

*Gilson College*

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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## SECTION 1 – OVERVIEW

### INTRODUCTION

Gilson College as a community strives to be the premier location for quality Christian education in the western and northern suburbs of Melbourne. Our purpose statement indicates that we aim “through excellence in education to develop people of integrity and Christian character.” This has been the goal and primary endeavour of the College founders, leaders and community for over 30 years. From humble beginnings the College has grown to an enrolment, as of 2021, of around 1300 students on two campuses and more than 110 teaching staff. Each member of the staff and the wider College community works together to further the stated purpose of Gilson College.

### CHILD SAFE SCHOOL

Gilson College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all our students. It has a zero-tolerance for child abuse, and has procedures and protocols in place to protect children, support those at risk and respond to incidents or allegations of all forms of child abuse. These procedures are outlined in the Duty of Care, Child Protection and Child Code of Conduct Policies. All are available on the school website.

### PRINCIPAL'S REPORT



This report covers the 2021 school year and as we have moved through and into this post-Covid era we see some things returning to normality while other things have remained to challenge us – for example the one-week lockdown that became two weeks. This has meant that managing people’s expectations was complex and maintaining morale for both students and teachers a substantial challenge.

At times we had a hybrid mix of remote and on-campus learning and this has reinforced for many that education is truly a team approach with parents and teachers working together for the greater good of our young people. Further to this there are also the many non-teaching roles like our bus drivers, IT, aides, admin / office, uniform, canteen, grounds and maintenance staff who contribute to allow our students to not just survive, but to thrive, even in the midst of challenging circumstances. We are reminded by none other than Jesus Christ himself that there will always be challenges. “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33 Knowing and understanding the context of world events and how circumstances manifest themselves makes it far easier to navigate these encounters.

On the Taylors Hill campus our student numbers (1041) remain close to capacity and consequently our major infrastructure needs are a performing arts complex and a VCE centre. The VCE centre should have stage one well under way by the time you read this. On the Mernda campus, we continue to grow with now around 250 students on campus and a steadily improving infrastructure that supports an outstanding school culture.

In 2021 the recipients of the Dux awards were as follows: Grishma Tamang - 90.60 - Mernda and Emmanuel Taafuli - 99.85 – Taylors Hill. We congratulate these students and as all of our graduates move into



a new phase of their lives, we wish them all God's blessings and are confident that they will take the many things they've learned and lead with integrity and a Christian character.

I am well aware that for many people the past two years has put added pressure on personal budgets and for this reason we are most appreciative of our community families who have faithfully honoured their responsibilities. We recognise that for many this is a sacrifice and we have endeavoured to restrict fee increases to the absolute minimum necessary to maintain a prudent financial plan. Increases of around 2% across all year levels have demonstrated our commitment to considering our community on this matter. Thank you also to our department heads and our campus bursars who conscientiously maintained our budgets to ensure that we remain a viable and financially sound institution.

As 2021 drew to a close we acknowledged the work of those who have moved into a new chapter of their careers. We would like to thank the following people for their service:

On the Taylors Hill campus we said goodbye to:

Adelaide Parkin  
Catherine Gillard  
Trinelle Galea  
Megan Bull  
Tyron Lockwood  
Mitchell Lindbeck  
Eunice Ko  
Nalini Ramaswamy  
Melissa Ferreira  
Janine Cass  
Chris Cowled  
Paul Goossens  
Stefanie Goossens



Mopelola Oluwasola  
Simone Zarb  
Lynton Bell  
Lyn Holland  
Sandra Situ  
Yvette Radolovic  
Rosemary Warner  
Cecilia Chen  
Paul Goltz  
Jonathon Gillard  
Pr Mau Tuaoi  
Matthew Dupla  
Brendan Henriques

On the Mernda campus we have said farewell to:

Ketannah Manners

Lucy Maclean (maternity)

Cherie Keath (maternity)

Netty Lawrence

Beverly Maingard (maternity)

Chelsea Humble

Andrew O'Grady

Chris Rampton

Jim Talliopoulos

As 2022 approaches we know that a new year can bring new challenges, but with every challenge there is an opportunity. An opportunity to be a part of the solution or an opportunity to be a part of the problem. Our belief is that there is excitement when we approach life aiming to inspire others in all realms of their life: academic, physical, social and spiritual. With a 'we can do it' attitude and working as team parents and teachers can collaborate to give our young people the best possible opportunities as they prepare for their post-school life.

