



The Road

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

Autumn 2023

OUR COVER

SACRED HEART COLLEGE

Cover: Pictured on the front cover is a section of stained glass window from the Sacred Heart College (SHC) chapel. Depicted in the glass is St Cecelia, patroness of church music, sitting at her organ. Funds for the installation of the window were raised by the SHC Old Collegians Association in the memory of Kathlean Meagan (see story on page 10).

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Kaitlyn Handreck, Andrew Robertson, Hannah Cashmore, Steven Mifsud and Jessica Hodge

PRINCIPALS WELCOME

STEVEN MIFSUD

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome you to the 2023 academic school year. This year the college will commence with 1195 students.

During the school holidays, I travelled to Noosa with my family and had time to reflect on the naming of our college – Damascus and the story of St Paul. Early in January I had met with family friends for dinner to celebrate the New Year and, as a gift, I was given a book that was a self-guided retreat on the Conversion of St Paul. Energised by the gift and armed with the text I was determined to reflect on the life of St Paul. As I travelled to the National Parks with my wife, son and his best mate, getting lost amongst many roads and backstreets trying to navigate by GPS, I questioned what conversion looks like in the 21st century.

St Paul was a man of conviction and integrity, yet he was also a man who struggled, questioned his faith, and was persecuted, but ultimately surrendered to the Holy Spirit. He wrestled with his faith, and his conversion was a story of community and new awareness. He, like each one of us, struggled with different relationships and needed to explore his faith to help him understand himself and his relationship with his God. He modelled the need for each of us to belong to community; to be propelled, to be held buoyant and to see the face of Christ in one another. The story of St. Paul is one of hope, challenge, and faith.

A term into the school year and a term with students I now revisit my learnings and I give thanks for this community.

Each day at our college I give witness to this challenge, to this gift, in the relationships, the learnings and the connections that are made, woven, broken and healed each day.

Entering the Easter Season, we are people of the Resurrection, people who live the resurrected Christ in and through our relationships in the here and now, on this earth. The Easter story is one of hope, transformation, and new life. We are called to bring the Reign of God into our everyday lives by living and sustaining deep and profound relationships and community.

Damascus College continues to celebrate the gifts and talents of each student. Our mantra, 'Be My Best', was certainly embraced by our 2022 Year 12 cohort. The college was pleased to receive the results of our VCE and VCAL students, and they are a testament to the thirteen years of hard work and tenacity of our young people. These students experienced two years of remote learning during their senior years and achieved some excellent results.

Last year we had 153 students complete Year 12. Six students withdrew throughout the year. We are proud that 32 students completed their VCAL Certificate and are now on their chosen pathway. 115 students sat their final VCE Examinations at the college. I am excited to announce the following results from our students who achieved an ATAR of 90+ were Fraser Crumpler 99.3, Xavier Clonan 96.75, Tristan Clonan 96.4, Megan O'Beirne 93.4, Brayden Welsh 91, and Harrison Welsh 90.7. The college VCAL Dux was Joshua Matheson



Steven Mifsud and 2022 College VCE DUX Fraser Crumpler

At the conclusion of the 2022 school year, we gave thanks to the staff who concluded their time at the college: Tony Haintz, Sally Balson, Ann Bawden, Deb Glasson, Gail Haintz, Matt Edwards, and Sharon Wolfe. Each has had extensive careers at Damascus and I thank them on behalf of the generations of young people that they have educated.

The college theme for 2023 is inspired by our college motto, “To live by the light of Christ,” and we are reminded to be people of hope, challenge, and inclusion. This year at Damascus, we continue to be hope-filled people who celebrate the fullness of the human person and believe in the goodness and strength of each individual. As Catholics on a journey with one another and our God, we are challenged to be people who are our best, people who speak of injustice and seek to question the status quo. We are a proud community that celebrates difference and promotes individuality with collective responsibility.

The college Senior Leadership Team (SLT) began this year with a three-day Leadership Retreat with Dr David Paul, a lecturer and consultant in Change Management. David has worked with many state, national and international organisations promoting growth, challenge, and innovation. As a Senior Leadership Team, we have the mandate to continue to work at the edges to further promote and develop a faith-learning community that ensures each community member is named, known and respected. David and the SLT have worked tirelessly to ensure that we are able to be our best! Our SLT will continue to model best practices and to grow as leaders in learning, faith, and wellbeing.

We have welcomed a number of new staff to our dynamic team.

- Sharon Lehtonen – Assistant Principal Catholic School Culture
- Ligia Lupoiu - Co-Curricular Music Program Coordinator & Music Tutor
- Hamish McCrum – Mathematics Learning Area Leader
- Kahlia McDaid – Learning Support Officer- Extensive Needs
- Michelle Jans – First Aid Officer

- Bridget Prunty – Learning Support Officer- Extensive Needs
- Cindy Reus – Parent Reception Officer
- Marcus Ryan – Teacher of Drama & Humanities
- Brianah Walsh – Teacher of English
- Anton Wilson – Teacher of Systems & Materials

The college has been preparing for our first ReLATE Training Days to be held later this term. ReLATE - Reframing Learning and Teaching Environments - was developed in Australia by MacKillop Family Services, drawing on the practice model implemented in our schools and delivered by The MacKillop Institute.

ReLATE provides a whole-of-school approach that focuses on safety, wellbeing and resilience so that the learning outcomes for every child are enhanced. The model allows us to effectively support students and families who have experienced adversity and/or trauma, and staff who are responding to the complex and diverse needs of our children and young people every day in our schools.

At its core, ReLATE promotes transformative relationships, not only for students but also for school leaders, teachers and other staff working with children, young people, and families.

The ReLATE model is a commitment, by our school community, to sustainable and positive cultural change.

The model promotes wellbeing as an essential precondition for learning. Safe, predictable, and supportive learning environments are created and maintained in our classrooms, where students are not just known but deeply understood. School leaders and staff are supported both in their professional learning and development journey, and in their commitment to self-care and wellbeing.

The new Positions of Leadership structure and the introduction of several new roles: Leader of Student Growth & Engagement, Leader of Student Wellbeing, and Leader of Curriculum and Assessment, coupled with Youth Ministry, will support our relentless focus on improving student learning outcomes with a renewed focus on wellbeing for learning and faith.

DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATION

VERONICA LAWSON RSM

On Wednesday 22nd February the staff of Damascus College came together to celebrate 60 years of an amazing woman's dedication to Mercy. No one person embodies the Mercy tradition quite like Sr Veronica Lawson, a powerhouse of energy and light whose life over the past 60 years has been one of great action.

Veronica's association with Damascus began as a student in the boarding house of Sacred Heart College in 1955, where she remained until graduating in 1958. After joining the Ballarat East Convent of Mercy, Veronica taught at St Martin's in the Pines until she was asked to step up into the position of Principal upon the illness of then Principal Sr Genevieve McDonald. Veronica led the college for two years from 1977 to 1978. During her time at St Martin's Veronica held many roles – principal, deputy principal, teacher and boarding house supervisor to name a few.

Veronica was the leader of her congregation for seven years and, in 1988, she became the first woman to be elected to the role of president of the Australian Catholic Biblical Association. Not just an educator of others, Veronica has never stopped learning herself. She has studied scripture at the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem, and at Trinity College in Dublin. She has also lectured in Biblical Studies at ACU and led many Holy Land Biblical Tours while on summer break. Veronica has amassed a global readership with her ongoing weekly commentaries on the Sunday Gospel readings and is a passionate warrior for social justice and the environment as well as a vocal advocate for refugees and asylum seekers. Her connection with Damascus remains strong to this day, having spent time as co-governor she is a frequent and very welcome visitor to the campus. A font of information, Veronica is one of the go-to people for any questions staff have regarding the history and the many connections of the college. Damascus College warmly congratulates Veronica on the wonderful occasion of her Diamond Jubilee.



Xavier Byrne, Veronica Lawson and Sophie Busuttil



Veronica Lawson Circa 1977



Veronica Lawson and Steven Mifsud



WELCOME TO A NEW LEADER

SHARON LEHTONEN

It is with great joy that I say 'Hello' for the first time. It is indeed a privilege to be a part of the Damascus community. I have worked as a leader in both Catholic schools and at system level for many years at the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) I am truly looking forward to the possibilities and opportunities that lie ahead in the Ballarat Diocese.

My family shares a long history with Catholic Education. I attended St Anthony's Primary School in Alphington and then carried on the tradition of attending St Euphrasia's at the Abbotsford Convent in Melbourne. This family tradition was one that dated back to the 1800's and sadly ended when the convent closed in the 1970s.

I have had the pleasure of working in several Catholic schools. These include MacKillop College Werribee, Catholic Regional College Melton, Kolbe College in Greenvale Lakes, and Sacred Heart College in Kyneton. My time at Sacred Heart was the first opportunity I had to work in a school that is embedded in the Mercy tradition, and it was here that I gained a great love and appreciation of the work of the sisters of Mercy. I was fortunate enough to participate in a Mercy Ethos Program held in Dublin. While there I was able to visit the Mercy International Centre in Baggott Street where I learnt the story of Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Mercy Order of religious sisters in the 1800s.

I feel greatly honoured to have this opportunity to reconnect with the Mercy story at Damascus College. Catherine McAuley is what I consider to be a courageous and insightful woman, whose love of God and humanity inspired her to do the most extraordinary things in an ordinary manner. Her mission was uncomplicated: to care for the poor and the sick, and to educate the young, particularly vulnerable young women. I hope to walk in the footsteps of Catherine McAuley and draw upon her inspiration in the work I do at Damascus College.

Another inspirational experience I have had as a teacher was to travel to Africa and spend some time in a small school in Kenya. It was heart-warming to see how proudly the students would wear their uniforms which were by no means new and often torn. They were committed to doing their very best under very difficult circumstances. Many of them would walk for hours through fields to reach school. They recognised that education is a gift, and they were aware of the empowerment to be gained through education.



Sharon at school in Kenya

This reminds me of Catherine McAuley's mission. She had a profound understanding of the value and worth of the individual. Her gift was to empower young people with a sense of dignity and gave them an opportunity to learn and develop skills so they could reach their potential.

I have always enjoyed working in education. It has been my life's passion. It is my love of learning that drew me to a role at MACs, where I had the opportunity to contribute to the leadership and development of teachers and principals. In my role as an Education Officer, I was able to work with a team of talented educators to develop programs for emerging leaders, middle leaders and principals. I was also very fortunate to work with a researcher to develop programs to target and support women aspiring to leadership. This was indeed challenging but also very, very satisfying.

Now I have the great pleasure of working with the Damascus community in the role of Assistant Principal – Catholic School Culture. I am truly enjoying my time back in a school environment. My two daughters would often joke that I've been at school all my life. When I left school to take up employment at MACS they said, 'about time, you've finally left school!' Now, of course, I'm back at school and it's like coming home.

I look forward to forging new friendships and partnerships and continuing my life's passion in education.

Sharon Lehtonen, Assistant Principal – Catholic School Culture



Audrey Brown, Steven Mifsud and Sharon at IWD Breakfast



Damascus College Easter Liturgy 2023



IWD Student Activity



Alysoun Smalley, Audrey Brown and Naomi Olthof



IWD Lunchtime Presentation to Students

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

International Women's Day (IWD) was a joyous celebration of the wonderful women in everyone's lives, with staff and students provided the opportunity to listen to two inspirational speakers throughout the day. The theme for 2023 was 'Embrace Equity' and it provided an important opportunity not only to celebrate women's achievement but to also raise awareness about discrimination.

The morning began with a staff gathering in the DEC for breakfast. Over coffee and chia pots staff heard the empowering words of Audrey Brown, former Director of Catholic Education Ballarat, Chief Executive Officer and Company Secretary, and currently the Executive Officer and Company Secretary for Catholic Religious Institute and Ministerial Public Juridic Person Victorian Schools Limited. Audrey is an experienced NFP Company Director, CEO, Company Secretary, and Trustee of a Ministerial PJP. She provides Professional Supervision for leaders in Ministry and Education. Audrey has extensive experience in education policy, governance, professional standards, and child protection and is a skilled facilitator of staff training and formation, conferences, selection panels, meeting process, and leadership reviews. In a Q&A session with Sharon Lehtonen, the Assistant Principal for Catholic School Culture, Audrey shared her experience and advice on being a woman in Catholic Education, a woman leading Catholic Education, and a woman of Catholic faith.

