

# 2017

## 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 School is blessed with attractive learning and play spaces.

## **Principal's Message**



Celebrate!

*to observe or commemorate with ceremonies or festivities*

*to make known publicly; proclaim*

*to praise widely or to present to widespread and favourable public notice, as through newspapers or novels.*

*To perform with appropriate rites and ceremonies; solemnize*

There was much to celebrate during 2017, most notable was the faithful commitment of families to the life of the school in various ways, whether through working bees, assistance at the tuck shop, helping in the classroom, assisting in the library or attending the Athletics day.

### **Sharing the story**

With a focus on celebrating all aspects of school life MDCS launched our official Facebook page to allow those that are in our community to celebrate with us and be able to share that with

their wider community such as family and close friends in a way that is easily accessible. There has been a wonderful uptake of this platform among our community members.

At the end of Term 1, we were able to celebrate the contribution of a long term teaching staff member, Mrs Elizabeth (Libby) Fensham, who served the school faithfully for over 26 years. It was delightful to be able to connect with past community members who joined us for a special evening, honouring the work she had completed throughout her time here. A new perpetual academic award has been created in her honour, The Libby Fensham Write Tight award.

### **Parent partnership**

As you will remember in 2016 MDCS conducted our first whole school review, something that hadn't been completed for a number of years; to have an organisation come and provide outside eyes to provide feedback. Out of this review were a number of recommendations which I'm pleased to say have come to fruition. This triggered in us a desire to gain greater parental input into the life of the school. Last year we provided opportunity for parents to contribute in four specific and targeted ways. This occurred via three parent surveys (MDCS Parent Survey, Dress Code Review and Year 12 Exit Survey) and an opportunity to be a part of a parent forum (Development of a Landscape Masterplan). I am very grateful for the way in which each of these opportunities were embraced, providing the school with valuable feedback and information to help look to the future.

### **Professional Learning and Academic Outcomes**

Over the past three years we have initiated a whole school approach to professional learning to develop common language between the teaching staff and learning assistants and also among the students. This has occurred via the engagement of an Educational consultant. She has specifically worked on developing understanding of how to effectively differentiate (focus of 2016 & 2017) and how to provide meaningful assessments (focus of 2018) to ensure students are being challenged

## ***Principal's Message (cont.)***

at their level to achieve success (defined as the student's best outcome). We were delighted to see improvement across the school in student outcomes. Our Year 12 exit results continued to show growth, including an improvement in the average student ATAR and the median study score (reported by VCAA). In addition we were delighted and surprised to receive advice from the CEO of the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) that we were one of 330 schools across Australia that MDCS had *"demonstrated substantially above average gain in reading and/or numeracy as measured by NAPLAN."* These were two external measures that reinforced the approach to professional learning that we had taken.

It should be noted that teachers continue to complete study through the National Institute for Christian Education (NICE). Teachers will also complete subject specific professional learning throughout the year.

### ***Compliance***

In 2017, MDCS was required to participate in its 5-yearly Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) assessment. MDCS successfully completed these tasks. Late in 2016, the Board and Executive engaged a company called CompliSpace to help us stay abreast of legislation and its impact on practices, and policy. This was launched to staff at the beginning of 2017, providing teachers with much easier access to policies and procedures. It also provides a platform for training of changes to policy particularly in relation to non-teaching activities such as the new Victorian Child Protection laws.

### ***Renovations***

Over the past three years, a significant amount of resources have been committed to renovating and refurbishing various learning environments. These include the Multipurpose Room, Library, Year 7 – 10 classrooms and, in 2017, the Year 3 – 6 classrooms. This included new roofs, lighting, carpet, paint and furniture.

## ***MDCS wedding***

It was a joy to finish the year by celebrating the marriage of a staff member, exchanging vows on the beautiful grounds of MDCS!



### ***Challenges***

While there was much to celebrate in 2017, MDCS was presented with the challenge of finding a new Business Manager, a vital position in the life of the school. It was sad to farewell Andrew North midway through the year. He brought

much to the team and continued to build on and improve the rigorous reporting process of those before him. However, it did leave some 'big boots to fill'. In the interim, Greg Waterhouse provided certainty to this area until a suitable candidate could be found. Ross Ingram has settled into the role very well and we look forward to the skills and abilities that he will bring.