Over the past year or two I and my leadership team have examined the way moving forward and what that would look like for the two campuses. After consultation with both the leadership team and receiving feedback from the staff on both campuses it became evident that the long-term arrangements for both campuses would be served well by having two independent registrations. This would allow greater flexibility, avoid the challenges that are generated by the distance that separates the campuses, but still permit the collaboration that has operated throughout their shared history. A plan has been mapped out for this to occur over the short to medium term.

On a personal note, after 26 years as the principal of Gilson College my wife and I have made the decision to move back to the Hunter Valley in NSW. We will remember fondly the many students we have worked with over the years. Some were taught by Mrs Vodell in pre-school and then shook my hand on stage for their Year 12 graduation. Others were enrolled by me and then years later brought their children to go through the same process. Having the opportunity to meet and connect with three or four generations of families is something we hold to be truly precious. While everyone has elements of a job that they will not miss, we are privileged to have had so many positive memories during our time at Gilson College.

We have been thrilled to have gone on many excursions, camps and initiated the overseas mission trips to Myanmar. This work has had the impact of changing many people's lives. Students have often shared with me the impact of having a global perspective and how they have recognised that we are indeed very fortunate to live in Australia.

I would also like to thank my wife for the nine years she invested directly into the community as the Reading Recovery teacher and in the last two years where she set up and established our Children's Centre. In addition to this her willingness to accept without complaint the many long hours without her husband, as my workaholic tendencies along with striving to do the very best by the community left her with limited support.

For our many friends and colleagues who we have had the privilege of working with over the years – we say thank you. Gilson College owes a great debt to those who have prayed and seen the amazing answer to prayers as God has stepped in and demonstrated that it is His hand that guides the matters of importance.

During our time we have consistently maintained that three main elements of our philosophy –

purpose, pedagogy and pennies (business) are listed in order of importance to remind ourselves of why we do the things we do. We leave praying that Gilson College will continue to serve the community and if the emphasis on integrity and Christian character is maintained we know that God will continue to bless the College.

Mark B Vodéll M. Ed. (Hons), PhD (Melb)