During lunchtime students filled the Valda Ward Auditorium to hear from Damascus College Class of 2018 alumni Hannah Cashmore. Hannah owns and operates her own business, 3350 Coffee Bar located on Mair Street, Ballarat, and took time out of her busy schedule to share with us some of her experiences and insights as a small business owner in Ballarat. The conversation with Hannah was led by Student Representative Council President Jessica Hodge and Year 12 student Kaitlyn Handreck, before being thrown over to questions from the audience – the forthcoming sea of hands up demonstrated the high levels of interest and engagement our current students felt with Hannah's story.

During the course of the IWD celebrations at the college, it was discovered that forging gender equity is not limited solely to women fighting the good fight. Allies are incredibly important for the social, economic, cultural, and political advancement of women. When equity is embraced by all, so too are diversity and inclusion. Equity should be embraced to forge harmony and unity, and to help drive success for all.

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

ALUMNI STORY

In early March Damascus College students enjoyed an International Women's Day (IWD) lunchtime conversation with past student Hannah Cashmore, Class of 2018

As a recent graduate, Hannah was asked to be the guest speaker at this special lunchtime event because her story and experiences are relevant and relatable.

Hannah told of her experience as a Damascus student who was grateful to have had the opportunity to undertake VCAL as it empowered her to seek a career in hospitality and gave her the foundation to succeed in her chosen field.

Success didn't come easily, as, while a student, she often had to make the hard choice of putting her career goals ahead of her social commitments. The audience audibly gasped when she explained that she chose to work on the weekends and after school and had not actually gone out to a nightclub until she was 21. As a self-professed "stubborn" person, Hannah explained that once she had made up her mind about what she wanted to accomplish, nothing was going to get in her way.

Hannah owns and operates her own business, 3350 Coffee Bar located on Mair Street. She also has investments in other local businesses and proudly moved into her own home recently. Hannah's pride in her ability to provide for herself financially through her own hard work was a real inspiration to the students in attendance, and there is no doubt she has instilled the seeds of success in the minds of those present.

Hannah Cashmore, Class of 2018





Sacred Heart College Chapel

SACRED HEART COLLEGE BUILDING TOUR

DAMASCUS HISTORY

During February Damascus College staff had the wonderful opportunity to explore the college's history by touring the original Sacred Heart College (SHC) buildings in Victoria Street, with former SHC Principal Marie Davey RSM leading the way.

Staff were fortunate enough to be joined on the tour by a small group of Ballarat Sisters of Mercy, who were only too happy to share their memories of the time they spent in the school and convent. Staff heard fascinating tales such as that of Sister Agnes Connellan who, while cleaning the glass panels high on the kitchen roof, came crashing through when the glass shattered. Sr Agnes was only saved from serious injury by her habit, which caught on a piece of metal, tearing as she fell and spiralling her to the floor as it tore bit by bit. That tiny piece of luck meant she was able to walk away suffering a particularly bad fright but with limbs intact.

Many SHC alumnae will remember the lower classrooms on the corner of King and Gent Streets with the revolutionary-at-the-time folding doors. While the walls were now bare, they still reflect the ghostly marks of their former inhabitants, and staff couldn't help but wonder what had once filled the now-empty squares. Staff learned that the walls were once home to Mother Marie Therese's

beloved art collection, so precious that she made sure to draw the blinds at every opportunity to prevent them from fading. A particularly poignant empty patch of plaster staff discovered had once belonged to a plaque commemorating the short life of Villa Maria (then part of SHC) student Art Caldwell, who lost his brave battle with leukaemia in 1948. Art was beloved by the staff and students of SHC for his radiant personality and wisdom far beyond his eleven years. A deeply spiritual child, Art prayed from his hospital bed for recovery so that he could fulfil his life's ambition of becoming a priest. Sadly, this was not to be.

The once meticulously kept rooms now showed the markings of time and staff had to step carefully in many places. The beautiful chapel with its stunning examples of stained glass and marble remains almost perfectly preserved. The hard work of the Old Collegians was never more visible than in the chapel, as over time they worked tirelessly to raise the funds necessary to erect permanent reminders of those who made such vital contributions to the life of SHC. Many a fete, card party, raffle, and dinner dance were held, the proceeds of which would then appear around the college in the form of a new building, chapel furnishing, scholarship fund or stained-glass

window. In the chapel, the Kathleen Meagan memorial window remains a stunning example of Old Collegian fundraising success. Kathleen had been brought to the convent as a baby upon the death of her mother, and there she remained until her own death in 1925 aged 35. A gifted musician, she was a much-loved figure around the college and her young death resulted in an outpouring of grief from all those who knew and loved her. These many treasures, once gazed upon and admired daily while invoking fond thoughts of those who had inspired them, now rely upon the keepers of history to keep their stories alive.

Rooms held different memories for different people. The room some considered the music room, was remembered by others as a boarder's dormitory room, complete with a separate little sleeping box for the Sister on duty. The typing room for some was considered the computer lab by others. Memorable pieces of college history were visible everywhere, from the beautiful statue in the grotto, to the crest which still hangs proudly over the front door. The clocks that were stared at with impatience so often during class still adorned the walls, their hands now at a standstill. For some it was the first opportunity to gaze upon the convent rooms, always out of bounds for students, and imagine the life of these hard-working nuns who were the backbone of SHC.

The tour was thoroughly enjoyed by all, whether SHC had been their home, their school or simply a proud part of the history of their place of employment. Everyone walked away having learned a little something, having laughed at an amusing story or appreciated the beauty that surrounded them. Damascus college exists here today as a direct result of the inspirational women who began building SHC one section at a time from their arrival back in 1881.

Photographs courtesy of DC staff members Mark Courneyea and Angela Carr



Marie Davey RSM in the SHC Chapel



SHC Grotto



Tour group



Sacred Heart College Kitchen



Sacred Heart College Tour



Sacred Heart College Locker Graffiti

SACRED HEART COLLEGE TOUR - REFLECTION

RACHEL WALLBANK

'Recently I was fortunate enough to be able to return to the old Sacred Heart building. It was something that I was looking forward to, particularly to see how my memories lined up with reality. There were parts that I had clear memories of such as the breezeway and going through to Gent St for classes over the road, and some that I had no recollection of at all. I wasn't aware that there was a little room tucked away at the end of Room 1 or that there was a whole other kitchen for boarders behind the office and administration area. Heading upstairs brought back fond memories of Bron Strahan's Art class and being in Sr Maryanne's RE class. The music room brought me back to Year 8 music with Sr Marie, where we made a radio show for one of our assignments. The graffiti on the lockers was reflective of the times: someone had a liking for 18-year-old boys back in the day and Seona was most definitely a legend!

I had strong memories of going up to a room at the top of the building for IT with Mr Seiter as we used to squish into the small space outside the door to wait. Our classes consisted of Logo (giving that little turtle directions) and using the electric typewriters to type pictures and patterns. I'm an efficient typist now, thanks to those classes!

Venturing into the nun's area was interesting, seeing things behind the curtain. Small reception rooms had painted walls in mint condition and the size of the bedrooms varied according to seniority. No doubt there was a pecking order - the further away from the girls, the further up the chain you were! The chapel and grotto were just as beautiful as I remembered.

If you are offered the opportunity, it is well worth taking the chance to visit. Hearing the stories from different generations and cohorts added to the experience. Marie's inside knowledge was invaluable, she may have missed her calling as a tour guide!

Rachel Wallbank, Class of 1998 & current Damascus College staff member



Boarders Dormitory



Staff room



Convent & Boarding House Mixer



Sr Margret Mary Batros Stations of the Cross in the Boarders Chapel



ANIMALS ARE MY PASSION

LARA FAIRCHILD

At a very young age, it was clear to my parents that my passion was animals and being out-doors. At every chance I was off playing in the garden and rain, hail, or shine, I was always out-side. When very young I would climb a chair to open the door and let myself out to play with my animals, although I did not like being chased around by our rooster.

I live on a tranquil property 30 mins outside of Ballarat, with my older brother Huntr and my par-ents Christine and Gary. When I was a toddler we had sheep, ducks, chickens, dogs, cats and a Shetland pony named Spike. Spike instantly became my best friend and from then on, I knew my life would be surrounded by horses.

Fast forward 10 years and life is pretty good! I have three horses that I'm caring for and riding. 'Doreen' is an Arabian who is trained in long distance endurance, Doreen is my dressage and show horse who I hope to breed one day. 'Uno What' (otherwise known as Benji) is a thorough-bred and ex racehorse. He is my eventing horse, we compete in dressage, show jumping, and cross country. 'Ash' is a pocket rocket show jumper, that I am riding for her owner until her daughter is ready to ride herself.

Each morning I get up to check on the horses and give them their morning feed. Each horse has different health requirements and therefore a different feed for breakfast and dinner. I remove their rugs if it's going to be a warm day and then I head off to the bus at 7.30am for school.

My favourite classes at school are physical education and art as I like to be creative and hands-on but to be honest the day can't go quickly enough as all I want to do is go home and ride!

I get off the bus at 4.30pm and head out to the paddock. Each horse needs to be ridden 3-4 times per week for about an hour. It's important to be consistent when training animals as just like us they get better the more work we put in. I attend pony club once per month which is a full day of lessons with teachers in different disciplines to improve my technique and I also have regular private lessons to further develop my skills.

Almost every weekend we compete in Pony Club events, Equestrian Australia events and Inter-schools Victoria, which is where I have the chance to represent Damascus on my horses and earn points for the school. Preparing the horses for events means washing them, plaiting and bunning their manes and braiding their tails, which takes around three hours. We travel all around Victoria to attend events. Most recently I competed at Boneo Interschools Show Jumping day with two horses in two different divisions. It started at 7:30am on the Friday, so we drove three hours Thursday night to Boneo then camped in the horse float overnight so we could be up and mounted by 7.30am

I'm very grateful that my parents fully support my passion for my sport, as owning and compet-ing on horses is costly and time consuming. I love everything about my sport and hope one day to ride at an elite level. There is no greater feeling than the bond you share with your horse and the trust you put into each other when riding together. If you have never ridden a horse, I highly recommend you call your local equestrian centre or riding school to discover what you are miss-ing out on.

Lara Fairchild, Year 8 student



Nancy Meiklejohn and Giles Handreck 2001



Samuel and Giles Handreck 2023 .

A FAMILY TRADITION OF DAMASCUS

ALUMNI STORY

Hello, my name is Samuel Handreck, and I am a Year 9 student at Damascus College. Let me tell you a little bit about myself.

I have two sisters; Kaitlyn is in Year 12 and attends Damascus and my little sister Felicity is in Year 6 and starting as a Year 7 at Damascus in 2024. Going to the same college as my siblings is a great thing because of the encouragement we give each other, as well as support during school and assessment tasks. Kaitlyn knows lots of things because she's been there for a few extra years which I really appreciate.

I enjoy most parts of school, but some of the things I enjoy most at Damascus are:

- PE – There are several different options for PE and I really enjoy strength and conditioning. Having Mr Jessup this year I have recognised he is the best PE teacher I've had so far, although Mr Walsh and Mr Inverarity are pretty great also!
- Friends – I have made some great friends and it's good to be able to share my high schooling with a good group of friends. They are really encouraging and supportive and we have fun together. I have seen good changes in myself and my friends as we have grown and developed.
- TA – It is great that I have Mr Carmody each year. He always says hi whenever I see him. It has been great to build up a relationship over the last few years with the same students in my TA and even though it is a bit sad to see the Year 12s graduate, it is always good to have new Year 7s coming through as well.
- After-School Sports – I really enjoy the after-school sports program.

- I enjoy the chess club with Aiden Taylor and Godwill Akakpo each Wednesday at lunchtime in the library, I feel I learn a lot from the other players.
- It's great to see how the house swimming, ball sports and athletics bring together and encourage house spirit, it gets competitive when everyone gets involved (go Xavier!)

Attending Damascus College isn't only a common thing between siblings as my dad Giles and his siblings also went to Damascus College. Dad was named Collegian of the Year when he graduated in 2001 (which was when Mr Macklin started teaching) and he still has some Damascus friends. I feel proud that our family has a long history with Damascus and I find it interesting to hear some of my dad's stories from when he was at school, especially hearing that some of the teachers are still here. A lot of things have changed since my dad's time too.

I feel so proud to have attended the same school that helped turn my dad into the man he is today. My dad is someone I look up to and is a very respectable person, so it means a lot to me to be attending the same school as him. My dad and I often talk about how my school day was, and often laugh and joke about our experiences at Damascus College.

Damascus is a very special school. I like that Damascus College is a co-educational school because it provides a good balance throughout the student body. There is something very special and unique about having a Damascus College experience, the Catholic journey of living by the light of Christ helps mature and ready teenagers for their adult experience and their journey with Christ.

