage with past students;
- visited the Loreto College Archives Centre to generate ideas for the development of the new Damascus College Archives Centre in the new building;
- Archivist attended a workshop at the Australian Society of Archivists National Conference on software packages, which confirmed the Damascus choice of Maxus Archives. Also attended a Maxus training session to further develop knowledge of the software package; and
- Archivist has added numerous historical items to the Hall of Fame, photographs now accompany many of the trophies to tell the story of each trophy

### Year 7 Enrolment data analysis

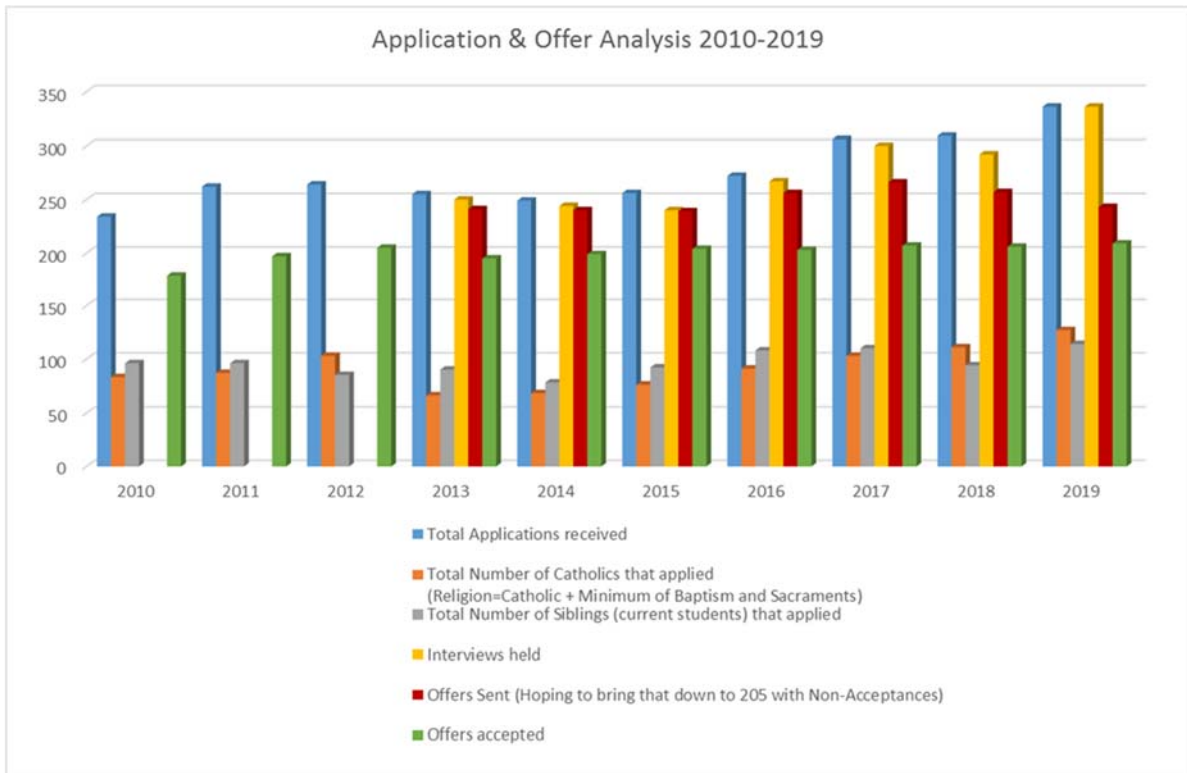
Below is an analysis of 2010-2019 Year 7 enrolment data including: applications received, Catholic (baptism and sacraments) applications, sibling applications, interviews held, offers sent and offers accepted.

It is important to understand that Damascus College engages in promotion 2 years in advance of the Year 7 enrolment year. So the work done in 2017 affects the application and enrolment data for the 2019 Year 7 Enrolment year.

Total application numbers have been consistently around 250 from 2010 to 2015, and from 2016 to 2019 total application numbers have been growing closer to and above 300 per enrolment year. In 2019 we had record growth with 336 total applications, growing 8.7% from the previous year of 309 applications. In 2017 the number of Catholic (baptism and sacraments) applications hit over 100 (103), in 2018 it reached 111 and a record was hit in 2019 with 127 Catholic applications, which is 14% growth from the previous year.

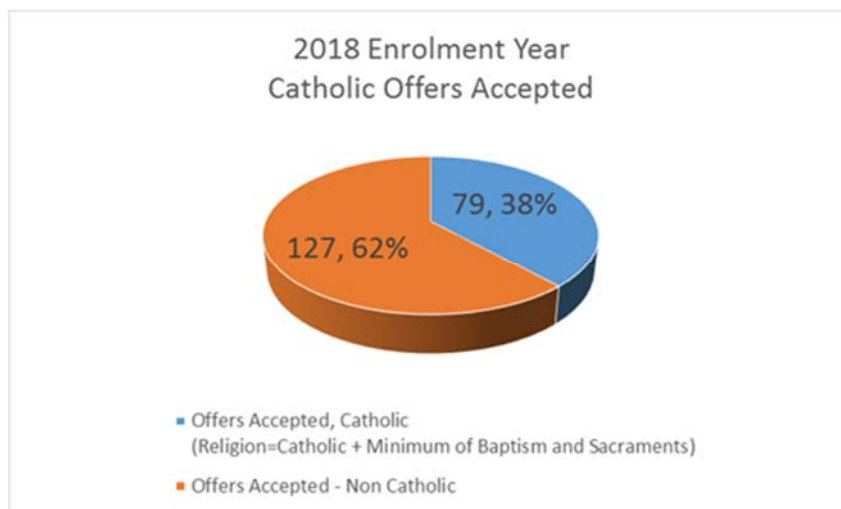
Applications and Offers – Year 7	Year 7 Enrolment Year									
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Applications received	234	262	264	255	249	256	272	306	309	336
Total Number of Catholics that applied (Religion=Catholic + Minimum of Baptism and Sacraments)	83	87	103	66	68	76	91	103	111	127
Total Number of Siblings (current students) that applied	96	96	85	90	78	92	108	110	94	114
Interviews held				250	244	240	267	300	292	336
Offers Sent				241	240	239	256	266	257	243
Offers Accepted	178	197	205	195	199	204	203	207	206	209





Of the offers accepted, for the 2019 enrolment year, 88 (42%) of the 209 accepted offers are Catholic (baptism and sacraments), which is up from last year's 79 (38%) of the 206 offers for the 2018 enrolment year.