The most significant challenge MDCS continues to face is getting the word out about who we are and the wonderful opportunities that the school provides for our community.

As I conclude this section may I encourage you to share with your family and friends that which you share with us. Get the word out; MDCS is a beautiful and nurturing community that seeks to see all children achieve their God-given potential as evidenced through various feedback from not only parents but from organisations such as ACARA which was covered earlier. We would love you to share our story with our wider community.

Jason Riding

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

I offer you this year a snapshot of our core activities in 2017. Many of these key initiatives stem from conversations around the Board Room table, from Executive meetings and Visioning planning meetings.

### Spotlight on 2017:

- Our first overseas study tour offered to students as part of the Indonesian program. Exciting!
- Continuing intentional growing of our Association by joint Board consideration, approach, application processing and interviewing of potential members. As a result 9 association members were added to our numbers.
- Introduction of a Professional Development register for the Board to record ongoing learning activities and attendances. Participation encouraged for growth and effectiveness in carrying out Board responsibilities.
- Child Protection training modules were undertaken by staff and Board members.
- Board training with a presentation by Complispace undertaken.
- Worksafe audit/inspection was carried out onsite by an external assessor. Recommendations carried out by MDCS and compliance achieved.
- The Landscape Masterplan was commissioned, actioned and completed in consultation with the school community. This was a new initiative to deliver and implement our desire to be purposeful and create a methodology around the approach to site and spaces, to harness our assets and enhance our physical external environment. The vision prepared capitalises on our natural bushland setting, improves traffic and pedestrian flow around the site, allows for improved outdoors spaces for staff, outdoor learning areas, dedicated play areas for all age groups, communal gathering spaces and gives consideration to the integration and connection between.
- Visioning Evening held between Board Members, Executive and key staff personnel to build into the Strategic Plan.
- Greater feedback sought from the community with the rollout of surveys to monitor and improve school performance.
- A greater focus on telling our story well, marketing and community building.
- School review conducted by VRQA (Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority). This occurs once every five years. The school was assessed for compliance and all requirements were met. Particular in depth evidences were required around Child Safe Standards, Grievances and Complaints, Anaphylaxis Management and Bushfire Preparedness.
- Primary classroom upgrades completed.
- Dress code review commenced.
- Committee for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations established.
- Facilitated visit to the school from the Shadow Education Minister, Mr Tim Smith.
- Authorised and secured contract for the installation of fibre optic cable to the school to provide the much needed upgrade for service reliability and substantial increases across connection speed and capacity.
- Hospitality and Food Technology Building preliminary concepts and Bus Parking relocation explored.
- New Business manager appointed with the arrival of Ross Ingram. Transition facilitated between Andrew North, to Interim Business Manager Greg Waterhouse and then to Ross Ingram.
- Board and Finance Committee initiated tighter monitoring of debtors and regular issue of statements and follow up.
- Successful turnout to the EGM with 60 attendees including the Year 12 students. Excellent presentation by our guest speaker, Andrew Brown. Encouraging and inspiring Year 12 reflection by Kyle Van Bockel.
- MDCS hosted it's first wedding!

What a great and full year it has been! We look



forward as a Board to springboarding off that growth and building a stronger school community delivering excellence in Christ-Centred education throughout 2018 and beyond.

Merrylyn Van Bremen



## ***From the Treasurer***

In 2017 we welcomed Ross Ingram who joined the school as Business Manager. Ross brings considerable experience across a range of areas which is valuable to the school as we plan for the next 5 to 10 years.

The school had another deficit year and this is directly linked to student numbers, as we outlined in the 2016 report. The key to managing this effectively is ensuring staffing levels are aligned with student numbers and working hard to grow enrolments. Positive signs including the parent feedback surveys and the open day tours, and we will continue to monitor this closely.

Despite the deficit we have continued with our repayments of our long-term loans and also committed to significant capital improvements in relation to installing fibre optic internet cabling, which was essential.

As we continue with the 2018 year and plan for the 2019 year, we will focus on sound financial stewardship to ensure our costs are aligned with planned student numbers.

