

# 2013

## Annual School Performance Report



**Mountain District**  
Christian School





# Mountain District Christian School



## **MDCS VISION STATEMENT**

It is the vision of the MDCS Association to provide by God's grace, a flourishing Prep to Year 12 school community where Christ centred education is paramount.

## **MDCS MISSION STATEMENT**

The MDCS Association serves the families and the Christian Community of our district who desire a Christ centred education.

We do this by providing quality biblically-directed teaching and learning in a nurturing environment.

Such education seeks to develop the God given gifts of each child and, together with parents and the church, equip the child for a life of service in God's world.

## ***Introduction***

Mountain District Christian School is a P-12 non-denominational independent school located in the picturesque Dandenong Ranges east of Melbourne. Established by Christian parents over thirty years, Mountain District Christian School has at its heart a desire to partner with parents in educating young people in values consistent with its biblical foundations. Mountain District Christian School is a welcoming school that seeks to nurture students in a supportive learning environment. Set on seventeen acres of bushland, Mountain District Christian is blessed with attractive learning and play spaces.

## ***Principal's Message***

The opening of the 25 year time capsule was a significant highlight of the 2013 year. It was delightful to stroll down memory lane with so many others as we explored the contents entered 25 years ago and were able to reflect on God's faithfulness in His school. Past newsletters, photos, equipment, budgets, and even clothing were some of these items. However, the most interesting part of the weekend celebrations was seeing the students, who had placed personal letters in the capsule, return to open, muse and read aloud to those who had gathered for the opening. It was wonderful for the MDCS community to reconnect with its past students and families and in particular to have a personal message from Mr. David Paech – a former Principal. I wonder what will have changed by 2038 when we open the time capsule buried in 2013?

In 2013, we were able to welcome a number of new staff including our new Head of Secondary, Mr. Stephen Duke, Mrs. Hannah Denny to the position of music teacher, Mrs. Evonne Diprose as year 7 class teacher, Mr. Ken McDowell as grade 1 and 2 teacher, Miss Erin Bennett as grade 3 and 4 teacher and Mrs. Melissa Ashton to the Community relations role.

In the midst of new staff we also said goodbye

to Mr. Christopher Prior who had served MDCS for 14 years, 3 of those as teacher, 5 as Deputy Principal and 6 as Principal. Chris was pivotal in setting up VCE at MDCS and the school saw significant growth in his time. Another long term employee who had been at the school for a number of years was Mrs. Ineke de Graaf who did much to develop the music program at MDCS, including the soirees that are now held each year. In addition was also Mrs. Jenny Scott who began her teaching career at MDCS in 1999 and who's passion for science, art and biology inspired many and brought rise to the MDCS nature trail still used today by those studying Environmental Science. Interestingly it was delightful to see her hand on the baton of science to her former student Kristy Jackel. These three teachers have left a lasting legacy and will be missed.

2013 also saw the arrival of chickens as part of the primary school farm. This primary school program engaged all of the primary school students being involved in the farming of worms through to the composting of scraps and the selling of the eggs.

The fantastic Arts program at MDCS was able to be further enhanced with the completion of the Art room extension specifically for the VCE Studio Arts students. We are very grateful to the Australian Government for the provision of just under \$100,000 to assist in the development of this room enabling our VCE students to have a dedicated space.

The year 9 class also wowed us with another performance written by our own extremely talented Mr. Jason Beer. This is fast becoming a very much looked forward to event for the year 9 class.

Finally, we are grateful to God for the way he protects and provides for MDCS. Can I encourage you strongly to continue to pray for MDCS as we seek to provide a Christian Education to all those who desire it.

Jason Riding



## ***From the Board President***

It's been a big year! We farewelled Mr Chris Prior at the end of 2013, after 6 years as Principal and welcomed Mr Jason Riding to the role of Principal in 2014. This change vacated the position of Deputy Principal to which Mrs Janita Bratton enthusiastically accepted.

As we reflect on 2013 we are thankful for the strong Christ-centred foundation that has been established, the ongoing health of the school, the growth, and the increasingly positive financial standing. As 2014 progresses we are excited about the future of the school, the passion, drive and commitment displayed by the new leadership team, and the development of a new master plan for the reinvigoration of the site and the potential for new infrastructure.

Our new management executives have transitioned well into their new roles and, as a leadership team, they are working dynamically and cohesively together. It is wonderful to witness the collegiality of the teaching staff at this school, and the keen dedication of the specialist, maintenance and pastoral staff. Our administration team at the front of house never cease to amaze me with their industriousness, helpfulness and smiles! God is gracious and may He empower and strengthen you all to advance His good work here at Mountain District

Christian School.