	Enrolment Year	
	2018	2019
Offers Accepted, Catholic (Religion=Catholic + Minimum of Baptism and Sacraments)	79	88
Offers Accepted - Non Catholic	127	121
<b>Total Offers Accepted</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>209</b>





## Goal 2: Engaged parents who contribute to the growth of students, the College and broader community

- Engage parents in established school events and ensure opportunities for participation are communicated via a range of methods e.g. Guest Speaker, Mother's & Father's Day liturgies and morning teas
- Communicate regularly with current and prospective parents through the College Facebook page, Twitter, College Newsletter and SMS messages
- Introduce a New Parents morning tea to add to the annual calendar: Murrnong Trail breakfast
- Communicate volunteer opportunities to parents and grow the volunteer database
- Improve parents helping with After School Sports
- Communicate to current parents to join DC Alumni via email, Facebook, twitter, newsletter, LinkedIn
- Introduce the new Academic Assembly and invite award recipient parents to attend
- 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.
- Develop a parent speaker program, of experts in their field visit College to speak to students and engage learning or get parents to Speed Date a Scientist Day
- Respond to parent enquiries in a timely manner e.g. within 24 hours
- Increase alumni activities and ensure current parents are invited, as they are also past students
- Communicate effectively with parents regarding upcoming College event opportunities

### Achievements

Throughout 2017, Damascus College continued to strengthen engagement levels with its parent community. Parents were engaged in established College events with strong attendance at events such Guest Speaker, Awards & Achievement Evening, Mother's & Father's Day Liturgies, Year 7 new parent morning teas, TA interviews, Orientation Day morning tea and Meet the Teachers evening.

The inaugural Academic Assembly was launched in February 2017 which was successful in achieving its aim of inspiring the student body to achieve academic excellence by celebrating the academic achievements of Damascus students, in front of the whole school cohort. This event invited parents and families to Damascus to celebrate student achievement, with a total of 86 award recipients and special guests in attendance, as well as the whole Damascus student body. In total we recognised 29 students for their academic achievement throughout 2016 and numerous students received multiple awards, totalling 41 awards.

The annual Guest Speaker event increased its attendance by 49% when compared to 2016 attendance figures. The fluctuation in attendance figures throughout the years for this event can be attributed to the relevant presenters and their attractiveness to the community. The overall aim of this event is to host a FREE community event that engages parents and the community, to contribute to the growth of their own student.

Mother's Day and Father's Day liturgy and breakfasts' had record attendances in 2017, with a 26.6% and 23% increase respectively. The increased promotion of this event is resulting in improved attendance and engagement with the parent community.

**Attendance figures for annual events:**

<b>Events</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
Guest Speaker	376	453	364	259	387
Mother's Day Liturgy & Breakfast		67	107	124	157
Father's Day Liturgy & Breakfast		48	78	100	123
Awards & Achievement Evening		462	469	613	518

The mediums used to communicate to parents in 2017, included the College Facebook and twitter pages, College newsletter and website, letters by mail and SMS messages. Volunteer opportunities were communicated to parents via the newsletter and College Facebook site. In 2017 Damascus received 10 new volunteer applications, making a total of 80 volunteers listed in the database. It is important to note that not all of these 80 are active volunteers. Parental volunteering is particularly strong in the areas of Rowing, EBT and Camps, which create a wonderful sense of community amongst these groups.

The SAS database and alumni database were utilised in 2017 to tap into parent expertise for the annual Science Careers Expo and there was good attendance from alumni as well as the parent body. An approach was made to parents regarding work experience and Gap year job opportunities for graduates, which brought numerous new work experience and/or gap year opportunities for graduates, through local and Melbourne organisations.

An online parent survey was conducted to Year 8 parents, reflecting on their experience as a Year 7 parent the year previous. This data is compiled and used to continually improved processes at Damascus.

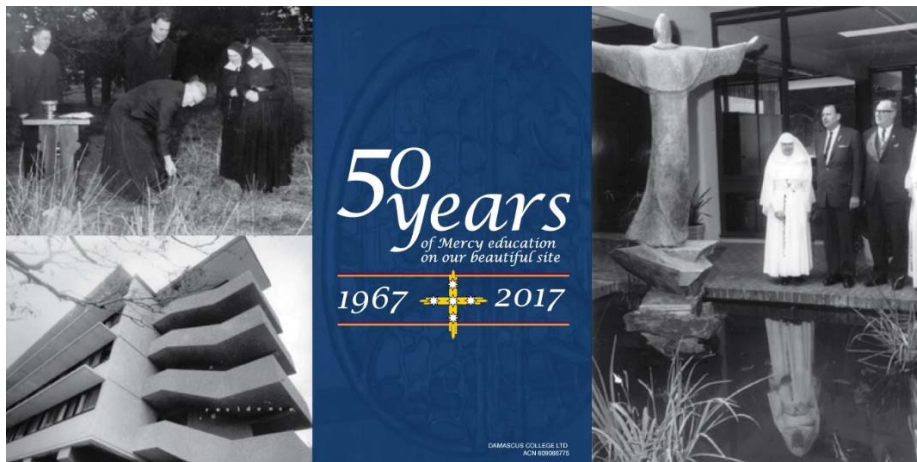
It is the Damascus philosophy to respond to parent enquiries in a timely manner, which is generally completed as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after the enquiry has been made.

Student attendance at College events is extremely important, and in 2017 we regularly communicated to parents this importance to encourage participation. In 2017 attendance at all of the four key major events (Swimming, Athletics, Lap of the Lake and Damascus Day) was improved when compared to 2016 figures, which is an excellent result. Consequently increased attendance, results in a decrease in absences, which was observed across all four major events. For Damascus Day it was noted that there was an increase in Parent notified absence and a decreased in Absence – followed up, which is encouraging and means if students must be absent they are now notifying the College instead of simply not attending. It is a challenge to reduce the amount of absences at these key events, but we continually communicate the importance of these events to parents.

### Event Student Attendance Comparison

Event	Present	Parent Notified Absence	Absent Without Reason	Absent Followed Up	School Related Absence (VETiS/SBA)	Total
<b>2012 - Swimming</b>	926	33	52	15	21	1047
<b>2013 - Swimming</b>	846	42	73	8	21	990
<b>2014 - Swimming</b>	932	52	46	15	8	1053
<b>2015 - Swimming</b>	876	71	45	27	3	1022
<b>2016 - Swimming</b>	888	93	46	25	2	1054
<b>2017 - Swimming</b>	917	84	46	7	1	1055
<b>2012 - Athletics</b>	832	54	102	20	0	1008
<b>2013 - Athletics</b>	819	45	82	11	0	957
<b>2014 - Athletics</b>	829	86	60	57	3	1035
<b>2015 - Athletics</b>	821	86	73	17	17	1014
<b>2016 - Athletics</b>	770	101	86	82	2	1041
<b>2017 - Athletics</b>	909	71	44	9	19	1052
<b>2012 - Lap of the Lake</b>	800	66	114	30	23	1033
<b>2013 - Lap of the Lake</b>	774	74	95	20	23	986
<b>2014 - Lap of the Lake</b>	805	71	66	23	52	1017
<b>2015 - Lap of the Lake</b>	829	89	34	26	20	998
<b>2016 - Lap of the Lake</b>	776	56	30	7	32	901
<b>2017 - Lap of the Lake</b>	901	88	18	18	25	1050
<b>2012 - Damascus Day</b>	685	124	143	42	24	1018
<b>2013 - Damascus Day</b>	787	87	53	34	23	984
<b>2014 - Damascus Day</b>	769	102	75	27	42	1015
<b>2015 - Damascus Day</b>	788	99	70	37	41	1035
<b>2016 - Damascus Day</b>	774	35	58	84	71	1022
<b>2017 - Damascus Day</b>	865	73	55	16	27	1036

## 50 year celebration event



2017 was the 50 year anniversary of Mercy education at our Mt Clear site, so a hallmark event was organised for Saturday 28th October 2017, which also coincided with two reunions of the Class of 1967 and the Class of 1958.

