

2014

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

2014 was a year of new beginnings. A number of long term staff had said farewell and a number of new staff entered to fill the *now vacant* roles. It was a strange beginning with no Mr. Prior there to welcome us all back. However, the work that he began continues through the work and development of a new Strategic Plan and Master Plan that began to be reworked in 2012.

The Soiree and the Year 9 production, capably coordinated by Mrs Denny and Mr Beer respectively, were once again great successes.

The Soiree was a wonderful celebration of the gifts and talents of the creative abilities of our school students. It was also a chance for our instrumental students to have the opportunity to perform after long hours of commitment to practice and instruction afforded them through the

instrumental program offered at MDCS. The talents and skills on display were a credit to the instrumental teachers that offer their services.

The Year 9 class production was a memorable event and a wonderful learning opportunity for all involved as the students began to understand some of the complexities of what is involved when performing a full stage production as opposed to just the acting performance.

We were also privileged to be able to be presented with the biannual Primary School Production titled, Acorn. The production involved all students from Prep to Grade 6 in the performance. It was a wonderful exploration of how God sees us, friendship and the role we have to play in being a good friend. The play was written by our very own Mrs Godman.

The students were given the opportunity of applying their learning to real life contexts through a meaningful camping program as an extension of the teaching and learning program. A range of camps such as the Year 8 Snowy Camp after studying the poem '*The Man from Snowy River*', the Grade 5/6 Camp to Sovereign Hill as they completed a unit on the Gold rush, through to the Year 9/10 Camp to Canberra were a selection of some from 2014.



Principal's Message (cont.)

A new initiative was launched in 2014, Stay and Play. This is a gathering for families with young children to come and develop relationships with the wider school community. It also allows younger children, not yet in school, to become familiar with school grounds and environment. Stay and Play also caters for families that don't have young children at home. It affords them the opportunity to develop relationships with other families in the school that they may not necessarily have the opportunity to meet. It is a wonderful time of nurturing community, capably run by Mrs Naara Foots.

The teaching staff began to work on developing a framework around what it means to be a student at MDCS. A number of existing documents were used as the platform for this, including the school's Mission and Vision statements, the Core Values and the '*MDCS Student Aims*' that lists what we hope students have achieved by the end of year 12. This was a wonderful exercise in reminding ourselves of why we do what we do and helping us to refocus beyond the impartation of knowledge to the developing of wisdom in our students for a life of service in God's kingdom.

In all of this what I most appreciate about all the learning that occurs at MDCS, and not just the learning but all activities, is the desire to see God honoured in all that is done, whether it be writing curriculum, honouring Him in the stewardship of our resources, how we determine policy and how we desire to see student's come to an understanding of how they can have a life of faithful and active service in God's world.

Jason Riding

From the Board President

The end of 2014 marks the first school year under the leadership of Jason Riding as principal. He has brought to the role his own unique flavour and style. It is wonderful to see the training and development strategies he has set in place for staff, and the initiatives and technologies he has introduced and implemented together with the leadership team. We are thankful for the firm foundation that preceded him and the continuation of strength of the leadership team under his new management. In 2013 a number of the staff were new, so 2014 has been a powerful,



consolidating year, and we have a great team of teaching and administration staff. We are truly blessed to have the calibre of staff that we do, and we are thankful for the excellent role models they all are to our children. Well done school team!

From the Board President (cont.)

We are excited that we can now move forward into a construction phase in line with the master plan. The first priority is the proposed addition of a new VCE and Performing Arts centre - to the area adjoining the lower car park - on the banks of the oval. With this first building project we are looking to provide general learning spaces, specialised and associated spaces for senior secondary classes, and a performing arts theatre space with associated dance, drama, music and music tuition rooms. With it built adjacent to the oval we expect it will foster and encourage greater use of that asset too. It will be the school's largest capital investment project and hence we are potentially looking to make it a three-stage build over six years so it will be a progressive undertaking. We have been in the schematic design and concept stage for the building in collaboration with Warren Van Damme of Van-Damme Designs. Recently we lodged the preliminary concept for town planning comment, and initial feedback has been positive. We applied to ISV (Independent Schools Victoria) for a partial grant for Stage One under the Victorian Independent Schools Block Grants Authority back in January, met with them onsite in March, representation is made by ISV at the end of May and allocation of funding is not known until later in the year. We do however intend to withdraw the application for a number of reasons, and reapply next January 2016. Application in the new year will afford us further time for



consultation and refinement of the design and documentation, give us opportunity to obtain planning approval, and see us into a stronger financial position, all working to give us a strong case for funding.