The management and staff have been investing considerable time and effort into curriculum development and professional development. This year they have commenced a mentoring program for staff new to the school to assist with their transition to MDCS. Along with this, all staff are currently engaged in a peer-to-peer accountability and appraisal process. It's great to hear feedback that these initiatives are bearing much fruit.

Many thanks to the Board who were diligent in their roles over the year, and of particular note - their commitment and faithfulness to the task of processing all the applications for the position of Principal and everything that went along with that!

As a Board we have been bringing the Governance Policies into a new format – one that brings the End Statements (our desired outcomes) and Executive Limitations for each category onto one page and introducing the addition of a Strategic Planning column. The categories have been condensed to 6 key areas encompassing the whole of school life: Community, Teaching & Learning, Students, Staff, Resources and Governance. This will make for a far easier to reference document, with the addition of specific targets and planned outcomes.



## ***From the Board President (cont.)***

Hamish Mitchell and Iain Chaney have both come to the end of their terms on the Board at this AGM. After 9 years of service, their commitment to the school and association has been exemplary. We have valued their character and faithfulness, and the experience and expertise that they have brought into service on the Board. We extend our congratulations on such a milestone and extend our sincere thanks for all the time and effort they have devoted to the school. Their presence will be missed. We are pleased that Iain intends to continue to assist in the short term on a committee level.



Jill Knoll stepped down in February to assist with commitments to aged family care. In previous years, Jill was secretary to the Board. We are filled with gratitude for her time of service and devotion to the Board and its administration – in particular the ongoing upkeep of the Governance Policy document and her role on the Ranges TEC committee. Marianne Biersteker stepped seamlessly into Jill's role in 2013 with her experience in business and secretarial roles, and for that we are very thankful.

We welcomed Courtney Clowes back to the Board team after a year of living abroad with his family. Great to have you back Courtney!

We were also blessed to have Malcolm Turner and Helen Wittmann appointed to the Board since the last AGM. We commend them to you for election.

We also take this opportunity to encourage each association member to consider whether you would like to be a part of the Board of Directors, or whether you may like to assist at a sub-committee level, in an advisory capacity to the Board. This is one of the many satisfying and rewarding ways to be involved and contribute to the life of our school.

Finally, thank you to all our devoted members for being the heart of the school and making it a flourishing community. We appreciate the gift of your time and service in all manner of areas, your support of parents and staff, for setting an example to the students and nurturing your children in the knowledge of the Lord. It is truly wonderful to see you working together in unity!

Yours in Christ

**Merryn Van Bremen**  
Board Chair





## ***From the Treasurer***

The 2013 audited financials show that we made a substantial \$195,737 surplus..... some \$45,000 ahead of what was budgeted. This is a wonderful result and now allows some additional funds to be spent around the school.



We received higher income from Government grants, with slightly reduced income from fees

when comparing these to budget. Overall, fees were still up, and even though our costs were also up slightly, we improved on the whole, recording the \$195,737 surplus (vs a loss of \$78,374 last year).

In previous years, we'd been comparing the profit BEFORE depreciation was taken into account and if this was the case the surplus would be \$433,120 (vs \$135,923). This is a \$297,197 turnaround which is wonderful.

Achieving surpluses means that the finances of the school are underpinned and allows capital works to proceed around the school

This surplus was used around the schools on building and IT upgrades and to further reduce debt (to keep us on a secure footing should interest rates increase)

We have a wonderful school here, with small class sizes and very dedicated teachers and staff. Praise the Lord.

Yours sincerely,

**Iain Chaney**  
Treasurer



# Mountain District Parent Controlled Christian School Association

ACN: 005 633 670

## Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2013

	Note	2013 \$	2012 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	33,024	18,958
Trade and other receivables	6	75,885	57,106
Inventories	7	15,005	8,530
Other assets	8	42,511	44,559
<b>Total current assets</b>		<u>166,425</u>	<u>129,153</u>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	9	5,011,810	5,010,220
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<u>5,011,810</u>	<u>5,010,220</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<u><u>5,178,235</u></u>	<u><u>5,139,373</u></u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	10	211,427	189,673
Finance lease obligation	11	139,710	153,940
Short-term provisions	12	393,662	386,514
Other liabilities	13	508,583	503,437
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<u>1,253,382</u>	<u>1,233,564</u>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Parents' deposits	10	63,800	66,700
Finance lease obligation	11	726,838	931,535
Long-term provisions	12	48,089	17,185
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<u>838,727</u>	<u>1,015,420</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<u><u>2,092,109</u></u>	<u><u>2,248,984</u></u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u><u>3,086,126</u></u>	<u><u>2,890,389</u></u>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Reserves		662,064	662,064
Accumulated surpluses		<u>2,424,062</u>	<u>2,228,325</u>
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<u><u>3,086,126</u></u>	<u><u>2,890,389</u></u>