This event was attended by approximately 500 alumni, parents, members of the community, special guests', current students and staff. It was a wonderful celebration of Mercy with members of our Damascus community, and a successful event for parent and community engagement.

To commemorate the 50 year celebration, a Commemorative Walk was developed and launched at the event. It is a 240 metre bush walking track with 12 commemorative signs, culminating in a sharing circle. The walk is located at the back of the Damascus campus, commemorating sponsors, past and current students and staff of Damascus College and our three foundation Colleges. A video was developed to launch the Commemorative Walk, including drone footage and a prayer accompanies each sign, as a point of reflection in line with our Catholic identity. This Commemorative walk was blessed at the event by Fr Adrian McNerney, and is a beautiful legacy that commemorates the Damascus College history for all future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

The Commemorative Walk honours the following:

1. Intro and welcome sign
2. Waddawurong acknowledgement
3. Founding Sponsors – Sisters of Mercy and Priests of Ballarat Diocese
4. Sacred Heart College
5. St Paul's Technical College
6. St Martin's in the Pines
7. Damascus College
8. Australian Defence Force
9. Victims of abuse including Loud Fence Ribbons
10. Damascus College deaths as a student or staff member
11. Sharing Circle with seats for reflection
12. Alice Fanning plaque on seat





### Sr Marie Davey Retirement



A significant event occurred at the conclusion of 2017 and this was the retirement of Sr Marie Davey. To honour her commitment and service to Catholic education, a farewell event was organised on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017, where 260 members of the community, parents, current students, staff and special guests gathered to celebrate Sr Marie.

To celebrate this event we hosted a formal event, followed by drinks and nibbles. Two videos were compiled of staff and students thanking Sr Marie for all that she has done for Damascus College and a portrait was commissioned to hang at the College upon her departure, pictured above. The Damascus biannual publication *The Road*, spring edition was dedicated to Sr Marie Davey, where she adorned the front page and her profile and timeline featured within the publication. This will form a significant milestone in the life of Damascus College.

Sr Marie's farewell event was another successful event that not only honoured Sr Marie and her contributions, but also allowed engagement with our parent and wider community.

The 50 year celebration of Mercy and Sr Marie Davey's farewell event were both new events that occurred in 2017 that engaged with our parent and alumni community, as well as the wider Ballarat and surrounding community. The 50 year celebration welcomed hundreds of past students back to Damascus, and doing so built and strengthened our alumni database, in particular for Sacred Heart College and St Martin's in the Pines.



Parent Access Module (PAM), TA interviews and Meet the Teacher Evenings are other forms of communication to parents about student progress. Parents attending TA interviews increased when compared to 2016. There are four opportunities for parents to attend a TA interview and for 2017 the attendance rate was Term 1 - 85%, Term 2 - 68%, Term 3 - 62% and Term 4 - 51%. This gradual decline in attendance throughout the year is consistent amongst previous years, but overall attendance rates were good, but there is always room for improvement.

### Goal 3: Strong links to the global community

- Host all 17 Catholic primary schools for a transition visit
- Conduct a Maths Games Day for Grade 4 students from key Catholic primary schools - St Alipius, St Francis Xavier and Emmaus
- Host Guest Speaker event and invite Catholic primary staff, parents and local community to guest speaker event in May
- Host a celebration for 50 year anniversary of catholic education on Mt Clear site
- Communicate College events and activities regularly to catholic newsletters, such as Catholic Diocese of Ballarat - Our Diocesan Community and Sisters of Mercy – just Mercy e-newsletter
- Build on relationship with Shower Bus to maximise relationship and impact on local community
- Host more outside events at Damascus, inviting the community
- Invite Grade 5 students from target Catholic Primary School's to performing arts production, limited space available at venue
- Meet with Principals of catholic primary schools biennial (every 2 years) to discuss ways of working together, value add. Distribute collateral
- Maintain positive relationships with key local media personnel
- Represent Damascus at Catholic Development Network
- Engage Alumni artist each year for the Alumni Art Project
- Regularly promote Damascus commitment to social justice and helping people less fortunate

Damascus College has continued to consolidate its relationships with local parishes and parish primary schools throughout 2017. 14 of the seventeen parish primary schools undertook a transition visit to Damascus with their Grade 5 students in 2017.

The Damascus Transition Co-ordinator also visits parish primary school to assist with the transition of incoming Damascus students, in 2017 30 parish primary schools were visited. This practice builds on the relationship with the primary school, as well as helps the student to better transition to secondary college. For those single students from Skipton, Meredith, Magpie and Warrenheip Primary Schools, they attended the preliminary orientation day because they were the only student from their school and the transition coordinator met and worked with them on the day and phoned the teacher for further discussion.

2017 saw the launch of a new Parent Transition Information Session for incoming Year 7 parents. This session was held in December 2017, on the same day that the new Year 7 students completed their testing. The session consisted of all members of the Leadership Team presenting on their portfolio, as well as a presentation from the Transition Coordinator, a PAM presentation

and the development and distribution of a new Transition flyer. Parents were surveyed following the session and feedback was extremely positive, and it is to be continued in future years.

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. Primary School teachers continue to provide positive comments in the way the transition day is well organised, how beautiful our campus is and how welcoming everyone is at Damascus College. Over the years there has been a definite shift away from Damascus being a second choice after Loreto or St Pat's with more families expressing that they are coming to Damascus as a first choice.

In addition to the transition program, Damascus hosts a Maths Games Day for Grade 4 students and in 2017 the Primary Schools that were invited were Emmaus Primary School, St Francis Xavier Primary School and Lumen Christi Primary School, during Numeracy Week in August. This event, now in its fourth year, was a highly successful day with 150 Grade 4 students in attendance, who were mentored by Damascus Year 10 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 primary school staff and volunteers present on the day.

Each year Damascus holds a school production and in 2017 it was 'The Crucible'. Due to the dark and controversial nature of this story, it was decided to not invite Primary School groups to a special viewing, this will be continued in 2018.

The annual guest speaker event at Damascus is a great way to engage with parents, but also the wider community. This event gives an open invitation to all members of the community to attend and experience this FREE event. It showcases our facilities to prospective families who may not have considered Damascus, but is also a positive way to use our facilities that engages and reinforces our relationship with the local community. The 2017 guest speaker event was presented by Nathan Hulls on 'How to create a culture of motivation and engagement for teens' and we welcomed 387 attendees from within and outside the Damascus community. The important element of this event is that the topic presented is general enough to attract a wide audience from the local community and that it continues to be a FREE event. We received much positive feedback following this event, particularly as the guest speaker presented to the student body and staff throughout the day, and then the parents/community that night, allowing student and parents to consolidate the learnings together at home.

Throughout 2017 Damascus continued to nurture a strong and positive relationship with local media, as a result increasing Damascus reach and links to the global community. 23 media releases were developed and distributed to media, showcasing Damascus, and reinforcing this relationship, resulting in 29 media articles. Damascus also regularly communicates to Catholic media and contributes regularly to Catholic newsletters including: Our Diocesan Community and Just Mercy e-newsletters, featuring 16 times throughout 2017. This ongoing connection strengthens the Damascus profile and relationship with other Catholic ministries and organisations, thus increasing reach to the global community.