Courtney Clowes



**Statement of Financial Position**  
**As at 31 December 2017**

|                                      | <b>Note</b> | <b>2017</b>      | <b>2016</b>      |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Assets</b>                        |             |                  |                  |
| <b>Current Assets</b>                |             |                  |                  |
| Cash and cash equivalents            | 5           | 17,915           | 12,448           |
| Trade and other receivables          | 6           | 131,307          | 94,287           |
| Inventories                          | 7           | 10,747           | 10,747           |
| Other Assets                         | 8           | 21,231           | 92,739           |
| <b>Total current assets</b>          |             | <b>181,200</b>   | <b>210,221</b>   |
| <b>Non-current assets</b>            |             |                  |                  |
| Property , plant & equipment         | 9           | 4,787,105        | 4,939,215        |
| <b>Total non-current assets</b>      |             | <b>4,787,105</b> | <b>4,939,215</b> |
| <b>Total Assets</b>                  |             | <b>4,968,305</b> | <b>5,149,436</b> |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                   |             |                  |                  |
| <b>Current Liabilities</b>           |             |                  |                  |
| Bank Overdraft                       | 11          | 88,880           |                  |
| Trade and other payables             | 10          | 145,386          | 164,100          |
| Financial Liabilities                | 11          | 949,175          | 532,331          |
| Short term provisions                | 12          | 371,606          | 389,674          |
| Other liabilities                    | 13          | 365,971          | 429,626          |
| <b>Total current liabilities</b>     |             | <b>1,921,018</b> | <b>1,515,731</b> |
| <b>Non-current Liabilities</b>       |             |                  |                  |
| Parents' deposits                    | 10          | 64,800           | 72,000           |
| Financial liabilities                | 11          | 160,204          | 205,885          |
| Long-term provisions                 | 12          | 56,314           | 50,296           |
| <b>Total non-current liabilities</b> |             | <b>281,318</b>   | <b>328,181</b>   |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>             |             | <b>2,202,336</b> | <b>1,843,912</b> |
| <b>Net Assets</b>                    |             | <b>2,765,969</b> | <b>3,305,524</b> |
| <b>Equity</b>                        |             |                  |                  |
| Reserves                             |             | 662,064          | 662,064          |
| Accumulated surpluses                |             | 2,103,905        | 2,643,462        |
| <b>Total Equity</b>                  |             | <b>2,765,969</b> | <b>3,305,526</b> |



**Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income  
For the Year Ended 31 December 2017**

|  | Note | 2017        | 2016        |
|--|------|-------------|-------------|
| Revenue  | 3    | 3,471,770   | 3,837,972   |
| Employee benefits expense                      | 4    | (2,922,672) | (3,066,493) |
| Finance Cost                                   | 4    | (45,206)    | (27,220)    |
| Depreciation & Amortisation expense            | 4    | (314,928)   | (313,473)   |
| Loss on disposal of assets                     | 4    | (19,735)    |             |
| Tuition expense                                |      | (198,183)   | (201,612)   |
| Administrative expense                         |      | (124,586)   | (91,718)    |
| Bus Transport costs                            | 4    | (102,756)   | (84,606)    |
| Property Maintenance costs                     | 4    | (94,875)    | (98,897)    |
| Other expenses                                 |      | (188,385)   | (146,627)   |
| Surplus(Deficit) for the year                  |      | (539,556)   | (192,674)   |
| Other comprehensive income for the year        |      | -           | -           |
| Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year |      | (539,556)   | (192,674)   |







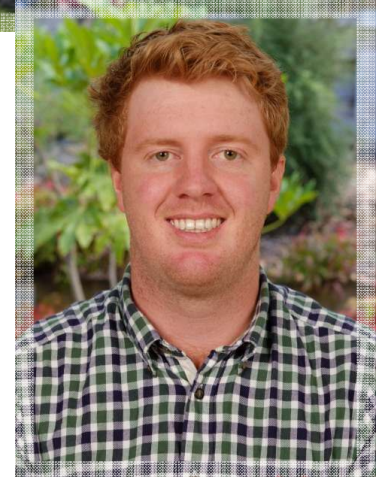
## ***MDCS Staff***

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.