Samuel Handreck, Year 9 student

Damascus College invites you to the

BRIGHT FUTURES BREAKFAST

Thursday 10 August, 7am
at the Damascus Events Centre



GUEST SPEAKER

SHELBY SHERRITT

Shelby, Class of 2013, will share her inspirational and motivational personal journey, from being diagnosed with a rare form of cancer when she was just 20 to being a full time artist with an international following.

Book your ticket or table at
www.trybooking.com/CIPOS

\$35pp or \$240 a significant saving for a table of eight



CAPITAL WORKS UPDATE

SENIOR LEARNING PRECINCT

Since the amalgamation of the three founding schools and the consolidation of sites to a single campus in the beautiful native surrounds at Mount Clear, Damascus College has made a long-term ongoing commitment to the provision of high-quality contemporary learning facilities. Through dedicated repurposing and refurbishment of existing facilities, and the construction of new buildings and spaces, the college continues to position itself to meet the challenges of an evolving educational landscape and increasing demand for the Damascus College experience.

Damascus is now engaging in the next stage of development, with plans to construct a new Senior Learning Precinct on the original St Martins in the Pines site.

The college has proven that successful student outcomes can follow many paths. The ability of Damascus students to dedicate themselves to their secondary education journey through a choice of educational and vocational avenues is a testament to the

increasing number of students embracing their senior years and committing to the attainment of their year 12 certificates.

This new facility will ensure Damascus provides a modern and positive learning environment at all year levels at the college.

In developing the holistic learner, the building is designed to encourage further capacity for independent study, collaborative working spaces, and additional areas for group gathering in connecting our community.

Being able to provide the best possible support to our students in leading them towards their chosen future vocations, this new facility looks to bring together the key functions of careers guidance and VCE and VCEVM coordination into a connected and collaborative Student Services precinct.

While still in plan form, the college is aiming at having this facility in operation for the 2025 school year.



Steven Mifsud



Gabriel Blake



Presentation of Awards

2022 AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENT EVENING

DAMASCUS EVENT

It was wonderful to finally head back to the Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts to host the annual Awards and Achievement evening on Wednesday 30th November 2022. This event recognised students throughout 2022 who have achieved academic excellence, general endeavour, and sporting endeavour, as well as age group champions.

The special guest speaker was Josh Eltringham, Class of 2003, who shared with the audience the very interesting and varied career path he has taken to reach his current position. He began studying Human Movement at the University of Ballarat but took a leave of absence to try something different. Josh then took a traineeship at the Carlton Football Club, before moving to the MCG where he has held numerous roles, including his current role as General Manager for Venue & Event Services.

Josh shared fond memories of his time at Damascus College, acknowledging that he understood early in his school days that the more he was able to give to the school, the more he would get back. He believes this is a lesson that also applies to life beyond schooling. Josh reflected that school was an important place to learn the value of building and nurturing strong relationships, a skill that has enabled him to reach the position he has today. The advice he shared with the audience was to do what you enjoy as you will more likely succeed in something you love doing, but importantly, there is no substitute for hard work.

Year 12 students Adele Lockhart and Lewis Clark dazzled the crowd with a musical performance and Gabriel Blake expertly performed his drama solo 'The Detective.' The third performance was a video compilation celebrating the Year 12 Visual Arts & Technology work, it was wonderful to hear why students chose to produce the artwork they presented.

The 2022 VCE Dux, Mia Lepair was celebrated in absentia, and was awarded the Dr Yvonne Aitken Scholarship sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. The wonderful achievement of VCAL dux Olivia King was also celebrated in absentia.

Also acknowledged and celebrated was the 2022 Junior Art Acquisition Award, which went to Zoe Angove, Year 9, with her painting titled 'Urban Landscape'. The Senior Art Acquisition was awarded to Finn Mauriks, Year 12, for his work titled 'Jandamarrah.'

The 2022 Special Awards and Scholarships were awarded, the recipients listed:

2022 SPECIAL AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Award	Name	
2021 VCE Dux - Yvonne Aitken scholarship	Mia Lepair	2021 VCE Dux
2021 VCAL Dux	Olivia King	2021 VCAL Dux
Debating Award	Kaitlyn Handreck	11
Bill O'Loughlin English Endeavour Award	Molly Degenhardt	11
Bill O'Loughlin English Endeavour Award	Zeb Nelson	11
BAS Rob Benoit Cup Winner - Tennis	Jarrold Joyce	10
Australian Olympic Change-Maker Award	Tiarna Parry	12
Sports Person of the Year	Olivia Daly	12
Damascus College Academic Endeavour and Excellence Scholarship	Lucy Leviston	10
Damascus College Arts Endeavour and Excellence Scholarship	Rhyal Williams	11
Damascus College Sporting Endeavour and Excellence Scholarship	Jovie Skewes-Clinton	9
Dorothy Irene-Ellis Thomas Scholarship	Xavier Clonan	12
Dorothy Irene-Ellis Thomas Scholarship	Sinead Sugars	12
Diocese of Ballarat Scholarship	Zoe Newman	10
Sisters of Mercy Dorothy Griffin Scholarship	Lucy Leviston	10
Sisters of Mercy Dorothy Griffin Scholarship	Chelsea Oellering	10
Damascus College Academic Honours	Tristan Clonan	12
Damascus College Academic Honours	Laura Lee	12
Damascus College Academic Honours	Mikayla Montgomery	12
Damascus College Academic Honours	Megan O'Beirne	12
Damascus College Academic Honours	Sinead Sugars	12
Damascus College Academic Honours	Amy Wells	12
Catherine King Community Shield	Tony Haintz	Staff



Lynette Conducting the Ballarat Orchestra

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

ALUMNI STORY

Born in 1928, Lynette Kierce began her education with the Sisters of Mercy at Sacred Heart College (SHC) in 1933 as a four-year-old. She immediately began piano and violin lessons, which saw her love of music nurtured from a very early age. When the college first opened in 1881, the very first students were students of music, and the abilities of both the Sisters and the aspiring music students were widely known.

Lynette's dedication was such that she would rise at 4 am each day so that she could get in four hours of violin practice before the school day began. Lynette was an exceptional soprano as well as an accomplished pianist and violinist and, during her school years, was taught by internationally renowned musician Gertrude Healy (later Sr Catherine of Sienna). Gertrude Healy had herself been one of the early students of SHC before finding international success playing the violin. She taught at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music before returning to Ballarat to conduct the SHC orchestra.

Upon graduating from SHC in 1947, Lynette gained a scholarship to attend the Conservatorium herself, commuting from Ballarat on the train where she would practise her violin should she be lucky enough to strike an empty carriage. As well as the violin, she studied vocals,

German, and Italian, and she was a two-time Ormond Scholarship winner during her time there. In 1949 Lynette founded the SHC Old Collegians Orchestra, a triumphant venture as many of the Ballarat Sisters of Mercy who had taught them had been renowned musicians themselves, sometimes on an international level. From these successful beginnings, Lynette led the group to form a full symphony orchestra. This was a remarkable achievement, as at the age of 23 Lynette was the only female orchestral leader in Australia at that time.

As the founding conductor of the Ballarat Symphony Orchestra, Lynette faced many challenges. Lynette invited local musicians to join but many were reluctant to accept not only a female conductor but such a young and as-yet-unknown one at that. She also faced difficulty finding music for the orchestra to play and it was often up to Lynette to arrange and painstakingly copy music by hand, working late into the night in order to have music ready for rehearsal the next day. Eventually she was given permission to borrow musical scores from the Conservatorium. Lynette led her group of 65 amateur musicians in around 12 performances a year, playing at regional centres and using their performances to raise money for charity.

In 1953, Lynette won the ABC Concerto and Vocal Competition and then the Melbourne Sun Aria, which left her facing a difficult choice – to continue conducting and face the challenges that would bring as a woman or to focus on her vocal talents. Lynette chose vocals and travelled to Europe where she entered the Vienna Academy of Music (as it was then known). In 1956, shortly before the birth of her daughter Isolde, Lynette moved to London. Here she studied with many famous names including Italian tenor Antonio Notariello, English baritone Clive Carey and Austrian singer Helga Mott. Her stage performances included the roles of Leonora in Beethoven's Fidelio, Dido in Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas, Seiglinde in Wagner's Die Walkure, Tosca in Puccini's Tosca, and Idamante in Mozart's Idomeneo.

Lynette and Isolde moved back to Australia in 1967 and, in the late 1970s, Lynette returned to SHC for a year as a teacher of World Music. They then lived for a time in Tokyo and then London once again until Lynette passed away in 2014. Lynette believed that music should be enjoyable and, as such, she conducted her orchestra with a policy of inclusivity. She arranged scores to suit the different skill levels of members to ensure that Ballarat musicians were able to continue their enjoyment of music once their school years had ended, no matter their level of talent.

Lynette Kierce, Class of 1947

With thanks to Lynette's daughter Isolde Standish for providing material for this piece.



Lynette Kierce



Lynette celebrating Melbourne Sun Aria win



2023 COLLEGE CAPTAIN

SOPHIE BUSUTTIL

I am Sophie Busuttill and I am proudly one of the 2023 college Captains alongside Xavier. I have two sisters, one in Year 10 here at the college and the other over the road at Emmaus Catholic Primary School in Year 6. We also have a Miniature Schnauzer named Coco.

Whilst I loved involving myself in leadership opportunities in the younger year levels, I never knew that I would have the opportunity to be School Captain. Through this role, I want to give back to the school as a thank you for everything it has done for me ever since walking through the JSC doors for Year 7 orientation day. I hope to continue to develop student pride in Damascus' rich history and enhance the sense of belonging and connectedness each of us has to the college.

I have so many memorable experiences from Damascus, most recently Year 12 Retreat. Year 12 Retreat is always talked about as one of the students' favourite memories from their time at school, and I can see why! Being able to spend time with your peers, down at the beach for three days, would sound ideal to everyone!

I know it sounds like a cliché, but I love the community presence at the college. It's true when they say that it's the people who make school, work, or social clubs so enjoyable. I feel a real sense of belonging to the school community and that is primarily due to the fantastic staff and students who make everyone feel so welcome and proud to be a Damascus student.

Not being here next year seems like such a surreal concept. Whilst I have no set plan just yet, I hope to pursue my dream of working in the creative industry, through either entering a Bachelor of Communication Design or a Bachelor of Fine Arts, hopefully at RMIT. Either course would help me to embark on a career as a

Graphic Designer, Art Director or even pursue a Post Graduate Degree in Primary School Teaching or Art Therapy. There are so many options and career paths today, which is exciting as there are so many possibilities! I also hope to travel after school and go to Europe, particularly Malta to meet my extended family and see the place my grandparents grew up and where dad is from.

A piece of advice I would give a parent when choosing a secondary college is to choose a college based on what is most suited to your child, whether that be by choosing a college that shares similar values, or one that offers subjects and extra-curricular activities that allow your child to be their best. This is why I believe Damascus College is such an amazing school, as it has such a diverse learning curriculum that adheres to the needs and goals of a range of young people, supporting them throughout their time here.

A piece of advice I would give to a student starting Year 7 at Damascus is to really immerse yourself in as many opportunities as you can. It's true that you only get as much out of something as you put in. Damascus offers such a wide range of extra-curricular activities, from the Art Club, to being a part of the rich history of performing arts through the college musicals, to after-school sports, the rowing program, or leadership opportunities such as the SRC.

I had no idea what impact putting my hand up for the SRC in Year 8 would have on my time here at Damascus. Stepping out of my comfort zone allowed me to learn how much I love being involved in a leadership position, working with a team, and voicing my opinions to help create change, with all these things leading up to my applying for and becoming School Captain.

Sophie Busuttill, Year 12 student



2023 COLLEGE CAPTAIN

XAVIER BYRNE

My name is Xavier Byrne and I am a Damascus College School Captain for 2023 alongside Sophie. I am extremely proud of Damascus College and genuinely looking forward to making memories throughout this final year of my schooling, as well as giving back to the school that has been such a large part of my life.

Dad was a schoolteacher and was lucky enough to get a job at Damascus. As a family, Dad's role over the next 13 years gave me and my siblings privileged insight into life at the college. My two older siblings also went to Damascus as well as my younger sister, currently in Year 10. My primary education was through Emmaus Catholic Primary School, so it was only a short journey from primary school to high school.

Family has always been an important part of my life and the values that have been instilled in me have been a crucial part of the person I am today. Coming from large families on both my Mum's and Dad's side has built a strong passion for and engagement with people and has helped me in building strong relationships with my peers, teachers, and all the staff at school.