Damascus continues to distribute a newsletter to parish primary schools four times per year, or one every Term. This regular communication and information sharing, assists to build closer links with the parish community. Promotional flyers were also distributed to each parish primary school inviting their communities to Information evenings and Open Mornings, thus reinforcing relationships within the local community.

Two events were held throughout 2017 that attracted significant members of the outside local community, these being the 50 year celebration of Mercy and Sr Marie's farewell event in October and December 2017 respectively. These were both very special events allowing key members of our community to attend Damascus College, enjoy our facilities, and strengthen our links to the global community.

Damascus continued to regularly attend the Catholic Development Network (CDN) meetings in Melbourne, helping to strengthen the Damascus profile in the wider Catholic community throughout Victoria, and these events assist in learning from others to improve outcomes at Damascus. Towards the end of 2016, Damascus was approached to host the first CDN meeting in 2017, this was an exciting opportunity that showcased our beautiful facilities, students and staff to the wider Catholic Colleges throughout Victoria. Feedback received following the event, was how lucky we are to have such beautiful grounds as they enjoyed a tour of the campus by student leaders, and they loved our friendly students and staff. Hosting this event enabled us to strengthen our links within the Victorian Catholic educational community, showcase our College to a wider audience and strengthen our profile within the global community.

For the last three years, Damascus has commissioned a past student or staff member to produce an art piece interpreting the Damascus motto 'To Live by the Light of Christ.' In 2017 we welcomed the sculpture by past student Peter Thomas, Class of 1992 and commissioned the 2018 piece by Seona Murnane, Class of 1995. This innovative project enables Damascus to reconnect with past students wherever they are located, by encouraging them to re-engage with the College and acts as great promotion to the wider community, showcasing the talents of Damascus alumni.



Throughout 2017 the Damascus College brand was promoted using our key messages from the Strategic Directions 2016-2020, including our commitment to social justice and helping people less fortunate. This consistent and targeted promotion was aimed at connecting with our community, developing strong links between Damascus College and prospective families and building a positive profile of Damascus College to the wider community. Strong branding defines to the community who and what Damascus College is, and portrays to the community what we want to be known for and what Damascus College stands for, our point of difference. This type of branding will remain consistent throughout the next three years until 2020.

**PARENT SATISFACTION**

Has been addressed within the data collected for the various portfolios reported in other areas of this Annual report

## Learning & Teaching

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Consistency of Documentation (Naming of files, folders, SIMON, comments/feedback and assessment tasks)
- Consistency of providing effective 'formative/ summative' feedback
- Using assessment data to inform future learning and teaching
- Undertake review of Special Needs Structure

### Achievements

In the Strategic Directions document, the Learning and Teaching focus for 2016 to 2020 is for "Progressive and innovative learning and teaching that maximises student outcomes." In line with this direction, the College understands that learning is an ongoing process, and each year level/unit is connected to the next. The inherent goal for 2017 focuses on improving student outcomes by using what we already know about our learners and supporting them to maximise their learning.

#### Key Achievements

- Creating and recreating files, folder structures in both SIMON and network drives and consistent naming of assessment tasks within subject areas. This action promoted consistency, clarity of practice and coherency for all students and staff in accessing all relevant documentation within and between learning areas.
- Targeted feedback through the introduction of criteria based assessments on SIMON facilitated a more consistent, equitable and efficient grading. Further, the introduction of criteria based assessments (along with a hard copy) used as part of a student-centred approach to assessment, allowed a more powerful practice for communicating expectations. The diagnostic information gained from using rubrics allowed identification of what our students are or are not mastering, and drive intervention opportunities to enhance their learning.
- Using Data from multiple sources enriches decisions about professional learning that can lead to increased results for every student. Multiple sources include both quantitative and qualitative data, such as common formative and summative assessments, performance assessments (On-Demand, Tests and Exams), observations, work samples, performance metrics (NAPLAN, Secondary Placement Testing, PAT-R and PAT-M, VCE Analysis). The use of these multiple sources of data offers a balanced and more comprehensive analysis of student, teacher, and system performance than any single type or source of data can. However, data alone do little to inform decision-making and increase effectiveness. The Professional Practice Team with the use of data engaged in dialogue and practice with Teachers, Learning Area Leaders, House Leaders and Leadership on factors that contribute to student success. These include:
  - Implementation of professional learning through the Teacher Performance Development Model. These included engaging teams of teachers and leaders in analysing and interpreting data that provided a more holistic view of the complexity of school improvement and fostering a collective responsibility and accountability for student results.

- Using data to inform Year 9 students' decision of accelerating into a VCE or VET subject in Year 10. The process involved a panel interview with students using Semester 1 reports, NAPLAN, On Demand and Student Placement Testing data.
- Using data for intervention of Year 10 students focusing on students' pathway options (VCE, VCAL).
- Leonie Saundry (external consultant) was commissioned by the College to undertake a review of the Special Needs structure and role, which was deemed too large for an individual to carry. The Principal recognised that the structural change is required and a steering committee was commissioned to work with Leonie to put forward a proposal that focused on providing a high level of care to all students, especially the most vulnerable, in line with the Damascus College Strategic Directions 2016-20. A proposal was put forward to the Principal in December after a 10-week investigation and will be considered as part of the POL review in 2018.
- Other Key Achievements of the year include:
  - Developing and introducing a STEM based subject at Year 8 which aims to provide a challenging learning environment that not only covers the essential components of scientific, mathematical and technological knowledge, but importantly provides context for students to apply their skills in a number of scenario based learning activities to develop problem solving and critical thinking skills. The program focuses on developing students' intrinsic motivation by providing situations requiring a deeper level of student inquiry and higher order thinking processes, replacing more traditional learning models that in the past have largely encompassed textbook-based questions. This new approach seeks to enable students to apply their science, mathematical and technological skills in context with the challenge at hand, rather than a sequential method of learning, applying, and moving to the next task.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

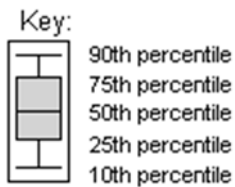
### Year 9 School Summary Report (2015-2017)

		Median 2015	Median 2016	Median 2017
READING	National	579	580	584
	State	584	584	590
	School	578	584	582
WRITING	National	551	551	556
	State	570	573	570
	School	546	560	558
SPELLING	National	585	581	583
	State	584	585	579
	School	584	571	569

GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION	National	567	568	576
	State	568	576	572
	School	554	562	572
NUMERACY	National	585	583	589
	State	593	587	590
	School	588	573	569

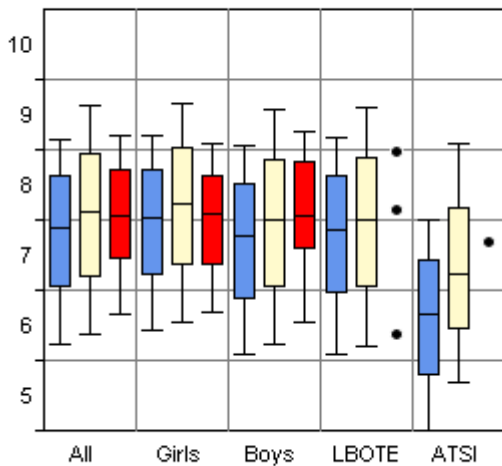
The National Assessment Program scale maps student outcomes onto a ten-band continuum. The data in this table is reported in these 'National Bands'. Students in Year 9 who are working at the national minimum standard would be placed between 478 and 530 that correlates with Band 6.