## ***Teaching Staff***

Mountain District Christian School has a talented teaching team with a range of teaching experiences and qualifications. As was mentioned earlier in this report we fare wellled a long serving staff member, Mrs Libby Fensham, in Term 1. We will miss her experience and wisdom. In addition, in 2017 we welcomed to the team Mr Tom Mahoney (senior Maths) and Mr Stefan Van Boxtel (Science, Health and Outdoor & Environmental Science).

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





## MDCS Teachers and Qualifications:

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Mr. W. Baird      | BEd (PE)  |
| Mr. J. Beer       | BA (Hons), Grad Dip Ed                              |
| Mrs. E. Heinrich  | BEd (Prim)  |
| Mrs. L. Burke     | Dip Teach   |
| Mrs. J. Bratton   | DipTeach, Grad Dip Ed                               |
| Mrs. A. Chaney    | DipTeach, BEd (Conversion)                          |
| Mrs. H. Denny     | BMusic, BEd   |
| Mrs. E. Diprose   | BA, BTeach  |
| Mrs. E. Fensham   | BA, Grad Dip Ed                                     |
| Mr. A. Grace      | BSci (Chem) Grad Dip Ed                             |
| Ms. S. Hanscamp   | BA, Dip Ed, MEd (Christian Education)               |
| Mrs. N. Heading   | BA, Dip Ed  |
| Mrs. R. Holland   | B Early Childhood Ed                                |
| Mrs. L. Knight    | BTeach, Grad Dip Sp. Ed, Grad Dip Grief Counselling |
| Mrs. X. Leonardis | Dip Ed (Primary), BEd, MEd (Christian Education)    |
| Mr. P. Lock       | BEd. (Design & Technology)                          |
| 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

Ms. S. Sumarno

Mrs. T. Williams

Mrs. C. Wyngaard

Mr. T. Mahoney

Mr. S. Van Boxtel

BEd (PE), Grad Dip Chr Ed, Dip. Management

BA, B Teach

BEd. (Primary)

BEd, Grad Dip Ed, Med (Christian Education)

BArts/ Education

Masters Teaching Practice, B Enviro Sci: Wildlife and Conservation Biology, Cert III Outdoor Rec, Cert IV Financial Services





## ***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.

### ***Christian Education***

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. As a condition of employment at MDCS, teaching staff are required to study with the National Institute, completing the two foundational units towards their Masters of Education. In 2017, five staff undertook study with the Institute and three staff completed the Certificate of Christian Education as part of their induction program.

### ***Whole school approach - Differentiation***

In 2017, Kylie Bice from Growing up Greatness, returned to continue, consolidate and expand on the Professional Learning that began in 2016. Differentiation was the focus. It including learning how to

differentiate lessons, tasks and programs by pace, abstractness, complexity, and accelerative options, as well as identifying the key features of differentiated practice in classrooms. The teaching staff and learning assistants were encouraged to bring a specific activity or task, assessment or program that they would like support to modify/differentiate or create, thereby making it relevant and useful for the upcoming semester.

### ***Individual professional learning***

These included courses in health, well-being 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.

### ***Total cost of Professional Learning***

Approximately \$34,223 was spent on professional learning. This equated to \$1425 per teacher spent on professional learning programs in 2017.



## 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 and implement strategies to assist the student. Student attendance across the school in 2017 was 90.87%.

As part of teaching and learning strategies and development of programs, teachers collect 'data'. This data is often very rich and can include classroom observations, work

samples, assignment and test results, and standardised assessments. NAPLAN is one of the standardised assessments used by schools within Australia to inform student learning. At MDCS other standardised tests used include the PAT Maths and English, the South Australian Spelling Test, TORCH and a number of assessment tools created by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). We do recognise that standardised 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 2017:



### MDCS Students achieving National Benchmarks:

|  | Reading | Writing | Spelling | Grammar | Numeracy |
|--|---------|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| Year 3                                   |         |         |          |         |          |
| % at or above national minimum standards | 85      | 92      | 92       | 92      | 100      |
| Year 5                                   |         |         |          |         |          |
| % at or above national minimum standards | 100     | 100     | 94       | 100     | 94       |
| Year 7                                   |         |         |          |         |          |
| % at or above national minimum standards | 100     | 100     | 93       | 100     | 100      |
| Year 9                                   |         |         |          |         |          |
| % at or above national minimum standards | 92      | 88      | 83       | 92      | 96       |