Already, I have had many great experiences in Year 12 including our Retreat, the Head of the Lake, and our Swimming Sports and I am appreciative of the effort everyone has put into these different events. This is not only the students' contribution, through participation and supporting but also the huge effort on the part of the staff, making sure we have the best experience possible.

I look forward to continuing to be a part of the strong Damascus culture and identity. I love the opportunity leadership provides me at Damascus. The college has a proud tradition as a forward-thinking school, willing to courageously adapt to the needs of the times and I consider myself fortunate to have the opportunity to

contribute to this as a student and leader. One of my proudest days at school was earlier this year at the Head of the Lake. With peers, we were able to show support for our friends and fellow students who have given their blood, sweat, and tears to rowing this season, to show our appreciation for their hard work, as well as having an opportunity to show our Damascus pride. We had fun, we were all at a great community event together, and I lost my voice for the next week!!

I don't yet know exactly what I want to do after this year, but I plan on going to university. At this stage I am not set on any course. I look forward to this year's footy season and seeing how our school footy team performs, as students we have been campaigning to have an opportunity to participate in BAS Division 1. This is the first time Damascus has entered Division 1 and while it will be a big step up, we are looking forward to the opportunity. I am equally excited about the other school events and am extremely lucky to be able to go to a school that provides us with such a rich diversity of experiences.

For new students to our community, I hope that my experience encourages them to take on fully the opportunities school life offers. Like me, you don't have to be the best at everything, but you can always try.

The position of school captain is something that I wouldn't have considered in my wildest dreams as a Year 7 student, and I don't think I could have achieved it without the guidance of peers, staff, and teachers at Damascus. It has pushed me to grow into a better person, without Damascus I would not be the person I am today.

Xavier Byrne, Year 12 student



Mother Bonaventure Healy left & Mother Alacoque Connell in the grounds of Sacred Heart College Circa 1950's

MOTHER ALACOQUE CONNELL

DAMASCUS SISTER OF MERCY

Margaret Mary Connell was born in Templemore, Ireland on 5 April 1872 and was educated at St Brigid's Missionary School, Callan. Opened by the Callan Sisters of Mercy, the school was the only one of its kind in Ireland at the time as it was conceived specifically for the education and training of young girls and women who aimed to enter a convent and seek a foreign missionary vocation. St Brigid's played a valuable role in shaping the future educator that the young Margaret was to become.

In 1891, nineteen-year-old Margaret, along with fellow St Brigid's friend Mary Kerwick (Sr M Berchmans), left Ireland for a new life in Australia. They then entered the Ballarat East Convent of Mercy in October 1891. Margaret later told the story of how her courage almost failed her once she first reached the front door of the Ballarat Convent and she was on the point of turning away. She did finally find the strength to ring the bell and many generations of Sacred Heart College (SHC) young women are thankful for her courage.

The welcome she received from 'Gran' (Mother Xavier Flood) dispelled all her fears.

She was received in July 1892, taking Mary Alacoque for her religious name. During her early convent years Mother Alacoque taught at St Aloysius, St Columba's, St Alipius and St Patrick's St Arnaud. She worked closely with Mother Xavier Flood, who came to rely on Mother Alacoque, particularly through the difficult years from 1894 to 1918. Together, they continued to build on the strong foundations laid by Mother Agnes Graham and Mother Xavier herself. In 1914, Mother Alacoque accompanied Mother Xavier to Rome where they had an audience with Pope Pius X. Their return journey was complicated by the outbreak of war - an attempt to avoid German submarines saw their ship veer from its expected route, only then to be blown further off course by a cyclone – or so the story goes!

Mother Bonaventure Healy reflected in 1964 that not even the hardship of the depression years could prevent Mother Alacoque from carrying on the legacy of Mother Xavier, even though “there was never enough of anything – except faith and courage”. Mother Alacoque was considered a natural teacher so it was not surprising that she would go on to play an instrumental role in the development of the Aquin Training College. Both intellectual and idealistic, she was known for her practical attitude to problem-solving while her spirituality influenced each of the students and Mercy Sisters she encountered. While forthright and practical, she was also loved by all who knew her for her caring, motherly disposition.

In 1918, Mother Alacoque was elected Superior of the congregation, a position she held on and off until 1956. In 1957, the Federation of the Sisters of Mercy Australia was inaugurated, combining congregations representing 2000 Sisters, of which Mother Alacoque became the first President. A serious operation on her eightieth birthday left her unable to participate fully in the activities she previously relished, although ill health could not dampen her interest in her beloved community. After 68 years of religious life, Mother Alacoque died peacefully on 23 May 1959 and was laid to rest in Ballarat. She was honoured at SHC through the naming of Connell house, of which this writer was a proud member.

With thanks to the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea Archives for their assistance in providing us with material for this piece.



Mother Bonaventure Healy (left) Mother Alacoque Connell (right) C1958



M Alacoque Connell receiving cheque from Old Colegians Association Connie Russo C1958



2023 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

POSITION	Mc AULEY	ST MARTIN	RICE	XAVIER
School Captains	Sophie Busuttill		Xavier Byrne	
House Captain	Abby Harrington	Julia Primerano	Leah Stevens	Wyatt Pilmore
House Captain	Felix Moore	Jessica Hodge	Alice Lepair	Daisy Simpson-Kerr
House Captain	Gemma Read	Tyler Bumpstead	Rohan Shillito	Jack Coffey
House Captain	Sienna Cooke	Nicholas Fletcher	Poppy Rowland	Gemma O'Donnell
Year 11 SRC	Lucy Leviston	Charley Gartlan	Niamh Seare	Charlie Norman
Year 10 SRC	Matilda Jones	Luke Eddy	Ryan McNaulty	Haileigh Buttigieg
Year 9 SRC	Harvey Wilson	Lucy Gravell	Meg Mason	Willem Madigan
Year 8 SRC	Billy Rennie	Dilana Romenil	Emily Meade	Imogen Tuffen
Year 7 SRC	Isabeau Turner	Connor Fletcher	Jai Stephen	Elsie Angrove



SRC PRESIDENT

JESSICA HODGE

Time flies when you live through a pandemic! Although it feels like my first day of Year 7 in 2018 was yesterday, and we jumped straight from Year 8 into VCE, our final year of school is now upon us, and I am incredibly excited. My name is Jessica Hodge and I have the pleasure of being the SRC president for 2023.

I have always loved and felt grateful for my school experience, and I am fortunate to be able to give back to the Damascus community this year. As SRC president, I am really looking forward to working with such a talented group of young leaders. I am surrounded by such strong office bearers - Charley Gartlan (Vice President), Rohan Shillito (Secretary), and Leah Stevens (Treasurer) - and am also well supported by our SRC Coordinator, Hannah Keating.

I hope to be an approachable and positive senior member of our leadership group and be an influential representative for my fellow students and the wider community. I am excited to contribute to the successful running and organisation of staple events such as the Bake Sale and Damascus Day, as well as implementing new ideas to leave our own unique mark. Mr Mifsud has been a fantastic advocate for increasing the 'student voice' at Damascus and I am looking forward to working with him as the SRC leader.

Being a very ambitious person, I am working hard to achieve both my personal and academic goals for Year 12. As someone

who enjoys learning and prides themselves in their marks, I have certain scores I am aiming for, as well as working on my time management and prioritising my mental health. Being passionate about lots of things has made it very difficult to decide what I will be doing after Damascus. I have never known what I was going to do when I 'grow up' and I think that is perfectly ok. I would love to go to university to continue to grow and learn but currently, I am undecided about what the course will be or if a gap year will be thrown into the mix. I am excited to see what the future holds.

I am looking forward to our year level becoming closer together and to developing new connections with my cohort but, overall, I want to make sure both myself and my year level get the most out of the year and enjoy every moment of it. Both within school, with Year 12 dress-up days or videos, and outside school, with 18th birthday parties and driver's licences, the final year of high school is such a milestone and will mean many lasting memories for me.

I am so humbled to have been recognised and chosen as President for this fantastic group of young leaders, and hopefully - as the first year since 2019 to not be affected by COVID - I can contribute to creating a memorable year for every member of the college community.

Jessica Hodge, Year 12 student



BIKING IS MY THERAPY

QUINN MOORE

Riding is my soulmate - sport version. On my bike it is as though the world is at peace, time stands still until I resurface to the real world. When I am on my bike, the pressures of life, the things I must complete and live up to seem to temporarily fade as I drift away to a dream land. Bikes are my true passion, that thing in your life you never get tired of. That thing everyone has or is yet to discover, that you are always striving for more of and endlessly working to enhance your abilities at.

As a young woman in a male-dominated sport, I face many difficulties. People discriminate against me; they tell me I don't belong in a high-risk sport and that I shouldn't bother trying to succeed. That is one of the many things that push me forward, adding more fuel to my fire. These people are giving me the motivation to ride harder and to continue to work to achieve my goals, because nothing anyone could say is going to stop me. I aim to encourage other girls; I want to show people that girls can too. I am striving to increase the number of women in this sport, so it is no longer unique to be a girl who rides.

My bike riding has shown me what it means to truly give something your all, to stretch the limitations of what you thought possible of yourself. This is a skill I am grateful for and one I have been able to implement in my classwork and perspective of school.

At Damascus, I have been so grateful for the support of my teachers. Mountain biking being this big a part of my life, means in race season the days of missed school add up fast. The constant flow of emails I send out to teachers about work I need to catch up on are always warmly responded to. These dedicated teachers who enthusiastically enquire about my race results and go out of their way to help me catch up on classes are what I love so much about Damascus.

Despite not knowing where my future is going to take me, I know bike riding will always be a big part of my life. For many years, it has been my goal in life to one day race in the world cup for mountain biking and I hope to get a job that can allow me both financial stability as well as the flexibility to be able to pursue my passion.

Wherever I go in life, I know I will always be grateful for the education and opportunities Damascus College has provided me.

Quinn Moore, Year 9 student



OUT FROM BEHIND THE LENS

DREW SMITH

Going from photographing Ice Hockey to playing may not have been a long journey, but it has definitely been a time-consuming one. After having had a vague interest in photography for a couple of years, focusing on astrophotography, ice hockey was a massive change of pace. My astrophotography did however help develop my skills in low light photography, which are required to successfully photograph ice hockey. Initially, I was quite indifferent to the sport itself, however, after photographing my first game I fell in love with the pace and atmosphere.

I quickly decided to increase my involvement and experience and reached out to the Melbourne Ice team to shoot one of their Yarra Cup games as a volunteer photographer. After that, I was enthralled. I approached a newly emerging league, the IceHQ Summer Pro League, at the start of 2022 and quickly became one of their volunteers as well. By this time, I was heavily invested in the sport and had upgraded my camera gear to capture better-quality photos.

Although I was unable to play myself due to my inability to skate, I spent much time doing off-ice shooting practice and occasionally playing street hockey as a goalie. In April 2022 I was approached by the Melbourne Ducks and asked to be an official game-day photographer for the inaugural season of the Pacific Hockey League. I was ecstatic and found the atmosphere that the Ducks brought to the rink unique and the most exhilarating in the sport. It was the most competitive ice hockey in the country, at the highest level, but also with the friendliest, most accepting culture.

During the 2022 season, I began to really propel forward my plans to play hockey and many discussions with a friend (also one of the photographers) inspired me to start getting the gear I needed. Although I could not commit to a junior team - the round trip to the

rink was 260 km each time - I was intent on playing a season of C2 before I finished high school. During term 4, once the Ducks season had ended, I made the commitment to learn to skate and attended skate school each Saturday morning. Also, during this term, although there were no active elite-level hockey seasons underway to photograph, I managed to photograph the CCM National Women's tournament, which was a great way to highlight women's league hockey. Then, after reaching out to photograph the Trans-Tasman Tournament, despite initially being told they had no need for more photographers, I was offered a last-minute opportunity to replace one who was unable to make it to the final game. This was certainly a highlight, being able to shoot Team Australia Vs Team New Zealand, which really helped me highlight the impossibility of recapturing a moment once it has passed; you have to be ready.

At the beginning of this year, I joined the C2 development squad, and began playing, while continuing as the main photographer for the second season of the Pro Summer League. The main difficulty with my season of playing is that my games are always immediately before or after the games I photograph, which means I miss the first period of the first game, or the last period of the second game, giving me less time to capture key moments. Although there is this obstacle, it allows me to watch and learn from a much higher level of hockey, helping me improve and develop my own game, knowledge, and positioning, to be much more effective on the ice.

In the future, I hope to move to Melbourne to complete university there and allow myself to play for a longer period throughout the year while continuing to shoot elite and semi-pro leagues.