We have completed the new look Governance Policy Manual, which has been refining and building upon what has been handed down over the years. Major changes in formatting bring End Statements and Executive Limitations into alignment under 6 major areas of school life: Community, Teaching and Learning, Students, Staff, Resources and Governance.

The document now looks more deliberately at planning items to link policies with the strategic plan of the school. It is a dynamic document that we regularly and cyclically review, which means it keeps the school policies in front of our eyes, and our minds and hearts are constantly engaged with the vision, mission and outcomes desired for the Mountain District Christian School community.



From the Board President (cont.)

As a Board we continually strive to develop as a team and drive forward the vision of the school. Christian Education National provide a great program of ongoing professional development and opportunities for Board members to extend knowledge and skills in governance. In addition, the National Institute for Christian Education (NICE) runs the Certificate of Christian Education, a short course of less than a day, which I highly recommend to all association members as you look to support the school and understand the journey of your child's education as a part of God's greater story. You will be blessed and equipped as a result. We have an amazing support network in CEN, NICE and AACCS (Australian Association of Christian Schools). These organisations provide valuable encouragement and resources to our schools, foster ongoing discourse around Christian education and provide broader representation to other agencies and government. We are excited that our teaching staff and some Board members will be attending the upcoming ITEC15 conference (International Transforming Education Conference), which to our advantage, is in Melbourne this year. We look forward to the feedback as our teachers are equipped and motivated to lead our children with strength and passion in the knowledge and reverence of the Lordship of Christ in a world that challenges this.

Mt Evelyn Christian School has just released a beautifully designed and inspirational book entitled 'Transformational Education'. It is created to be an easy and enjoyable read, and encourages us to think Biblically about education. I commend it to you, the result of a highly considered and collaborative effort - to which many Christian leaders, educators and students have contributed.

I take this opportunity to thank all of our current serving Board members for their wonderful dedication and contribution to the school this year. We currently have seven

directors: Courtney Clowes, Jonathan Finlay, Helen Wittmann, Marianne Biersteker, Malcolm Turner, David Giles-Kaye and myself. I would like to see some more Association members inducted on to the board as we can have up to 12 members, and we have a couple of members nearing their 6th year term, so if you think a position on the Board (or finance committee) may interest you please come and have a chat with one of us. Also to our sub-committee members of Finance, Policy Document Review and Building & Infrastructure, we thank you sincerely.

Finally to the rest of our community and association, thank you for volunteering your time and the gift of your service to the school, which ultimately means to our children, to each other and to God. May we continue to build one another up and encourage all to aspire to excellence and strive to do our best for His glory.

Yours faithfully,
Merryn Van Bremen
Board Chair



From the Treasurer

In 2014 the school had another strong result with a surplus of \$184,004. This ensures we have enough money to repay a portion of our long-term debt, and has put us in a strong position to start the 2015 year with the double-stream of classes in Year 7. This has occurred despite a decrease in student numbers, and a conservative approach that we have taken in relation to depreciating our assets (so this expense is significantly higher than in previous



years). Our revenues have been static from both tuition fees and government grants, and we have seen savings in our finance, admin and property

maintenance costs and I believe this indicates sound stewardship by Jason Riding and Tony

Drummond and the board, and gives us confidence that the school is in a solid financial position. Two items to note in our balance sheet that look unusual are our low cash balance (\$6,551) and the high level of other liabilities (\$523,494). Our cash balance is low because we put all additional funds immediately against our bank borrowings to offset interest, but we are able to draw down on that immediately. Having the high level of other liabilities is actually pleasing, because this relates to the school fees paid in advance in December 2014 for the 2015 year. A large number of families are paying in advance which puts us in a strong cash flow position at the start of the calendar year and is a real benefit to the school. With low debt levels and a detailed capital expenditure plan in place to ensure constant improvements, I believe the school has been blessed both financially and by having disciplined stewards, allowing us to continue as a unique school providing Christ-centred education to families.