The Year 9 Group Summary report



READING

Band



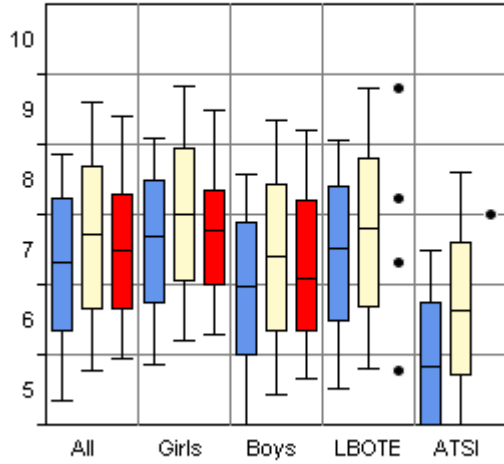
Students ABOVE the National Minimum Standard 86%

Students AT the National Minimum Standard 11%

Students BELOW the National Minimum Standard 3%

WRITING

Band



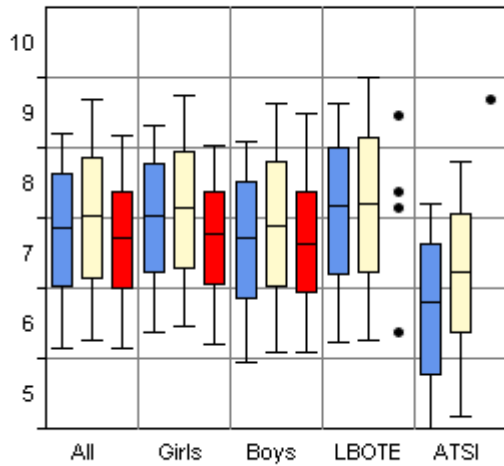
Students ABOVE the National Minimum Standard 66%

Students AT the National Minimum Standard 21%

Students BELOW the National Minimum Standard 13%

SPELLING

Band



Students ABOVE the National Minimum Standard 75%

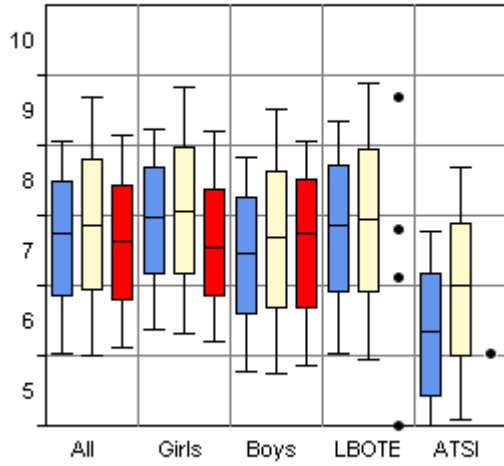
Students AT the National Minimum Standard 19%

Students BELOW the National Minimum Standard 6%



GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION

Band



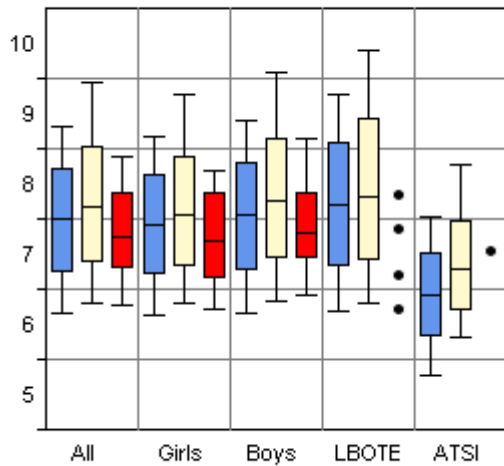
Students ABOVE the National Minimum Standard 72%

Students AT the National Minimum Standard 22%

Students BELOW the National Minimum Standard 6%

NUMERACY

Band



Students ABOVE the National Minimum Standard 84%

Students AT the National Minimum Standard 15%

Students BELOW the National Minimum Standard 1%

POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

In Education or Training	57.1
Bachelor degree	30.4
Certificates/diplomas	8.9
Apprenticeship/traineeship	17.9
Not in Education or Training	42.9
Employed	12.5
Deferred	28.6
NILFET	1.8

**EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

DESCRIPTION OF PL UNDERTAKEN IN 2017

Professional Practice Days

Faith development Day

Learning Area specific training

Autism awareness & response

NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN PL

89

AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER TEACHER FOR PL

\$2258.00

## Wellbeing

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

1. **Develop respectful relationships that value all members of the community**
  - Implement the 'Friends Program for special needs students displaying social anxiety
  - Guest speaker to explore Motivation, Self Esteem, Bullying, Success and Responsibility
  - Continue to develop the TA program to further explore wellbeing issues
2. **Provide a welcoming community**
  - Introduce a College Registrar position to deal with community enquiries and student enrolments
3. **Provide a safe and supportive school for all students**
  - Implement a cyber safety program for Year 7 students
  - Continue to develop the Student Counsellor profile within the school

### Achievements

#### Cyber safety classes for Year 7

An area of concern that we had during early 2017 was the unacceptable use of social media by year 7's, especially cyberbullying, therefore early in 2017 I attended a presentation by the e-safety commission and found a remarkably diverse amount of current resources that can be used by schools. From this, the latest information was used to develop an interactive lesson which was presented to each class of Year 7's. The lesson aimed at establishing an understanding of cyberbullying behaviour and its impact on others with activities providing practical strategies to assist young people to deal with cyberbullying behaviour and where to seek support. The students were also introduced to the idea that bystanders were just as much involved in the bullying as those doing the bullying and they should speak up against the bullies.

The activities presented were;

- an initial quiz which showed that over 70% of all year 7's had been cyberbullied at least once;
- the students identified cyberbullying within sections of social media text provided to them;
- the students identified how Photoshop can be used to present inappropriate photos of students; and
- the students completed a final quiz relating to the content and 95% were able to get 100% for the test.

#### Nathan Hulls guest speaker presentation.

During 2017 we wanted our guest speaker to explore the issues of Motivation, Self Esteem, Bullying, Success and Responsibility. Nathan Hulls presented these issues with all year levels. His story was of a boy born with a disability, the first known case in Australia, facing the future of

being different, but desperately wanting just to fit in. Facing teasing, bullying and being labelled. Going through the grief of losing his mum at a young age, but rising above the 'stuff' to choose his own adventure, to create his own future – to *decide his own destiny*. Nathan understands what it feels like to try to form and discover your own identity and purpose. He has learned that life's battles can be won, armed with a sense of humor and an optimistic attitude. Sharing his struggles, Nathan encourages young people to view their lives through a new lens. This empowering story of triumph encourages teens to understand that our destiny is not determined by the 'stuff' that happens to us, the 'stuff' which is out of our control. But our destiny is determined by the decisions we make in response to those things.