Drew Smith, Year 12 student



Br Herrick overseeing Swimming Sports C1965

BR DONALD SERGE HERRICK

DAMASCUS COLLEGE HISTORY

While the origins of Damascus College can be traced as far back as 1881 when the Sisters of Mercy began teaching in Victoria Street, there is no doubt the current format of the school has been shaped equally by the Christian Brothers and their dedication to the education of the Catholic young men of Ballarat. In 1948 the Christian Brothers opened St Paul's Technical College in response to the lack of opportunities for technical education in Ballarat. The new college meant that young men looking to find an apprenticeship now had a place to learn the skills they required to gain employment. With the amalgamation of Sacred Heart College, St Paul's Technical College, and St Martin's in the Pines in 1995, the strengths of each of these colleges became the foundation for the newly formed Damascus College.

The young Donald (as he was then known) entered the Christian Brothers Juniorate in Strathfield NSW in the January of 1949. He commenced his novitiate in 1952 and made his Perpetual Profession as a Christian Brother in 1959.

Serge was appointed to St Paul's Technical School during the years 1964 – 1967 and spent the last three as Principal. A gentle, kind-hearted soul, he did his best work with the disadvantaged, those less endowed with ability, and those who struggled at school. As principal, Serge was unsparing in providing programs for those who would otherwise fall through the educational cracks.

Serge then spent the first half of the 1970s in the highlands of New Guinea at a school called Fatima near the town of Banz. Br Kevin Laws remembers that Serge had a deep understanding of the students - essential if you were to be accepted there.

Back in Australia in the mid-1990s came the announcement that the Grand Prix would be relocating to Albert Park. Concerned that this would pose a great threat to the grassy wetlands habitat of almost two hundred bird species, Serge found his zeal for justice once again fired up. He became a vocal opponent of this threat and an active Friend of Albert Park.

By the year 2000, Serge was part of the community in Dandenong. He went weekly to a drop-in centre to listen to and help people who were finding the challenge of life difficult. Serge could sit with these people and just listen, not expecting anything from them. They grew to see he was interested in them and comfortable talking to them. He had a presence where he was not embarrassed by long pauses or outlandish statements and if people became agitated or aggressive, his calm, mature approach was able to settle them and encourage them to approach the situation differently.

Serge's retirement years were accompanied by increasing deafness and finally dementia. In all of that, his gentle nature remained his normal demeanour. He died on 12 August 2022 at St Joseph's Home, Northcote.

Ron Geurts, St Paul's Technical College 1967 – 1970, reflects...

"Bro Herrick was a gentle bloke who took the time to talk to those students who showed any interest to listen and encouraged us to do the best we could at anything we tackled.

In our 3rd year, we had to complete a major woodwork project, as this was our last trade year for the 'academic' class. During storage, my partially built project (a desk) was somehow broken. I was heart-broken; partly because I had to start again, but also because I had to ask my parents for more money to buy new timber. Bro Herrick took me aside and encouraged me to see this as another learning opportunity, like a character test. I later found out that he also helped us by paying for most of the new timber."

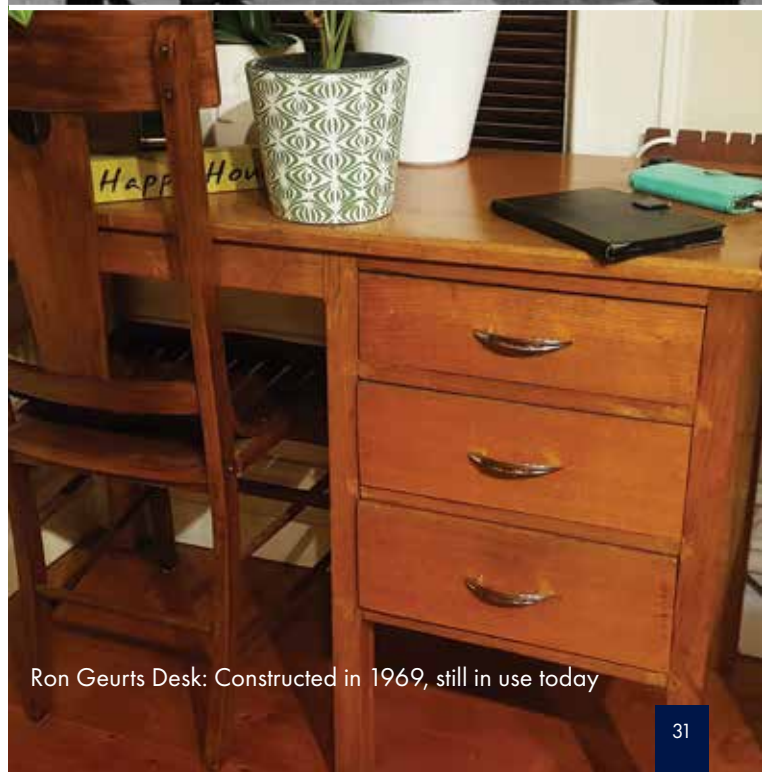
With thanks to the Kelty Archives Parkville for the provision of information for this article.



Br Herrick with Val Perovic and parents Circa 1966



Br Herrick 4th from right C1969



Ron Geurts Desk: Constructed in 1969, still in use today



Back Row: Emma Smith, Jovie Skewes-Clinton, Ryder Lavery. Middle Row: Tyla Crabtree, Bailey Bellin. Front Row: Freya Palmer and Keisha Darroch.

DAMASCUS REBELS

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

The Greater Western Victoria Rebels is an Australian Rules football club that provides an elite pathway for talented players. With both male and female teams, the club plays in the Coates Talent League, offering a high-level under 16 and under 18 competition for the eastern states of Australia.

Players are selected from regions across Victoria including Warrnambool, Hamilton, Horsham, Mildura, and Ballarat. Eight players have been selected from Damascus College alone - a fantastic achievement.

The program consists of training two nights a week and matches played on the weekends. The coaches are knowledgeable. Part of the program involves travelling across Victoria to play against other sides each week such as Gippsland, Melbourne, and Bendigo. The season begins on 19th March and runs until late September, with 17 rounds in total.

I am extremely grateful to have been part of the program for two years now, the GWV Rebels is like a family to me, it allows me to form lifelong friendships not just with teammates but with the coaches as well. It means the world to be a part of the program to play the game I love to play, gaining knowledge and skills and a feeling of contentment in the football arena.

In the future, I hope to make the best of the opportunities I have been offered, and in the coming years I plan to implement the skills I have gained throughout the program to enhance my football journey.

Bindi Crabtree, Year 12 student

'For as long as I can remember, I have loved football. I have been playing since I was 8 years old and being chosen to represent the GWV Rebels is a dream come true. I am very excited about the upcoming games and was surprised and honoured to be chosen as the U16 Vice Captain. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to represent the Rebels; I love both learning how to be a better footballer and all of the new friendships I have made from all over country Victoria.'

Jovie Skewes-Clinton, Year 10 student

Damascus College congratulates all eight students selected for the GWV Rebels: U18M Ryder Lavery, U18 F Bindi Crabtree, Tyla Crabtree and Emma Smith, U16F Jovie Skewes-Clinton, Freya Palmer, Bailey Bellin, and Keisha Darroch.

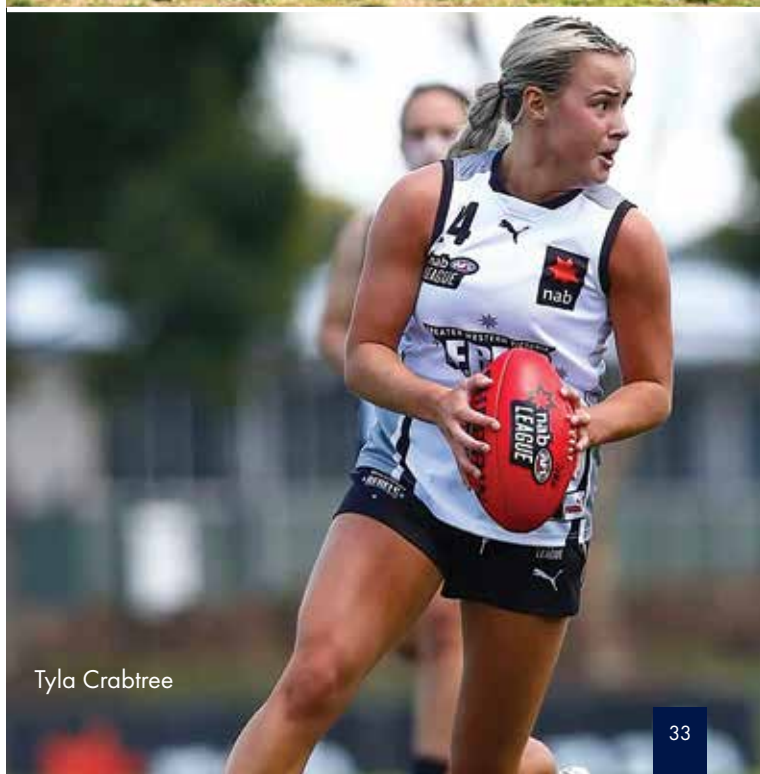
Further congratulations must go to Jovie Skewes-Clinton who has been selected in the Victorian Country U16F squad to play in the AFL National Development Championships, the highest level of state and territory representative football, as part of the AFL's Talent Pathway Program. These competitions feature the most promising young footballers from across Australia - the next generation of AFL stars.



Bindi Crabtree



Keisha Darroch



Tyla Crabtree



Portrait of Catherine McAuley, image courtesy of Mercy International

2023 SHINING LIGHT INDUCTEES

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

The Venerable Catherine McAuley said, “We should be shining lamps giving light to all around us”.

We are proud of our long line of alumni from Damascus College, and from our foundation colleges of Sacred Heart, St Paul’s and St Martin’s in the Pines, and we continually find inspiration from their achievements and pathways since graduating.

To showcase and celebrate the achievements of our alumni in the many fields and areas of their endeavour, Damascus College introduced The Shining Light Award for Inspiring Alumni.

The award enables us to proudly induct selected alumni as a Damascus College Shining Light, recognising the contributions and achievements of alumni who have shined bright in their chosen field.

We are pleased to advise that for this year’s award, we received 21 nominations and after a robust selection process we proudly inducted five recipients into the Shining Light Award.

Dr Yvonne Aitken was born in Horsham in 1911 and was educated by the Mercy Sisters at Sacred Heart College from 1927-1929 before being awarded a scholarship to the University of Melbourne, embarking on her journey to become a leading and influential woman in science.

Yvonne was only 29, with a newly completed Master’s degree in Agricultural Science, when she was given an ostensibly impossible challenge. Her mentor suggested she decipher the mystery of why day length determined the time over which crops matured - as distinct from other environmental factors and genetics. It was a problem yet unsolved.

Yvonne accepted the challenge with extraordinary zeal and over the next thirty years planted various species at locations around the world that offered extremes of daylight, temperature, and altitude. This was research on a massive scale.

Through Yvonne's research, agronomists and plant breeders were able to predict geographic and climatic limits for plant varieties. Yvonne's lifetime goal was to extend the range of consumable crops for humans and animals, and the research she conducted helped to achieve that goal.

Yvonne earned a doctorate of agricultural science from the University of Melbourne, the first woman to achieve this in Victoria. She was a fellow of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1989 for her significant contribution to plant sciences and teaching.

Yvonne died in November 2004, aged 94.

Damascus College is grateful to Yvonne for being a Shining Light, her work in the agricultural sciences has left a lasting impression on the variety and quality of food now available. She was a trailblazer for women in a scientific field that was dominated at that time by men, opening the door of opportunity for everyone.

Dr Yvonne Aitken has received the 2023 Shining Light Award for STEAM Achievement.

In 1988, Professor Ooi was in the first cohort of male students admitted to St Martin's in the Pines, one of Damascus College's foundation schools, which opened on the Mt Clear site in 1967. With around 400 female students and only about 40 males, this may have felt a little strange for Professor Ooi, but it was an important milestone for the college, as it became the only co-educational Catholic high school in the Ballarat region.

After graduating from St Martin's, Professor Ooi went on to study at the University of Melbourne where he achieved a Bachelor of Engineering in 1993, before completing his PhD in 1997. Professor Ooi then finished his post-doctoral research at Stanford University in California.

Professor Ooi is a busy man. He has published more than 300 scholarly works on his research and has made a significant contribution to society's scientific understanding of a wide range of topics, from cardiology to fluid dynamics to wildfire management.