Courtney Clowes
Treasurer



Mountain District Parent Controlled Christian School Association

ACN: 005 633 670

Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2014

	2014	2013
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash & cash equivalents	6,551	33,024
Trade and other receivables	40,186	75,885
Inventories (uniforms)	9,686	15,005
Other Assets	46,386	42,511
Total Current Assets	<u>102,809</u>	<u>166,425</u>
Non-current assets		
Property, plant & equipment	5,059,717	5,011,810
Total non-current assets	<u>5,059,717</u>	<u>5,011,810</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>5,162,526</u>	<u>5,178,235</u>
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade & other payables	218,294	211,427
Financial Liabilities	195,091	139,710
Short-term provisions	376,605	393,662
Other liabilities	523,494	508,583
Total Current Liabilities	<u>1,313,484</u>	<u>1,253,382</u>
Non-current liabilities		
Parent's deposits	67,200	63,800
Financial Liabilities	465,497	726,838
Long Term Liabilities	46,215	48,089
Total non-current liabilities	<u>578,912</u>	<u>838,727</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>1,892,396</u>	<u>2,092,109</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>3,270,130</u>	<u>3,086,126</u>
EQUITY		
Reserves	662,064	662,064
Accumulated Surpluses	2,608,066	2,424,062
TOTAL EQUITY	<u>3,270,130</u>	<u>3,086,126</u>



Mountain District Parent Controlled Christian School Association

ACN: 005 633 670

Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 31 December 2014

	2014	2013
	\$	\$
Revenue	3,952,661	3,956,152
Employee Benefits Expense	(2,798,546)	(2,790,763)
Finance Cost	(52,856)	(72,991)
Tuition Expense	(189,643)	(184,720)
Administration Expenses	(59,949)	(65,514)
Bad and Doubtful Debts	(27,169)	(12,471)
Other Expenses	(337,636)	(396,573)
Surplus for the year not including depreciation	<u>486,862</u>	<u>433,120</u>
Less Depreciation of Fixed Assets	(302,858)	(237,383)
Surplus for the year	<u>184,004</u>	<u>195,737</u>



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.

Tracy Williams, a long serving member of the staff as a Teaching Assistant, finished her time with us at MDCS. Having completed her Teaching degree at the end of 2014, she has sought employment in a teaching capacity. We are very grateful for the contribution she made during her time, particularly in developing resources to support students with learning difficulties. It was wonderful to be able to welcome Mr. Phil Diprose to staff in a range of capacities, bus driver, maintenance and teaching assistant in the secondary school.

Teaching Staff

Mountain District Christian School has a talented teaching team with a range of teaching experiences and qualifications. In 2014 we welcomed new teachers to MDCS. Mrs Hannah Denny took on the role vacated by Mrs Ineke de Graaf in an ongoing role, Miss Kristy Jackel began as the Year 8 class teacher and Science teacher after completing a small role in 2013 and Mrs Leanne Dube replaced Mrs Allyssa Callow as she took maternity leave to welcome her first child.

It was a privilege to welcome Mrs Janita Bratton back to the leadership team in the role of Deputy Principal. Janita had previously held the role of Primary coordinator a number of years ago. Her wisdom, insight and drive make her a wonderful addition to the leadership team.

At the end of 2014, we were pleased to be able to provide Mrs Thea Maguire and Mrs Lia Burke the opportunity to take long service leave for 2015. Mrs Bronwyn Hamilton also was granted a year of leave. We look forward to their return in 2016.