Below is an excerpt from the email MDCS received from Robert Randall, CEO of the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA):

*Dear Principal,*

*I am pleased to advise that ACARA has identified your school as having demonstrated substantially above average gain in reading and/or numeracy achievement, as measured by NAPLAN...*

*... On behalf of ACARA, I would like to extend my congratulations to you and your school community on this achievement. Improvement in student literacy and/or numeracy of this magnitude, as measured by NAPLAN, is significant and worthy of highlighting and acknowledging.*

*Best wishes*

*Rob*

**Robert Randall**  
Chief Executive Officer

**acara** AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM,  
ASSESSMENT AND  
REPORTING AUTHORITY



## Senior Secondary Outcomes

In 2017, twenty three students undertook a Unit 3 & 4 sequence of study towards their Victorian Certificate of Education. In all, thirteen students completed Year 12 at MDCS. The students participated in a variety of subjects. These included Biology, Chemistry, English, Further Mathematics, Health and Human Development, History, Physical Education, VCE Dance, Psychology, Studio Art, Outdoor and Environmental Studies, Literature and Drama. The number of subjects offered at MDCS is very high when considering the number of students enrolled.

It was pleasing to note that all students that completed Year 12, with the exception of one achieved successful completion of their VCE. The students completing a Unit 3 & 4 study sequence achieved some excellent results. 2.9% of students achieved a study score over 40 (slightly more than 2016). The median study score for students completing a Unit 3 & 4 study sequence in 2017 was 30 (2 points higher than 2016). The average ATAR improved by 5 points, up to 65.15. This was an improvement of 12 points on 2015 results.

It was pleasing to note that all students that applied for tertiary courses were provided with an offer in the first round.





## Community Satisfaction

Throughout the course of 2017, the school sought feedback and input from the community on five specific occasions. The

- Term 1 MDCS Parent Survey **new**
- Dress code review (Parents)
- Primary Portfolio Feedback **new**
- Landscape Masterplan input through face to face forums (Parents, staff and students) **new**
- Year 12 Exit surveys – **moved to online rather than paper**

The engagement with these surveys and parent forums was very encouraging. In each instance, with the various focus of each survey, there were very thoughtful and encouraging responses. I'd like to highlight here the Term 1 Parent Survey.

The feedback from the survey indicated a very high level of satisfaction from the community. It also provided the opportunity to allow families to raise concerns that they may have had. There were very few. Those that were raised were followed up if contact details were provided. In conjunction with the online survey, a number of families were rung at random to provide opportunity for in depth discussion as to how the year had begun. In some cases families that were called had completed the survey. It was a helpful process to begin and one which will continue into the future; a more specific and targeted seeking of feedback from our parent body.

Some of the comments that were received with regard to what's going well are listed below.

*'Really enjoying the experience of being a new parent in the school. There is a lovely friendly feeling amongst some parents and a genuinely prayerful parent community.'*

*'The school year seems to have begun with a strong focus on raising the educational aspirations of*

*students. We have appreciated the way the new staff have worked hard to get to know our child and have brought a fresh approach to teaching in his year level.'*

*'Special learning needs being met, with teachers willing to try number of strategies and resources to help support my child's learning.'*

*'The swimming program, the Christian teaching content and the quality of teaching seems to be very good.'*

*'I'm very happy with the focus on improved academic performance.'*

*'Communication between school teachers and parents.'*

*'I can see that all the kids have settled in well. I feel there is always someone to help with any questions we might have. Great communication!'*

*'Teachers listening and taking on board info from parents about children and really working with the family and putting the children first.'*

*'Everything. Brilliant communication, kind and nurturing, at the same time as challenging and encouraging.'*

*'The Christian focus, teaching children how to see the world from a biblical perspective is paramount to me. I love that the parents can be as involved as they like or not. That's really good. My experience with other schools is not so good on this level.'*

*'I'm very happy with the level of communication to the parents and the education and care that is given to the children.'*





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