Dr Yvonne Aitken



Prof Andrew Ooi at the University of Melbourne



Prof Andrew Ooi and Steven Mifsud 2023

During his career Professor Ooi has worked at the Centre for Turbulence Research, the NASA Ames Research Centre - located in California's Silicon Valley, Stanford University, and as a research scientist at the Australian Defence Science and Technology Organisation. A very deserving recipient of the Shining Light Award, Professor Ooi is a wonderful role model to all Damascus students and an inspiration to those looking to enter the field of STEAM.

Dr Andrew Ooi has received the 2023 Shining Light Award for STEAM Achievement and Academia & Career Excellence.



Nicole Thornton ARCBS Tissue Typing 1999

Nicole Thornton is a very deserving recipient of the Shining Light Award for her work in the Medical Sciences, in particular her work as the Head of the International Blood Group Reference Laboratory.

Nicole and her younger sisters Shona and Olivia attended Sacred Heart College and St Martin's in the Pines. When Nicole was in Year 12, she knew that she wanted to enter the field of science but she was determined to do something that would ultimately help people. She considered Medicine but her VCE results were not high enough to gain entry. Instead of giving up her dream, Nicole decided she would do a year of Medical Laboratory Science which would then enable her to transfer to Medicine. Sometimes things work out as they are meant to, as once she started her degree, she became fascinated with the blood sciences, and from then she knew that Medical Laboratory Science was the perfect match for her.

Nicole received her Bachelor of Applied Science in Medical Laboratory Science from RMIT and then went on to gain her Master of Science - Biomedical Science from the University of Ulster in Ireland. In 2018, Nicole won the Race and Sanger Award, a hugely prestigious award in the field of science and medicine given for involvement in research and development and making an outstanding medical or scientific contribution to transfusion medicine and science.



Nicole in the lab

Nicole currently runs the World Rare Donor Panel. Her CV is packed with impressive roles, awards, and a lengthy list of publications, but it is knowing that the work she does is making a real difference in patients' lives that matters the most to Nicole. Nicole believes there is no better feeling than knowing that you made another person's life better, or you gave a family answers and hope when they were in a time of despair.

Nicole has received the 2023 Shining Light Award for STEAM Achievement.

Doctor Samantha Brown graduated from Damascus College in 2006 before completing a bachelor's degree in Archaeology at LaTrobe University followed by Honours at the University of Melbourne. She then moved to the UK in 2014 to gain her Master's degree in Archaeological Science at the University of Oxford. Upon being accepted into Oxford she quickly realised the cost of tuition would be beyond her means.

At this time, her family and community rallied behind her – her Mum organised a Cadbury chocolate drive, then there was a pub trivia night, a Go-Fund-Me Page, and the Sisters of Mercy awarded her a small scholarship. Doctor Brown said that people from the Damascus community contributed whenever they could, and without the huge effort of her family, particularly her Mum, she would not have been able to pursue her dreams at Oxford.

It was at Oxford that Doctor Brown had the opportunity to study ancient proteins and to work on bones from the Denisova Cave site. She found this to be a fascinating site, where evidence has been found of human occupation in the cave going back two hundred thousand years.

As part of her Master's project, Doctor Brown discovered a bone from an early human called Denisova 11 - nicknamed Denny. A historically important discovery, Denny provided the first conclusive evidence of human interbreeding - her mother was a Neanderthal and her father was a Denisovan. This makes Denny the only known hominin that had parents in two separate populations. Denny died around ninety thousand years ago.

In 2017, Doctor Brown moved to Germany to get her PhD from the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, carrying out similar research. In 2021, Doctor Brown took a research position at the University of Tubingen in Germany. There, she runs a Laboratory studying proteins from archaeological bones, leather, eggshells, and plant remains.

Dr Samantha Brown has received the 2023 Shining Light Award for Academia & Career Excellence.

Class of 2016 alumni Connor Prunty attended Damascus College, as did his younger sister Bridget and brother Tom. It was Connor's considerable intellect that saw him develop his interest in engineering and information technology - both at Damascus College, as an integral member and mentor of the Energy Breakthrough Team (now known as the Sustainable Racing Team), and then through Deakin and Swinburne Universities. Connor used these acquired skills to complement his strategic and logistical fire-fighting approach to ensure safety and optimal effectiveness.



Samantha graduating from Oxford



Samantha with Dinosaurs



Connor with Charlie



Connor in his CFA fire uniform

Connor had a wonderful relaxed, laid-back attitude but that didn't prevent him from becoming passionate about certain things, in particular helping people, and he found that there were many ways he could be of service.

Connor often quietly contributed to the running of Masses by expertly working the computer-operated overhead displays and musical accompaniments. It was not unusual for Connor to discreetly come to the rescue of others when technology was not behaving and, indeed, his expertise was called upon for other occasions.

Young children adored Connor, be they his young cousins or family friends. He always had time to spare for them and was often observed to be their six-foot-four climbing frame, cheerfully providing a sky-high view from atop his shoulders.

Connor's particular passion was the Buninyong-Mt. Helen CFA who were like a second family to him and many hours were spent by Connor at the station or on the trucks fighting fires. Connor didn't just fight fires locally but answered the call to action from around the state whenever he could. He also worked as treasurer in the fire brigade for 12 months and was the 5th Lieutenant for two years. His experiences at the CFA saw him travel in a Chinook helicopter and a light plane.

When the fire began at the Midvale shopping centre last year, Connor was first into the shop and was credited with preventing this fire from causing greater damage than it did. As a member of the brigade, Connor didn't just fight fires, but also spent many hours selling calendars door-to-door, rattling tins for the Good Friday appeal and helping out in any way he could.

It was for his service to our community that Connor was nominated, not once, but twice as a Shining Light. Sadly, Connor died in November last year, aged just 24. Even in death, he continued to help people as an organ donor and through his gift two people now have sight. Damascus College thanks Connor for his dedication to his community.

Connor Prunty has received the 2023 Shining Light Award for Service to the Community.

Damascus College was proud to induct the 2023 Shining Light Award recipients at the Academic Assembly held in February this year. This provided a wonderful opportunity for current students and staff to listen to the recipients stories and to be inspired to become shining lamps themselves, giving light to all those around them.



Samantha Brown's mum Jeneine Walsh-Hevey accepting her Shining Light Award



Prof Andrew Ooi accepting his Shining Light Award



Connor Prunty's sister and brother, Bridget and Thomas accepting his Shining Light Award



Nicole Thornton's sisters, Shona and Olivia accepting her Shining Light Award with Damascus College Principal Steven Mifsud



2017



2022



2023

40

STEPPING UP

ALUMNI STORY

Recent graduate Cooper Guinea, Class of 2022, couldn't be more thrilled to be returning to Damascus College in 2023 however, this time he will be the one assigning the homework - as the choreographer for the 2023 college production of *The Addams Family*.

Despite his young age, Cooper has a long and impressive list of experience and credits to his name including the role of Tommy in the 2016 Melbourne season of *Matilda* at The Princess Theatre. He has trained across Victoria; including at Centrestage Performing Arts School in Melbourne where he is signed with Centrestage Talent Agency. It was at Centrestage that Cooper's affinity with choreography began, and it was here he was awarded the Corrie Lodders Senior Dancers Scholarship in 2018.

A dance instructor at Soraya McKee Dance Society, Cooper has a particular fondness for Hip-hop and Commercial Jazz. Although it was another victim of COVID cancellations, Cooper worked with the BLOC Theatre Company as the Assistant Choreographer for their production of *Seussical*. Cooper's other credits include Disney's *Camp Rock: The Musical*, *Bugsy Malone*, and Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*.

For his performance in the 2021 production of *Mamma Mia!* Cooper was awarded the 2020-2021 Guild Award for Best Dancer. The BLOC Theatre Company then recognised him again in 2022 with both the Peter Jacobs Memorial Award and a Guild Commendation Award for Best Choreography for their production of *Newsies*.

Currently, Cooper is the Choreographer for both the BLOC Theatre Company's 2023 production of *High School Musical* and Damascus College's 2023 Production of *The Addams Family*. Cooper is excited to see the cast he is supporting and nurturing appear onstage in the Valda Ward Auditorium. With a huge passion for teaching, Cooper can't wait to guide the next generation of young dancers in the years to come.

Cooper Guinea, Class of 2022

YEAR 7 CAMP REFLECTION

ALICIA AUSTIN

At the beginning of this year, I was lucky enough to experience Year 7 camp. We got to go to 'Log Cabin Camp' in Creswick, travelling there on a bus with other Rice House Year 7 students. When we arrived, the first activity we did was the zipline, which also happened to be my favourite activity. You got to slide down the zipline really fast while seeing everyone looking tiny below you because of the height.

On this camp the most challenging activity for me was the Leap of Faith. The Leap of Faith is where you get safely harnessed up, climb up to the top of a tower, and then jump down ten metres. This activity required teamwork because your teammates would pull your harness up while you were climbing. It also included trust because you had to trust your teammates to do it properly. Despite this activity being challenging, I really enjoyed it.

On this camp I met some new people and I got to know my friends a lot better. This was an amazing camp of new experiences. I learnt lots of new things and got to do things I had never thought of trying before. This camp was so much fun!

Alicia Austin, Year 7 student



Alicia Austin



Rope activities



Archery



Celia Nolan, Michelle Masson, Carmel Hepingstall 1968



Lorraine Flynn, Carmel Hepingstall, Sr Joachim, Chris Coughlan, Sheila Keely 1969



Carmel Hepingstall and Denise Roache as the Queen and Queen mum 1975



Carmel at Damascus College 2022

A WOMAN OF PURPOSE AND ACTION

ALUMNI STORY

Carmel Hempenstall, Class of 1968, has spent many years as a teacher, at both St. Martin's in the Pines and Damascus College. After completing high school as a boarder at St Martin's in the Pines, Carmel completed a Bachelor of Economics at La Trobe University followed by a Diploma of Education. She taught at St Patrick's College Ballarat, Keoghan College Broadmeadows, Catholic College Sydenham, Loreto College Ballarat and Ballarat School of Mines.

During her teaching career and alongside her work in schools, Carmel has consistently chosen to study and work to improve the lives of young people at the margins of society. While teaching at St. Martin's she was a volunteer at both Lisa Lodge and Hayeslee, doing night shifts caring for young people who were in care and deemed at risk by the court.

She has worked as an Honorary Probation Officer in the children's courts in Ballarat and Broadmeadows and has served on committees of organisations that fostered opportunities for young people, including those not always well served by existing structures.

An active participant on committees associated with the Childcare, Kindergarten, and Primary and Secondary schools attended by her two children, Carmel was the inaugural Catholic Education representative on the Highlands Local Learning and Employment Network Committee of Management for five years.

Carmel's is a life dedicated to action - she was on the Management Committee of the Ballarat Learning Exchange (BLX), President of the Ballarat Careers Education Network, Ballarat Diocesan representative of the Catholic Education Commission of Victorian Pathways Network, and a Board Member of Centacare Ballarat. She was also involved in the introduction of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and coordinated the introduction of it at Damascus College as part of a trial across 21 sites in Victoria. She was responsible for the development of the Industry Skills Strand of VCAL.

In 2016 she was awarded Life Membership of the Australian Centre for Career Education. In retirement, Carmel became part of the formation of the Asylum Seekers Pathways Steering Group. This program was developed for young students seeking asylum and explored strategies to find employment and education for students who were not entitled to government-funded education or training places. The Pathways project has since expanded and now forms much of the directions being taken by The Hope Co-operative which recently won a Victorian Multicultural Award (2022).

Her work at The Hope Co-operative also included the production of 'The Shape of Hope' book, a collection of Asylum Seekers' stories documenting why they left home, how they got to Australia, and what it is like to start building a new life. Stories that include bombs, broken-down boats, summer bushfires and all-night study sessions in the middle of winter. Each story is unique, but there are common threads - frustrations with visas and bureaucracies, and the excitement of being accepted into university or getting a job. The Shape of Hope is a beautiful book that gives very practical insights into the barriers faced by asylum seekers and how they overcame them.

Carmel's life's work has focused on developing pathways for young people living on the margins of society. She has maintained this focus in all her choices as a teacher, a community leader, and a participant in modelling new ways to change the lives of society's most vulnerable. Carmel has made a difference in many lives and continues to do so by steadily taking action, often in unobtrusive ways, to change or work around unjust structures which form obstacles for those excluded from mainstream society. Carmel's passion for social justice is an example to us all.

Carmel Hempenstall, Class of 1968



2022/2023 Damascus College Rowing Program

2022/2023 ROWING SEASON REVIEW

DAMASCUS COLLEGE ROWING

The 2022-2023 rowing season for Damascus College saw 65 students compete at the 2023 Head of the Lake, with representation in the following events:

- Three Junior Girls Crews
- Three Junior Boys Crew
- Three Intermediate Girls Crews
- Two Senior Girls Crews
- Two Senior Boys Crews

All Damascus College crews performed well and executed their skills flawlessly, a testament to the hard work of the skilled coaching team.