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



MDCS Teachers and Qualifications:

Mr. J. Beer	BA(Hons), GradDipEd
Miss E. Bennett	BEd(Prim)
Mrs. J. Bratton	DipTeach, Grad DipEd
Mrs. L. Burke	Dip Teach
Mrs. A Callow	BPhys. Ed.
Mrs. A. Chaney	DipTeach, BEd (Conversion)
Mrs S. Conway	BTeach, BSc.
Mrs. H. Denny	BMusic, BEd
Mrs. E. Diprose	BA, BTeach
Mrs L. Dube	B.ED (PE),
Mr. S. Duke	BEd(PE), GradCert (Theology)
Mrs. E. Fensham	BA, GradDipEd
Mrs. G. Godman	BA, BTeach
Mrs B. Hamilton	B ExSc, DipEd

Ms. S. Hanscamp	BA, DipEd, MEd
Mrs. N. Heading	BA, DipEd
Mr. B. Heckathorn	BEd
Mrs. R. Holland	B Early Childhood Ed
Miss K. Jackel	B Env Sci, Grad Dip of Secondary Education
Mrs. L. Knight	BTeach, Grad Dip Sp. Ed, Grad Dip Grief Counselling
Mrs. T. Maguire	BA, DipEd
Mr. K. McDowell	BA (Biblical History) Grad Dip Ed
Mr. T. Nyhouse	Cert III Carpentry & Joinery, Cert IV WPT&A
Mr. J. Riding	BEd (PE), Grad Dip Chr Ed, Dip. Management
Mrs. D. Scott	BA, Dip Ed, Grad Dip Maths Ed
Mrs. C. Wyngaard	BEd, Grad Dip Ed, 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

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 2014, 5 staff undertook study with the Institute and 3 staff completed the Certificate of Christian Education as part of their induction program.

Approximately \$1100 per teacher was spent on professional development programs in 2014. These included courses in health, well-being



development programs. A key component of our efforts to grow staff in their understanding and development of teaching content and developing teaching practice from a Christian 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.

and safety such as first aid and anaphylaxis training. Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) also 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. Senior Secondary staff also participated in a range of professional learning activities specific to the subjects they deliver at the VCE level.

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 2014 student attendance was 92.6%.



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, TORCH and a number of assessment tools created by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). 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 2014. Please note the small sample sizes.

MDCS Students achieving National Benchmarks:

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Numeracy	Grammar
Year 3					
Total number of students in year	22	22	22	22	22
Number present for test	22	21	21	20	21
% meeting national benchmarks	91	100	100	95	100
Year 5					
Total number of students in year	20	20	20	20	20
Number present for test	20	20	20	20	20
% meeting national benchmarks	100	95	90	100	100
Year 7					
Total number of students in year	22	22	22	22	22
Number present for test	22	22	22	21	21
% meeting national benchmarks	100	95	95	95	100
Year 9					
Total number of students in year	26	26	26	26	26
Number present for test	24	25	25	25	25
% meeting national benchmarks	100	88	96	96	96

Senior Secondary Outcomes

In 2014 twenty nine students undertook a Unit 3 & 4 sequence of study towards their Victorian Certificate of Education. In all, sixteen students completed Year 12 at MDCS. 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, Mathematical Methods, Physical Education, Physics (Distance Education Centre of Victoria), Psychology, Specialist Mathematics (Distance Education Centre of Victoria), Studio Art, Outdoor and Environmental Studies, Literature and Drama.

It was pleasing to note that all students that completed Year 12 achieved their VCE. The students



completing a Unit 3 & 4 study sequence achieved some excellent results.

7.1% of students achieved

a study score over 40. This is the highest it has been for a number of years. This is in contrast to the median study score of 26 which is the lowest it has been for a number of years. The average ATAR was 50.74.

It was pleasing to note that all students that applied for tertiary courses were provided with an offer with the exception of one who used other mechanisms to continue study. 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. Other students have begun an apprenticeship or deferred their university course until 2016.



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 overwhelmingly positive to the school. 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 children to parents or guardians.

Staff were surveyed, amongst other things, on the development of curriculum and catering for students of mixed ability. In the area of curriculum development, staff reported that they would like more Professional Learning or training given to aligning curriculum to the Biblical Perspectives. They would also appreciate more training for catering for mixed ability groups.

It was wonderful to note that that overwhelmingly the feedback given by staff was that there is a welcoming and supportive staff culture.





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