Nathan's presentation was well received by all students and they took away two major messages, "Stuff happens, deal with it!" and "You can't change the past, you can create the future"

It was fantastic to see Nathan address over 300 parents and community members at our free evening session, many of those who came have attended our community speaker every year. Those who attended enjoyed Nathan's content and it is always great to see parents remain behind after the presentation to discuss the issues with other parents and staff.

### **Friends Program**

During 2016 Jess Dunstan, our counsellor, was trained as a facilitator of the 'FRIENDS Program' to be run at Damascus in 2017. Our counsellors took a group of 11 of our special needs students who required some assistance with social anxiety. This program empowers early-teens to deal with stressful situations by normalising the state of anxiety and teaching self-regulation by the "Emotion Thermometer" concept. It also develops self-confidence by arming participants with positive and creative strategies to problem solve challenges and setbacks in every area of their lives. The FRIENDS program has been proven by research to decrease anxiety and depression in adolescents.

The FRIENDS Program is a group-based program that equips participants with the necessary tools to overcome new challenges that are commonly experienced by the 12- to 15 year old's. The program ran twice a week for 5 weeks and students were removed from classes to attend. It was interesting to watch these students as they first entered the room, most sitting by themselves and not wanting to answer questions and get fully involved. After five weeks the students were very comfortable interacting with one another and actually asked for the sessions to continue after the last session. For some it was the first time they had engaged in a group session with other students.

The program was so successful that community members heard of the program through parents of the attendees and Jess and Christie have been asked to present the program at several community health centres.

### **Counsellor statistics**

In 2017 our counsellors were seen by 20% of our students (see below). This is slightly decreased compared to the past 2 years as in 2016 the counsellors saw 21% of students and in 2015 the counsellors saw 22% of all students.

## 2017 Counselling Statistics

Total number of students for one-on-one counselling

<b>202</b> students referred to counselling	<b>20%</b> of all Damascus Students
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Of those students who were referred (20%):

Male	32%	65 students
Female	68%	137 students

Year 7	16%	32 Students
Year 8	20%	40 students
Year 9	17%	35 students
Year 10	15%	30 students
Year 11	17%	35 students
Year 12	15%	30 students

Referral source:

Self	41%	82 students
Staff	48%	96 staff
Family	9%	19 family members
Other	2%	5 other (friends, school protocol, Child Protection)

How long students were linked in with counselling services:

Single session	24%	49 students
Short-term management	43%	86 students
Ongoing management	20%	41 students
Did not attend requested session/s	13%	26 students

Top 3 presenting issues:

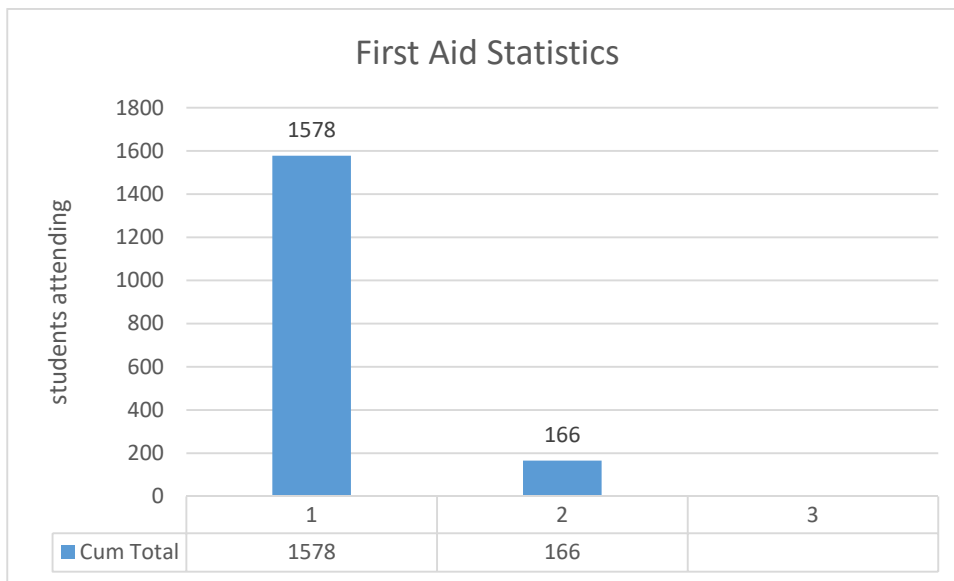
Mental Health	21%
Peer related concerns	19%
Family related concerns	17%

Other presenting issues include:

- Behavioural (home and school)
- School refusal
- School stress
- VCE stress
- De-brief
- Grief and loss
- Sexuality

**First Aid statistics**

During 2017, 1578 students attended First Aid for a variety of reasons. For the first time, Simon Carroll, our First Aid Officer took note of students presenting for reasons associated with anxiety and found 166 students attend for Anxiety. Many of these were then linked into counselling services. We will continue to monitor these numbers in the years ahead and link these students in with the counsellors and maybe the FRIENDS program.



**TA program/interviews**

Angela Hoban our Teacher Advisor Co-ordinator has continued to develop the TA program both in each morning session and the fortnightly TA periods. She has developed lessons for TA teachers which explore the issues of, developing mindsets (embracing failure), developing smart goals, student reward and recognition, resilience and happiness. She also puts out a weekly email to assist TA teachers with discussion starters to be used each morning, these include YouTube clips, riddles, word of the week and daily events. Angela has also developed a sheet for each TA interview of the year which outlines discussion pointers for each TA interview. She is constantly looking for ways to make the interviews worthwhile so that parents see a reason to attend.

### Number of Interview bookings for TA Interviews

Between 2011 and 2018 the percentage of attendees at each of the TA interviews were as follows. The percentage of attendees at each of the interviews were down slightly in 2017 which is something we need to address in future years.

	2011			2012		
	Interviews	Students	Percentage	Interviews	Students	Percentage
TAA	824	1037	79%	869	1040	84%
TA1	772	1021	76%	696	1031	68%
TA2	671	1011	66%	918	1032	89%
TA3	558	1004	56%	524	1027	51%
TA4	548	868	63	615	869	70%
	2013			2014		
	Interviews	Students	Percentage	Interviews	Students	Percentage
TAA	871	1024	85%	952	1058	89%
TA1	798	1010	79%	798	1050	76%
TA2	696	997	70%	753	1041	72%
TA3	787	992	79%	713	1034	68%
TA4	576	876	66%	589	862	68%
	2015			2016		
	Interviews	Students	Percentage	Interviews	Students	Percentage
TA1	698	1037	67%	934	1060	88%
TA2	523	1039	50%	686	1041	65%
TA3	461	1007	46%	546	1032	53%
TA4	388	1009	38%	521	1027	50%
	2017			2018		
	Interviews	Students	Percentage	Interviews	Students	Percentage
TA1	910	1064	85%	895	1075	83%
TA2	711	1044	68%			
TA3	649	1042	62%			
TA4	522*	1020	51%			

### Introduction of an Administrative Officer - Registrar

With the retirement of Sr Marie Davey it was decided to employ an Administrative Officer- Registrar to the administration staff at the College and we are very happy to have Erin Marshall take on the position starting in January 2018. The Administration Officer- Registrar will undertake duties relating to student enrolment, transition and special needs. This role provides support to the Assistant Principal of Student Wellbeing in all matters relating to student enrolments, transition and data management. Specifically this position will support the student enrolment and transition processes across the College. The role will ensure the integrity, accuracy, and security of all student records of current and former students; facilitate effective student re-enrolment and transition and maintain secure student data files.