The Head of the Lake Regatta also saw the largest Damascus College supporter crew in many years! Led by Rohan Shillito, Xavier Byrne and Tanayah Wooller, the vocal supporters no doubt helped every one of the crews accelerate to the finish line!

2023 ROWING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

DIVISION	RUNNER UP	WINNER
Junior Boys:	Archie Bennett	Will Busuttill
Junior Girls:	Olivia Radisich	Annie Glover
Intermediate Boys:	Joachim Henderson	Jett Incoll
Intermediate Girls:	Ruby Lavery	Ruby Byrne
Senior Boys:	Cooper Reid	Rohan Shillito
Senior Girls	Lillian Leonard	Charley Gartlan
Cox of the Year	Matilda Watt	Harvey Wilson
Coach of the Year:	Matilda Flood	Rob Davis

Morongo Medallist: Daisy Simpson-Kerr

Senior Rowing Fellowship: Daisy Simpson-Kerr



A few highlights from the season:

- Senior Boys 1st Crew winning a Bronze Medal at the Head of the Schoolboys Regatta in the Open Division 1 Coxed Four event
- Senior Boys 2nd Crew winning a Silver medal at the VIC State Championships Regatta in the Schoolboy Division 2 Coxed Quad Scull event
- Senior Girls combining to row an eight at the Head of the Schoolgirls Regatta
- Intermediate Girls combining to row an eight at the Head of the Schoolgirls Regatta
- The development & progression of our junior program from learn to row to competitive crews

- Thank you to all parents, staff and coaches who helped throughout the rowing season, without your assistance the rowing program could not survive. The BBQ stall on the Wendouree-Ballarat Regatta weekend was again very successful, providing much needed funds to continue to build and grow our program.

The momentum and enthusiasm the rowing program is building now will continue into the 2023/2024 rowing season with exciting new opportunities for all rowers of all age groups. I believe we are building something very special here and I am excited to see where this journey takes us.

Paul Blanchfield, Damascus College Rowing Coordinator



INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

ALUMNI STORY

Pete Gervasoni, Class of 1994, has had an interesting and diverse career since leaving St Martin's in the Pines. From a baker to an award-winning singer-songwriter, to his current international career in Risk Management and Resilience, Pete has tried his hand (very successfully) at everything.

Having spent two decades in the country music scene, in 2004 Pete was invited by the AFL to perform his award-winning original song "What are they marching for?" for 90,000 people at a sold-out MCG on Anzac Day. His talents do not stop with music, and for the past fifteen-plus years he has forged a successful international career in risk management and resilience. Pete is a Fellow of the Institute of Strategic Risk Management and a Certified Practising Risk Manager. Having been nominated for risk manager of the year, he was also a finalist in the Institute of Public Administration Awards for his contribution to public sector risk management.

Pete has held senior risk management roles across many Government organisations including the Department of Defence. He is considered an international expert in organisational and community resilience, representing Australia on international committees and writing global standards in order to support developing countries, the UN Office of Disaster Risk Reduction, and more than 80 developed countries in enhancing their resilience. Pete has toured the globe as an invited expert presenter at many international conferences, visiting countries including Singapore, Norway, the USA, the United Kingdom and Croatia.

As an internationally recognised expert in risk management, organisational resilience, and community resilience, Pete is currently leading an international team in writing a standard to support

organisations and Governments to formulate a resilience policy and design their resilience strategy. Pete has worked with several Government Departments, including the Department of Defence as the lead of their international quality assurance program, the Victorian State Government as risk advisor, and the insurer VMIA as the lead educator in risk management. He has also worked with local governments including Ballarat City Council and the City of Greater Geelong. In these roles, he has transformed their approach to risk management and embedded better decision-making processes based on effectively managing risk. He partnered with Federation University in 2013 and again in 2017 to undertake a world-first research study into organisational resilience and supports PhD student Imogen Stockton in achieving her Doctorate as part of these innovative studies.

Pete volunteers his time to the International Standards Organization (ISO) and Australian Standards in developing new standards for the global community in the resilience domain. He is considered in his industry as a strategic leader which has led to him being invited to speak at many conferences around Australia on a range of topics from risk management to resilience. Pete is definitely an inspiration to the Damascus College community.

Pete Gervasoni, Class of 1994

NEXT GEN EXHIBITION

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

The official opening of the 2023 Next Gen exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ballarat was cause to celebrate for two 2022 Damascus College graduates. Each year the Art Gallery of Ballarat presents this curated event to showcase art and design projects created by Year 12 students across the Central Highlands and South-Western regions.

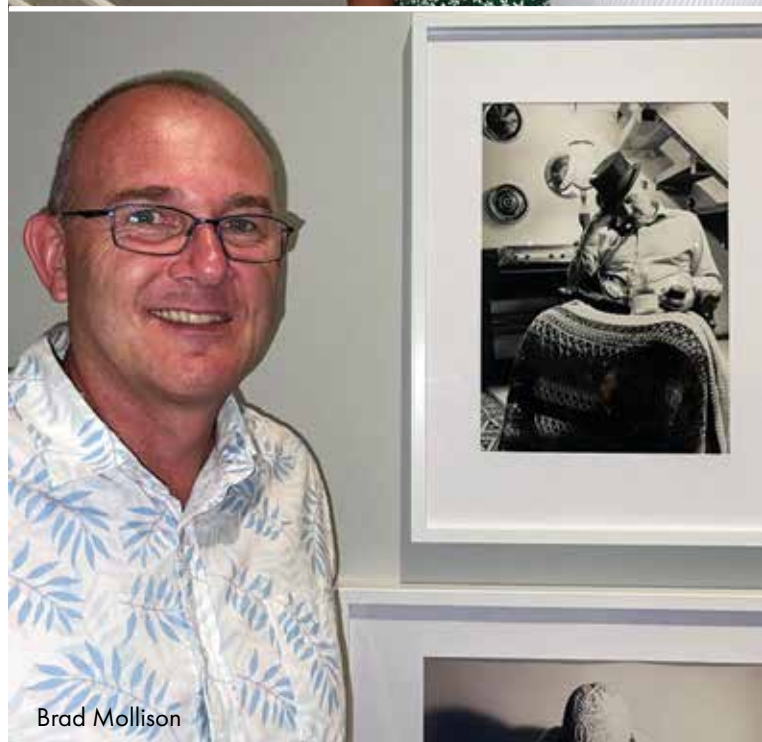
Damascus was well represented by Class of 2022 students Samantha Dechene and Finn Mauriks who were invited to exhibit artwork from their Year 12 Visual Communication Design, Studio Art photography and general Art folios.

Congratulations Samantha and Finn, we look forward to seeing your next artistic pursuits! Please follow this link to view more artwork from the 2022 Year 12 Visual Arts exhibition.

<https://www.damascus.vic.edu.au/2022-Visual-Arts-Virtual-Tour/>



Samantha Dechene and her mother Dayna Mollison



Brad Mollison



Finn Mauriks 'drypoint etching artwork 'Jandamarrah'



Finn Mauriks



Fraser Crumpler and Berenice Kerr RSM



Joshua Matheson



Study Score of 40+ Award Recipients

ACADEMIC ASSEMBLY

DAMASCUS EVENT

On Monday 20 February 2023, Damascus College welcomed back members of the Class of 2022 to celebrate their academic excellence at the annual Academic Assembly.

It was wonderful to return to a whole-school celebration format after several years of limited attendance. The hard work, dedication, and resilience of the Class of 2022 were witnessed by the entire student body who were hopefully inspired and challenged to Be Their Best.

2023 college Captains Sophie Busuttill and Xavier Byrne kicked off the event which was filled with inspirational and thought-provoking speakers. We were excited to welcome back 2022 VCE Dux Fraser Crumpler, as he addressed the audience with honesty and insight, sharing the challenges he faced in his quest for academic excellence. The audience also heard from 2022 VCE-VM Dux Joshua Matheson who spoke to the audience about reaching your goal by taking a different path.

The event was also a celebration of alumni success, with five past students, Yvonne Aitken, Andrew Ooi, Nicole Thornton, Dr Samantha Brown and Connor Prunty, recognised as Damascus College Shining Lights.

Congratulations to all award recipients. Following are the award recipients recognised and celebrated.

2022 VCE UNIT 3 & 4 STUDY SCORE OF 40+ AWARD

Name	Year	Subject	Score
Mikayla Montgomery	12	Drama	41
Fraser Crumpler	12	English Language	43.22*
Gemma O'Donnell	11	Health and Human Development	42
Adele Lockhart	12	Legal Studies	41
Tristan Clonan	12	Literature	47.89*
Xavier Clonan	12	Literature	42.74*
Lucy Leviston	10	Further Mathematics	41
Kiahna McQuie	10	Further Mathematics	40
Zoe Newman	10	Further Mathematics	46
Taya Thiele	10	Further Mathematics	41
Lucas Wells	10	Further Mathematics	44
Harrison Welsh	12	Further Mathematics	40
Fraser Crumpler	12	Mathematical Methods	47.48*
Brayden Welsh	12	Physical Education	45
Fraser Crumpler	12	Physics	44.15*
Tristan Clonan	12	Product Design and Technology	45
Miranda Bunting	12	Psychology	40
Sophie Busuttil	11	Psychology	41
Daisy Simpson-Kerr	11	Psychology	42
Sinead Sugars	12	Visual Communication and Design	42
Emily Thomas	12	Visual Communication and Design	41
Fraser Crumpler	12	French	48.38*
Xavier Clonan	12	Mathematical Methods	42.42*
Megan O'Beirne	12	Mathematical Methods	42.42*
Harrison Welsh	12	Chemistry	40.88*
Fraser Crumpler	12	Specialist Mathematics	48.14*
Xavier Clonan	12	Specialist Mathematics	43.29*
Katelyn Barentsen	12	French	41.14*
Megan O'Beirne	12	Specialist Mathematics	40.97*

* Scaled study score

SPECIAL AWARDS

Name	Year	Award
Fraser Crumpler	12	2022 VCE Baccalaureate Award
Megan O'Beirne	12	2022 VCE Baccalaureate Award
Tiarna Parry	12	2022 VCE Baccalaureate Award
Brayden Welsh	12	2022 VCE Baccalaureate Award
Eloise Sheridan	12	2022 VET Achievement Award
Hannah Fratantaro	12	2022 VET Achievement Award
Samuel Blood	12	2022 VET Achievement Award
Joshua Matheson	12	2022 VCE-VM Dux
Mikayla Montgomery	12	Academic Honours Award
Megan O'Beirne	12	Academic Honours Award
Laura Lee	12	Academic Honours Award
Sinead Sugars	12	Academic Honours Award
Tristan Clonan	12	Academic Honours Award
Amy Wells	12	Academic Honours Award

Name	Year	Award	Score
Harrison Welsh	12	2022 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	90.7
Brayden Welsh	12	2022 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	91
Megan O'Beirne	12	2022 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	93.4
Tristan Clonan	12	2022 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	96.4
Xavier Clonan	12	2022 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	96.75
Fraser Crumpler	12	2022 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	99.3
Fraser Crumpler	12	2022 Damascus College Dux	99.3





SACRED HEART COLLEGE STAFF REUNION

ALUMNI STORY

After several unsuccessful attempts throughout the recent Covid waves, a reunion of former staff from Sacred Heart College, Ballarat East was eventually held on Saturday, December 3, 2022. Staff members who worked at the school from the mid-seventies through to the mid-nineties gathered in The Long Room at Oscars to reconnect, reminisce, and recapture some of the magic from their Sacred Heart days.

Marie Davey RSM, Sacred Heart's final principal, led the group in a remembrance activity that named key people, places, cultural events and even some of the trends in education from the time.

Memories were tested and old rivalries reignited with the running of a House Quiz which was traditionally held on the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Contestants wrestled with such complex questions as:

What total would you get if you added the room numbers of the 4 portable classrooms in the northwest corner of the college property?

Answer: $16+17+18+19=70$

The McAuley team of Le'Anne Smith, Kerry Sidaway, Chris Grant, and Sallie Burke triumphed to take the Sr Therese Power Shield for 2022.

We were pleased to have Joan Matthews, wife of Ron Matthews, and Angela Reilly, sister of Jo Reilly, join us for the evening.

Our thoughts were very much with those who were not able to attend the evening through illness, infirmity, carer responsibilities, or the tyranny of distance. They were fondly remembered by their colleagues.

Danny Moore, SHC staff member 1989-1994.