**Mountain District Parent Controlled Christian School Association**  
**ACN: 005 633 670**

**Statement of Comprehensive Income**  
**For the Year Ended 31 December 2013**

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>3,956,152</b>	<b>3,453,158</b>
Employee Benefits Expense	(2,790,763)	(2,581,026)
Finance Cost	(72,991)	(87,006)
Tuition Expense	(184,720)	(206,735)
Administration Expenses	(65,514)	(52,614)
Bad and Doubtful Debts	(12,471)	(23,261)
Other Expenses	<u>(396,573)</u>	<u>(366,593)</u>
<b>Surplus for the year not including depreciation</b>	<b><u>433,120</u></b>	<b><u>135,923</u></b>
<hr/>		
Less Depreciation of Fixed Assets	(237,383)	(214,297)
<b>Surplus(deficit) for the year</b>	<b><u>195,737</u></b>	<b><u>(78,374)</u></b>



## ***MDCS Staff***

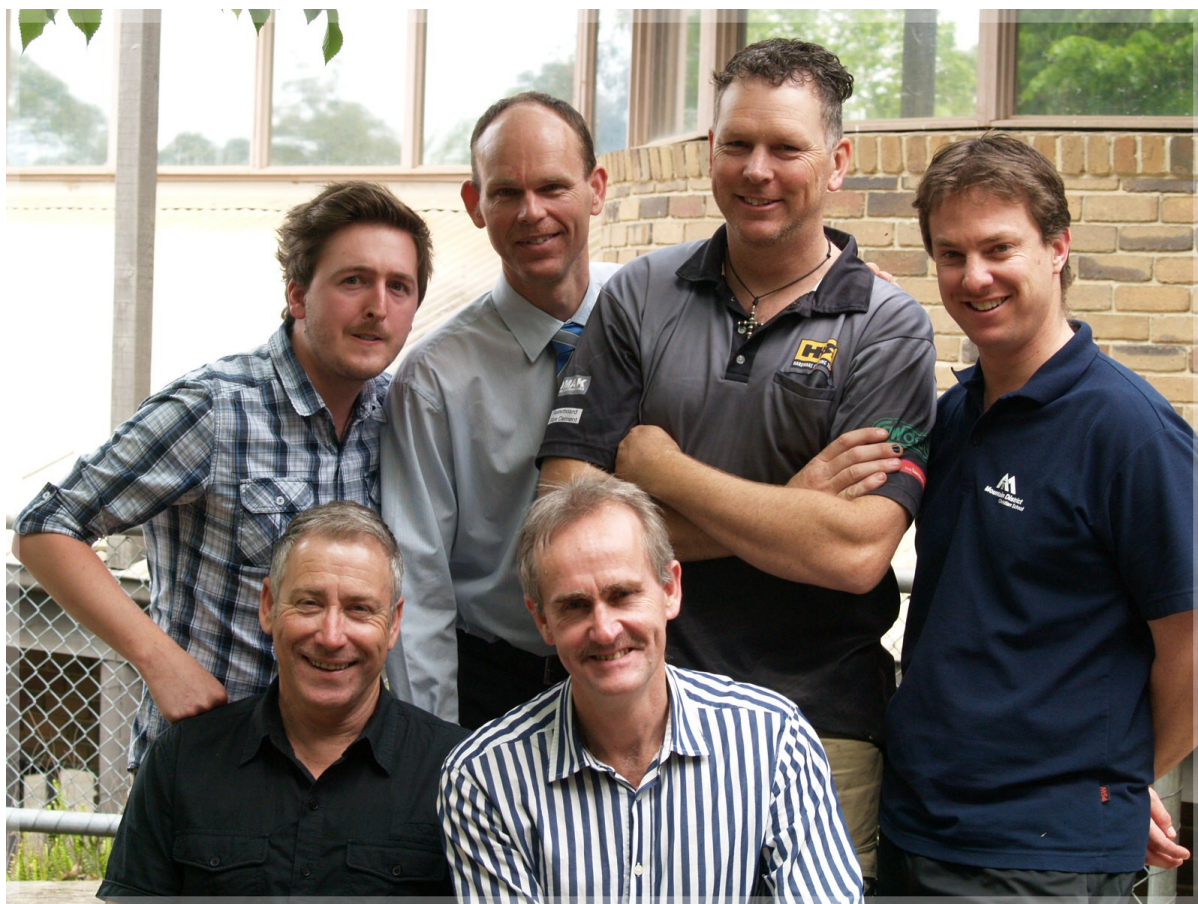
Mountain District Christian School employs over forty people. In addition to teaching staff there are a number of people who work behind the scenes to support the school including educational support staff, maintenance and cleaning staff, bus staff, a chaplain, and administration team members. In 2013 we said farewell to three long serving and well respected staff members that had served at MDCS. Mrs. Ineke de Graaf who fulfilled a number of roles but most recently as music teacher, Mrs. Jenny Scott whose passion for science inspired many students and finally Mr. Christopher Prior who began as a classroom teacher and finished his time at MDCS as Principal. In his time he led a number of new initiatives including the implementation of VCE, he had a significant role in the realisation (in partnership with Mount Evelyn Christian School and Donvale Christian College) of Ranges TEC. Each of these staff members leaves a lasting legacy on the 'personality' of MDCS and each will be missed. We wish them well in their next adventure.