I know that Erin will contribute to the Damascus College community with energy and enthusiasm and will create a safe environment where all members of the community understand the purpose and processes involved in student enrolment. This is extremely important with our increasing enrolments at all levels. At the end of 2017 both year 7 and 8 levels were full, year 9 and 10 levels had a few vacancies and numbers of applications for 2017 enrolments at year 7 were approximately

300 for 208 places. Erin will also assist Cathy Prunty with the administration of the Special Needs department and assist Keran Mewett with transition administration.

## **NON ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL**

When a student does not attend school on any given day, an SMS is sent to the parent by 10:30am asking for an explanation of the absence. If an explanation is not provided then the student absence is recorded as unexplained. The list of unexplained absences is sent to TA teachers at the end of each day to be followed up the next day with the student during the morning TA. If a student is continually absent without reason this will be followed up by the TA teacher or the House Leader who will call home and discuss the absences with the parents/guardians.

If a student is continually absent without a medical certificate or very good reason then we refer to the school refusal procedure which was developed in 2016. (See below)

In 2017 we worked with 4 students who were school refusers. It is not always a matter of getting these students back to school but instead exploring all educational opportunities for them. Our school counsellors spent hours of their time during 2017 on each school refusal case working mainly with the student and their parents. The students are given options for returning to school which may include dropping subjects or attending part of each day. The student may also be given timeout strategies when they want to stay at school but cannot attend all classes. It is important that parents are on board with our refusal processes as we cannot do anything if the student will not come to school at all. If this happens we then refer to external agencies who can go out to the family home to assist the whole family unit.

Each year school refusal theory is changing and during 2017 Christie Stevens, our counsellor, has been attending conferences and reviewing our processes and she will trial these with our families during 2018.

## **DAMASCUS COLLEGE PROCEDURE FOR STUDENT SCHOOL REFUSAL**

### **Consequences of School Refusal**

Students who exhibit school refusal behaviours (from missing school camps, arriving late regularly, sporadic attendance to total school refusal) have been shown to have many adverse consequences as a result of this. These include;

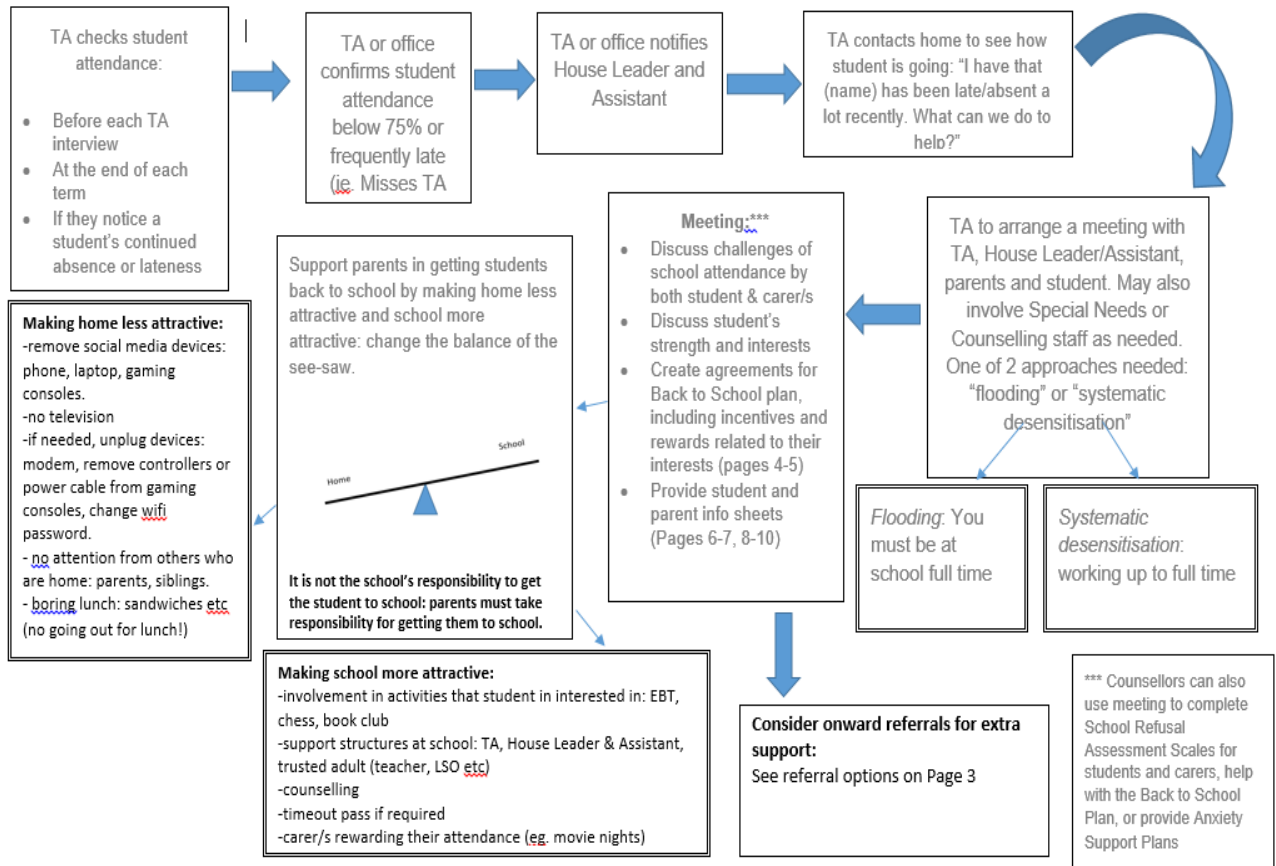
- poor academic success;
- poorer employment prospects;
- diminished social network;
- increased risk for mental health problems;
- problem solving and coping skills impacts,
- impact on physical health; and
- increased risk for being involved in the juvenile justice system

### **Points to remember:**

- You cannot fix every student every time.
- Roles need to be very clear from school and parents: parents cannot be the case manager for this, the school needs to.



- An end goal needs to be decided: what are we working towards- VCE/VCAL/ University/Employment.
- Sometimes schools want the student at school more than the parents do.
- If parents are not on side, it is a lose-lose situation.



Our students have many extra curricula activities that they can be involved in, a few which are listed below:

- Major House Competitions which include, Swimming, Athletics and Lap of the Lake
- Year 7 House Reading and Debating Competitions
- After school sporting competitions
- The Final Hours Performance
- Major School Production
- Lunchtime Reading, JAG, MAD, chess and drama clubs
- After school Minecraft club
- Year 7, 8 and 9 camps
- Nathan Hulls presentation
- Senior and Middle school Formal and Junior school social

## STUDENT SATISFACTION

Has been addressed within the data collected for the various portfolios reported in other areas of this Annual report

## Child Safe Standards

### Goals and Intended Outcomes

Damascus College supports the CECV commitment to providing a safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Victorian Catholic schools through:

- Upholding the primacy of the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- Empowering families, children, young people and staff to have a voice and raise concerns; and
- Implementing rigorous risk-management and employment practices.