PICTURED ABOVE

Standing: Angela Reilly, Kerry Sidaway, Jo O'Mara, Kathy Wood (Penfold), Karen Simpkin, Sallie Burke, Sharyn Canny (Hammond), Dianne Cody, Trish Fitzsimmons, Barbara Madden, Mary FitzGerald, Le'Anne Smith, Rita Cousens, Dave Seiter

Sitting: Margaret Lavery, Marie Davey, Janet Dellar (Thistleton), Brendan Bawden, Helen Goode, Liz Dowling, Marina Kaam, Marie Murnane, Joan Matthews, Marilyn Seiter

Kneeling: Bronwyn Strachan, Danny Moore





2023 SWIMMING CARNIVAL

DAMASCUS EVENT





St Paul's Form IV 1968

BLAST FROM THE PAST

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Our 'Blast from the Past' series presents snapshots of the history of Damascus College and its foundation colleges, Sacred Heart College, St Paul's Technical College and St Martin's in the Pines, reminding us of the small moments in our past that may be special to some, long forgotten by others, but safely stored away in our archives.

The St Paul's Technical College annual publication, 'The Duke', was a student written, illustrated and edited magazine that would present the year that was with pride and humour.

In 1968 staff and students of St Paul's were asked one of life's most important questions – What is Happiness? The answers appeared in the 1968 edition of the 'The Duke' and varied from the simple to the profound. They are a reminder to find joy in small pleasures.

- 'Not being unhappy' – Br Herrick, Principal
- 'Unedited editorials' – Ennio Tocchet, Form IV, Editor
- 'Different things for different people' – Br Kelly, Science

- 'School and mathematics' – Br Reilly, Metalwork
- 'A perfectly quiet classroom' – Meg Barry, Teacher of English
- 'Debates, socials, but on the other hand, girls and more girls' – Antonio Marnica, Form IV
- 'A full stomach' – Adrian Birch, Form IV
- 'Leading a happy life' – Vladimir Perovich, Form IV
- 'Girls, more or less, mostly more' – Peter Howren, Form IV
- 'Doing what you like' – Stephen Seagrave, Form III
- 'A clear conscience and freedom of mind' – Chris Hutchinson, Form III
- 'A bowl of cornflakes' – Wayne Porter, Form III
- 'Everything...' – Daryl Hurst, Form III

“THE DUKE”



St Paul's Technical College annual publication 'The Duke'

Not many students are able to say they have worked with NASA, but that is exactly what happened for a group of Damascus College students in 2001.

Under the guidance of teacher Brendan Bawden, a small group of students participated in Project Starshine.

Sponsored by the United States Naval Research Laboratory in conjunction with NASA, Project Starshine involved the launch of a series of satellites into orbit which would then to be tracked by students all over the world.

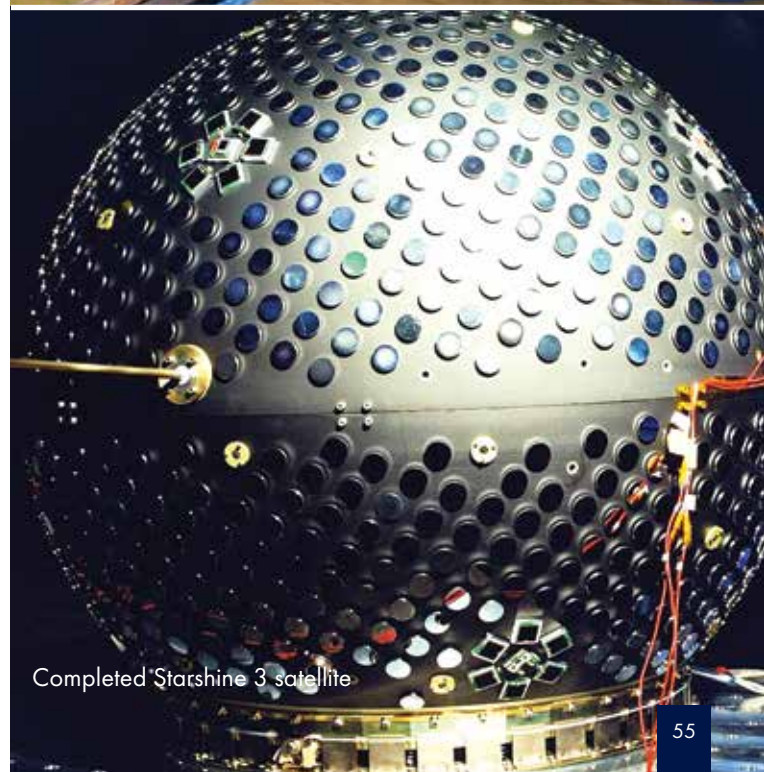
The Damascus students joined 40,000 others from over 1,000 schools worldwide in grinding and polishing 1500 mirrors which were then placed on the surface of the Starshine 3 satellite. The 91 kg satellite was then launched from Alaska and, once in orbit, it journeyed more than 7000 times around the earth.

During Starshine 3's orbit, students were able to use the data received from the satellite to measure the density of the earth's atmosphere. Starshine 3 eventually burned up on re-entry into the earth's atmosphere in January 2003, having given students from around the world, including those at Damascus College, a taste of life as NASA scientists.

Blast from the Past would love to hear from you! If you have a special school memory you would like us to revisit, let us know at archives@damascus.vic.edu.au.



Students polishing mirrors 2001



Completed Starshine 3 satellite



Sally Bolson



Ann Bawden



Simon Carroll



Matthew Edwards



Aleceia Gason

FAREWELLS & RETIREMENTS

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

FAREWELLS...

We wish the following staff members well on their new adventures...

- Simon Carroll
- Matthew Edwards
- Aleceia Gason
- Deborah Glasson
- Rob Jans
- Tina Munro
- Min Myers
- Catherine Newman
- Barbara Perry

...and we thank them for their service to the Damascus College Community

RETIREMENTS...

Sally Balson

Sally was a strong contributor and a valuable member of the Damascus College Community. During her time at Damascus Sally taught predominately HPE and English. She also held the role of TA Coordinator and was a Xavier TA advisor. Sally instigated and implemented the Equestrian program at Damascus and students sought Sally out for advice and to borrow equipment from Sally for

their personal use. Sally was always willing to give her time to assist students with their equestrian pursuits. She played a major role in developing and implementing the VETis Equestrian Program.

Sally focuses on the importance of relationships both with students and colleagues. She was always willing to spend time with students assisting them with both any academic and personal concerns they may have been having.

Sally has a passion for animals and at her home she cares for many including dogs, horses and sheep. Her caring and compassionate nature will be missed by staff and students of the Damascus College Community and we wish her well in retirement.

Ann Bawden

Ann joined the Damascus staff in 1999 after devoting her time to raising and nurturing her six children. Over her years at Damascus she held many roles but those of Xavier 5 TA and Xavier House Leader for nine years were positions that brought her immense satisfaction and joy. Ann's kindness, wisdom and compassion had a wonderful impact on the college community, both for students and staff.

A five-time Indonesian trip veteran, Ann would always throw herself into any opportunity to ensure Damascus students could experience life-changing opportunities. She was the driving force behind the



Debra Glasson



Gayle Haintz



Tony Haintz



Robert Jans



Tina Munro



Min Myers



Catherine Newman



Barbara Perry



Peter Sartori



Sharen Wolfe

establishment of the Awards and Achievement evening to recognise the endeavours and achievements of the Damascus community, a reflection on Ann’s love of witnessing the successes of others.

As a key member of the college Staff Association, Ann would go out of her way to make all staff feel appreciated and supported and was the organiser of many a social gathering as well as the advocate for staff when they needed it. Ann’s calm, caring manner will be greatly missed but we wish her every happiness in her retirement.

Gayle Haintz

Gayle Haintz worked as an LSO at Damascus College for 17 years, working predominantly with students in years 11 and 12 VCAL (now known as VCE VM). Her strength in building relationships with students saw them flourish, and long after students had left school they would keep in touch with Gayle to let her know what they were doing both for work and socially. Gayle was a much-valued member of the Staff Association. Her organisational and catering skills saw that the staffroom pantry was well stocked and morning teas were attractively presented.

Gayle is looking forward to her retirement and will be busy with family and friends and following the Tigers. Spending some time travelling with Tony is also on the agenda.

Tony Haintz

Tony has been a long-serving staff member of Damascus having started at St Martins in the Pines at the start of 1990. He has been an integral part of the formation of Damascus College and has devoted his career at Damascus to strengthening and developing the Catholic Identity of the college. His work has brought thousands of students into an encounter with the Catholic Church and the person of Jesus within the context of what it might mean to be a Christian in the world today.

Tony has held various leadership roles throughout the years, particularly in the areas of Religious Education, Catholic Identity and Social Justice. It is apparent that Tony demonstrates a deep affection for the college and its Mercy tradition. One of his great legacies is the work that he has done in developing a relationship with the community of Ainaro in Timor Leste and with our sister school Santa Maria. This has culminated in nine student immersion visits to Timor Leste and a plethora of fundraising activities - which have allowed students to experience the joy and value of working towards the

goal of helping others, and to experience a deep sense of personal connection to their peers in another country.

Tony has demonstrated an amazing capacity for work, and he has approached all he does with an unwavering desire to make the world a better place for all, but especially for those who have participated in the life of Damascus College.

Peter Sartori

For more than 30 years Peter has been a valued member of the Damascus College community, having begun his time here at St Martin’s in the Pines. Peter has worn many hats over the years, teaching Chemistry, Physics, Science, IT, Maths and RE. His various leadership roles have included Timetabler, Daily Organiser, VCE Coordinator, Web Manager, and Database Manager.

A wonderful mentor to many staff and students, and a valued friend to his colleagues, Peter’s passion for teaching was evident in the positive relationships he was able to build with his students throughout his years. We wish Peter a long and joyful retirement, and hope he enjoys the time he can now spend with his beautiful family.

Sharen Wolfe

Congratulations to the wonderful contribution that Sharen Wolfe has made to the Arts program and the teaching and learning culture of Damascus College. Over the last 32 years, Sharen has nurtured thousands of students in her time as a professional, passionate, and dedicated Art teacher.

Teaching Art, where students may express their vulnerabilities and insecurities in a creative format, comes with a huge amount of responsibility. It requires a teacher who is nonjudgmental and has the unconditional trust of students, and Sharen has been able to provide this for the students under her care. Sharen has also been an advocate for raising the profile of teachers in the community, and her own level of professionalism has been reflective of this. She is incredibly diligent in providing constructive feedback to students whether that be in school reports, assessment tasks or in the progress of student work.

Sharen should feel incredibly proud of what she has achieved as an educator and in doing so shaping the lives of the many students who have been under her care. We wish her all the best for a safe, healthy, happy, and very long retirement.



RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

On Tuesday 28 March, as part of the next step in the Damascus College Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), the college community gathered together to witness the raising of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags alongside the Australian Flag for the first time on this campus.

A RAP is a framework that outlines an organisation's commitment to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, something the college has been working towards for some time in consultation with the local Indigenous community. A flag raising ceremony is a symbolic event that is often included in a RAP to offer recognition and respect for traditional landowners and their cultures, and to inspire a dialogue around reconciliation.

During the ceremony, Andrew Robertson, Assistant Principal – Student Wellbeing, addressed the school community on the significance of the day, before passing the flags over to the

Indigenous members of the college RAP Committee. A smoking ceremony, a traditional ritual to cleanse the area, then took place as the flags were raised. The moving ceremony held on the Damascus lawn was borne out of the college RAP, and as these new flags fly in the breeze, they will welcome every visitor to this important site, giving instant recognition to the history of the land and the importance of country. The new flags provide an opportunity for the college to publicly acknowledge the importance of reconciliation and the need to work towards a more inclusive and diverse society.

The college stands on the sacred land of the original inhabitants, the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation, who cared for and nurtured it across many millennia. It is not difficult to imagine the hurt and chaos caused when Europeans arrived, and the college encourages all to walk gently and sensitively on this beautiful site.



SUBMISSIONS NOW OPEN

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

2024 ALUMNI ART PRIZE

**This is your chance
to earn \$2000 for a piece of
your artwork**

The Art Prize is open to Damascus College Alumni, including past students or staff from Damascus College, Sacred Heart College, St Paul's Technical College and St Martin's in the Pines.

Your artwork could be a drawing, sketch, painting, photograph, sculpture, textile, glasswork, lithograph, screen printing, or even an etching, but must explore the college motto 'To Live By the Light of Christ'.

Application deadline: 4pm Monday 31 July, 2023

Details and application form
damascus.vic.edu.au



damascus.vic.edu.au