## ***Teaching Staff***

Mountain District Christian School has a talented teaching team with a range of teaching experiences and qualifications. In 2013 we welcomed 5 new teachers to MDCS. Mrs. Ineke de Graaf took a year of leave to study. In her place we welcomed Mrs. Hannah Denny and Mrs. Louise Beare to share her teaching load for the interim. We also welcomed Miss Erin Bennett to the Primary teaching team and Mrs. Evonne Diprose to the secondary team. At the beginning of May, Mrs. Nissa Heading took maternity leave and Mr. Ken McDowell took her duties for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Stephen Duke began as our new Head of Secondary. He brought a wealth of experience from his time teaching at Covenant Christian College in Geelong and his time spent managing the Que Baptist Residence, a residence for tertiary students, where he also fulfilled role of mentor to the students.

There are currently no employees of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent.



### **MDCS Teachers and Qualifications:**

Miss S. Baensch	BTeach, BSc.
Mrs. L. Beare	GradCertMusic, CertEd
Mr. J. Beer	BA(Hons), GradDipEd
Mrs. A. Beever	BEd(Hons)
Miss E. Bennett	BEd(Prim)
Mrs. J. Bratton	DipTeach, GradDipEd
Mrs. L. Burke	Dip Teach
Mrs. A Callow	BPhys. Ed.
Mrs. A. Chaney (Conversion)	DipTeach, BEd
Mrs. H. Denny	BMusic, BEd
Mrs. E. Diprose	BA, BTeach
Mr. S. Duke	BEd(PE), GradCert (Theology)
Mrs. E. Fensham	BA, GradDipEd
Mrs. G. Godman	BA, BTeach

Ms. S. Hanscamp	BA, DipEd, MEd
Mr. B. Heckathorn	BEd
Mrs. R. Holland	BEarlyChildhood Ed
Mrs. N. Heading	BA, DipEd
Mrs. L. Knight	BTeach, GradDip Sp. Ed, GradDip Grief Counselling
Mrs. T. Maguire	BA, DipEd
Mr. T. Nyhouse	Cert III Carpentry & Joinery, Cert IV WPT&A
Mr. C. Prior	BAgrSc, BMin, GradCertRE, GradDipEd, MA (Theol), MEd
Mr. J. Riding	BEd, GradDipChrEd
Miss B. Schout	BExSc, DipEd
Mrs. D. Scott	BA, DipEd, GradDip MathsEd
Mrs. J. Scott	BSc, GradDipEd
Mrs. C. Wyngaard	BEd, GradDipEd, MEd





## ***Teacher Professional Development***

It is a key goal of MDCS to build the capacity of the teaching team to deliver quality educational programs from a Christian perspective. While below there is an outline of some of the professional development activities undertaken, building capacity involves growing culture, establishing and providing time for staff to work in teams, as well as providing mechanisms for real growth through appraisal and professional development programs. A key component of our efforts to grow staff in their understanding of development teaching content and developing teaching practice from a Christian

Christian Education National conference. The venue was Donvale Christian College. Approximately 600 staff from CEN schools from Victoria gathered to participate in various workshops or study with The Institute.