The Damascus College Child Safety policy is readily available to the wider community through the College website.

### Achievements

Central to the mission of Damascus College is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

This Standard has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at Damascus College against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes.

It is the responsibility of all members of the Damascus community to work together to ensure the safety of all children and that the requirements of the Child Safe policy are followed.

All staff of Damascus College are required to undertake the Mandatory Reporting eLearning module and assessment. All staff of Damascus College are required under the mandatory reporting obligations to ensure all allegations and suspected cases of child abuse are reported immediately or as soon as possible to the appropriate authorities. It is compulsory that all reported concerns are to be documented on the confidential contact record form and submitted in person to the Child Protection Officer (CPO).

All allegations are to be treated seriously and followed up as per the obligations of mandatory reporting (attachment 3) and that of the CPO role. Each case is to be treated with a sensitivity to the diversity characteristics of the school community, with respect to all involved and the wider community. Outside of obligatory requirements, these are to be treated confidentially and with compliance to the privacy of those involved.

This policy is publically available for all members of the school community. The process and policy details are available for all staff and students.

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and Board/sub-committee members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by;

- being aware of, and following, all relevant policies, guidelines and instructions with regard to the safety of children and young people – in particular mandatory reporting obligations;
- adhering to the school's child safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to the safety of children and young people in the strategic directions 2016–2020;
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse;
- treating everyone in the school community with respect (modelling positive, restorative and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and pastoral environment);
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children and young people, particularly if they are telling you that they or others have been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of others;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification);
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination);
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities);
- maintaining appropriate professional boundaries around their behaviour towards children and young people;
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child;
- holding a current police check, professional registration and/or Working With Children Check (WWCC) card in accordance with applicable legislation;
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic);
- reporting to the Principal or Board Chair inappropriate conduct or conduct which might reasonably be considered to be a breach of this Code or a breach of criminal law;
- reporting to the Police any conduct or concerns which might reasonably be considered to be illegal - such reporting would ideally be in conjunction with the Principal or Child Safe Officer or Board Chair but this is not a requirement of this Code;
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership or child safety officer;
- reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership or child safety officer; and
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren)/ young person/young people are safe.

To minimise the risk of any Child Safety incidents occurring and in regards to the recruitment, selection and management of staff, Damascus College;

- have developed clear statements around job requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety;
- ensures that all applicants for jobs involving child connected work are informed about the College's child safety procedures;
- keep records of Working with Children Checks or similar, proof of personal identity, history of work involving children and references regarding suitability of employment;
- ensures that all new staff are inducted into the Colleges policies, roles, practices and procedures for ensuring child safety; and
- monitor and assess staff on an ongoing basis regarding their suitability for employment.

## VRQA Compliance Data

Last VRQA compliance audit completed 2015

Audit scheduled for 2019

eSort system holds information to support ongoing VRQA compliance, merged by Damascus College Compliance Officer

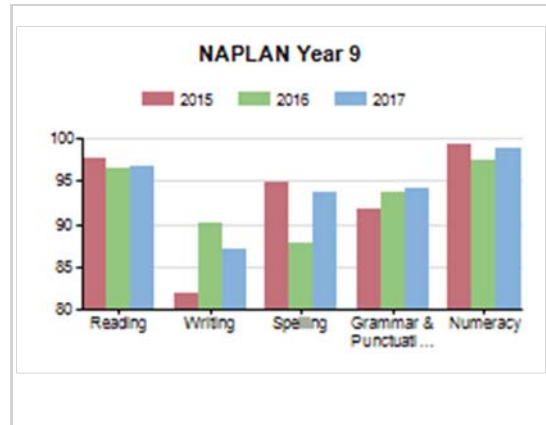
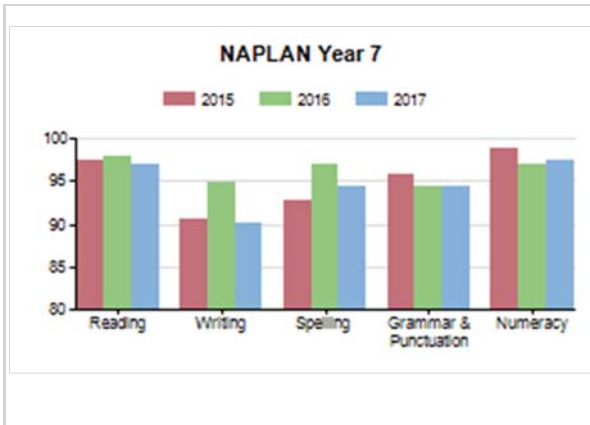
### **NOTE:**

The School's financial performance information has been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at <http://www.acnc.gov.au>

**E2075  
Damascus College, Mount Clear**

**PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS**

<b>NAPLAN TESTS</b>	<b>2015 %</b>	<b>2016 %</b>	<b>2015 - 2016 Changes %</b>	<b>2017 %</b>	<b>2016 - 2017 Changes %</b>
YR 07 Grammar & Punctuation	95.8	94.3	-1.5	94.3	0.0
YR 07 Numeracy	98.9	96.9	-2.0	97.4	0.5
YR 07 Reading	97.4	97.9	0.5	96.9	-1.0
YR 07 Spelling	92.7	96.9	4.2	94.3	-2.6
YR 07 Writing	90.6	94.8	4.2	90.1	-4.7
YR 09 Grammar & Punctuation	91.9	93.6	1.7	94.2	0.6
YR 09 Numeracy	99.4	97.5	-1.9	98.9	1.4
YR 09 Reading	97.7	96.5	-1.2	96.8	0.3
YR 09 Spelling	94.8	87.8	-7.0	93.7	5.9
YR 09 Writing	81.9	90.1	8.2	87.2	-2.9



YEARS 9 - 12 STUDENT RETENTION RATE	
Years 9 to 12 Student Retention Rate	70.81%

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	%
Y7	94.01
Y8	91.85
Y9	92.03
Y10	91.38
Overall average attendance	92.32

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE	
Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	89.5%

STAFF RETENTION RATE	
Staff Retention Rate	89.66%

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	
Doctorate	0.00%
Masters	17.44%
Graduate	53.49%
Certificate Graduate	4.65%
Degree Bachelor	83.72%
Diploma Advanced	24.42%
No Qualifications Listed	2.33%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class	2
Teaching Staff (Head Count)	95
FTE Teaching Staff	86.888
Non-Teaching Staff (Head Count)	55
FTE Non-Teaching Staff	46.726
Indigenous Teaching Staff	0

MEDIAN NAPLAN RESULTS FOR YEAR 9	
Year 9 Reading	582.10
Year 9 Writing	558.00
Year 9 Spelling	568.60

Year 9 Grammar & Punctuation	571.50
Year 9 Numeracy	568.70

SENIOR SECONDARY OUTCOMES	
VCE Median Score	28
VCE Completion Rate	100%
VCAL Completion Rate	92%

### TEACHER SATISFACTION

Throughout the year the College has worked through a process of redefining the leadership structures and accountabilities of staff. A refinement of the Deputy Principal role was developed, advertised and appointed to. A Human Resource Manager position was created, advertised and appointed to. These roles were socialised within the broader staff context. Staff review processes were distributed within the middle leadership structure of the College.