Approximately \$1000 per teacher was spent on professional development programs in 2013. These included courses in health, well-being and safety such as first aid and anaphylaxis training. Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) provided seminars and training programs for our teaching staff. These included programs in literacy and numeracy, the use of Information and Computer Technologies in learning, and classroom management.



perspective includes our participation in Masters studies with the National Institute of Christian Education (The Institute). The Institute is the training arm of our national Christian schooling body, Christian Education National. As a condition of employment at MDCS, teaching staff are required to study with the National Institute, completing two units towards their Masters of Education. In 2013, 6 staff undertook study with the Institute. All teaching staff attended the biannual Victorian

Teachers of MDCS also are members of a number of professional groups such as the Christian Educators Professional Association, and subject based associations. These associations hold conferences and workshops in subject areas such as English, Biology, Indonesian, Physical Education, and Psychology. These are attended by MDCS staff.

## Key Student Outcomes

It is a requirement of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.) that we maintain an Attendance Register. Children between the age of six and seventeen are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are undertaking approved home tuition or correspondence education through the Distance Education Centre. Mountain District Christian School requires parents to inform the school when their children are absent from school. Non-attendance is recorded on school reports each semester. Repeated non-attendance can have a detrimental influence on a child's educational outcomes. In circumstances of regular non-attendance the school will look to establish meetings with parents to assist them with any issues that may be attendance related. In 2013 student attendance was 93%.



As part of teaching and learning teachers collect 'data'. This data is often very rich and can include classroom observations, work samples, assignment and test results, and standardized assessments. NAPLAN is one of the standardized assessments used by schools within Australia to inform student learning. At MDCS other standardized tests used include the South

Australian Spelling Test and a number of assessment tools created by the Australian Council for Educational Research. We do recognize that standardized testing can have limitations and should not be considered in isolation from other available information on student

learning. It is important, however, that data be used wisely to assist teachers, parents and students to establish good work programs within a safe environment and thus facilitate learning. Below are the NAPLAN results from 2013. Please note the small sample sizes.

### MDCS Students achieving National Benchmarks

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
<b>Year 3</b>					
Total number of students in year	14	14	14	14	14
Number present for test	13	13	14	14	13
% meeting national benchmarks	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Year 5</b>					
Total number of students in year	20	20	20	20	20
Number present for test	20	20	20	20	20
% meeting national benchmarks	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Year 7</b>					
Total number of students in year	26	26	26	26	26
Number present for test	25	24	26	26	26
% meeting national benchmarks	96	100	96	96	100
<b>Year 9</b>					
Total number of students in year	26	26	26	26	26
Number present for test	25	26	26	26	26
% meeting national benchmarks	100	85	88	88	100



## Senior Secondary Outcomes

The Year 12 class of 2013 was one of the largest in the history of VCE at MDCS. In all, twenty students completed their VCE. The students participated in a variety of subjects. These included Biology, Chemistry, Dutch (Victorian School of Languages), English, Further Mathematics, Health and Human Development, History, Indonesian (Victorian School of Languages), Mathematical Methods, Physical Education, Physics (Distance Education Centre of Victoria), Psychology, Specialist Mathematics (Distance Education Centre of Victoria), Studio Art and Theatre Studies.

At the conclusion of the year there was much to celebrate. Some students achieved well above their expectations. 25% of the cohort achieved an ATAR above 80; 10% above 90. The average ATAR score was 67.03. The median VCE Unit Study Score was 30 with just over 5% of students achieving study scores over 40.

It was pleasing to note that all students that applied for tertiary courses were offered a



first round preference. Those students that did not apply through the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) have either applied through other mechanisms such as direct entry through the development and presentation of a portfolio, have begun an apprenticeship or deferred their university course until 2015.



## Satisfaction Surveys

We desire for MDCS to be a healthy school where feedback is given by both individuals and groups to assist the school as a whole to fulfill its vision and mission. Student learning is enhanced by a strong connection between home and school and a safe and supportive school environment. Each year we survey members of the school community and groups in order to look to improve facets of our operation.

Respondents to parent and student feedback were overwhelming positive to the school. A comment from one of our Year 12 parents stated,

"It's been a great journey with very caring staff".

However, it was noted that it would be beneficial to have a greater level of careers advice given and it would be beneficial to have more regular communication regarding the progress of their child.

Staff were surveyed, amongst other things, on the effective use of iPads in regards to staff organization and the impact they have had on their teaching practice. Staff overwhelmingly

responded in the affirmative that it has had a positive impact in both areas.

However, there was a stark contrast in how staff felt regarding their use of the iPad to its full potential.





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