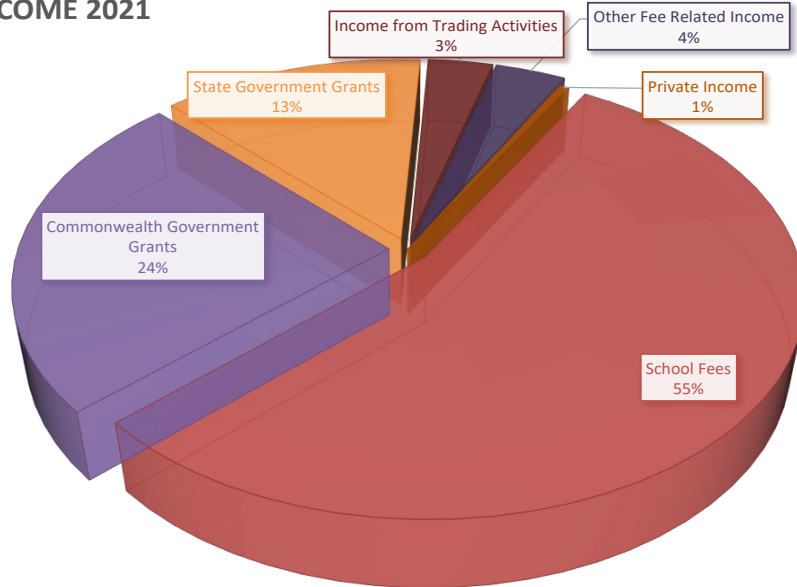
Principal 1996-2021



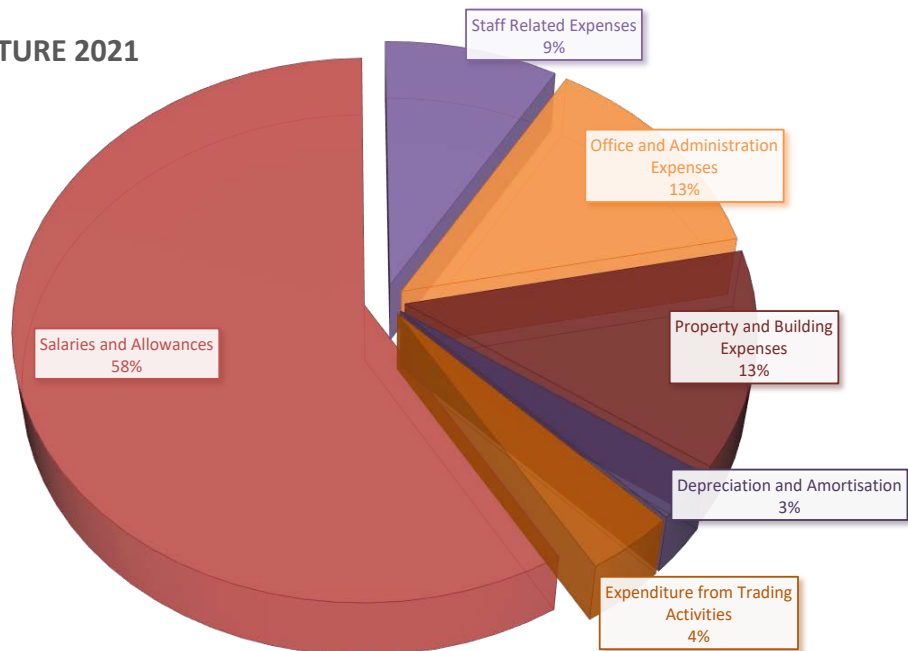
## FINANCIAL REPORT

The financial health of Gilson College continues to grow positively, and this is due to efficient management of the College finances and God's blessings. While still offering quality Christian Education the College maintains its goals of minimising its expenditure while maintaining its income. For 2021, the financial benchmarks and budgetary guidelines were met for accounts payable, accounts receivable.

### INCOME 2021



### EXPENDITURE 2021



Despite the challenges of the year, a significant number of parents continued to support the College through timely payments of their fees. To assist with financial challenges, the College offered a 10% discount on all fees. At 58%, school fees and other income sources rose approximately 3.1% from 2020.

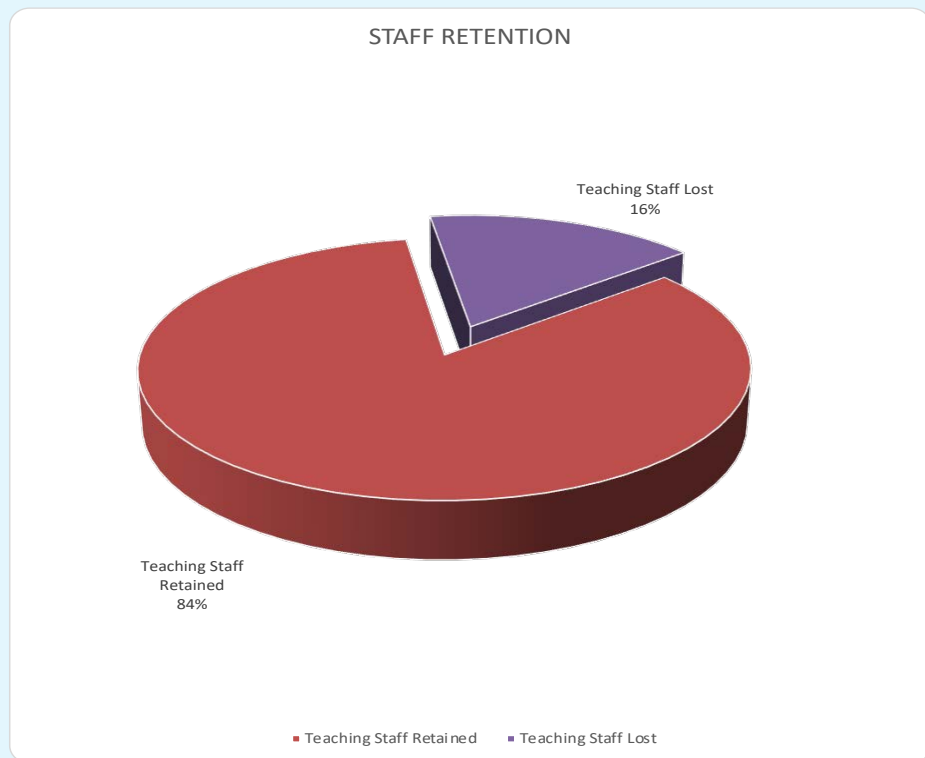
The College significant expense, as always, is paying for staff, with salaries, allowances and staff-related expenses dropped to 58%. In contrast, the other major expense, property and building expenses, rose to 13%.

## SECTION 2 – PROFESSIONAL FOCUS

### STAFF RETENTION

At the end of 2021, 21 staff left the College (both campuses included), out of a total of 129 teaching staff. This provides a retention rate of 83.7%, and therefore its 3.5% less than 2020 which indicates that the rate has been reasonably consistent over the last few years.

The most common reasons for leaving the College in 2020: moving to our sister schools, moving interstate, heading into further studies, making a career change and starting a family.

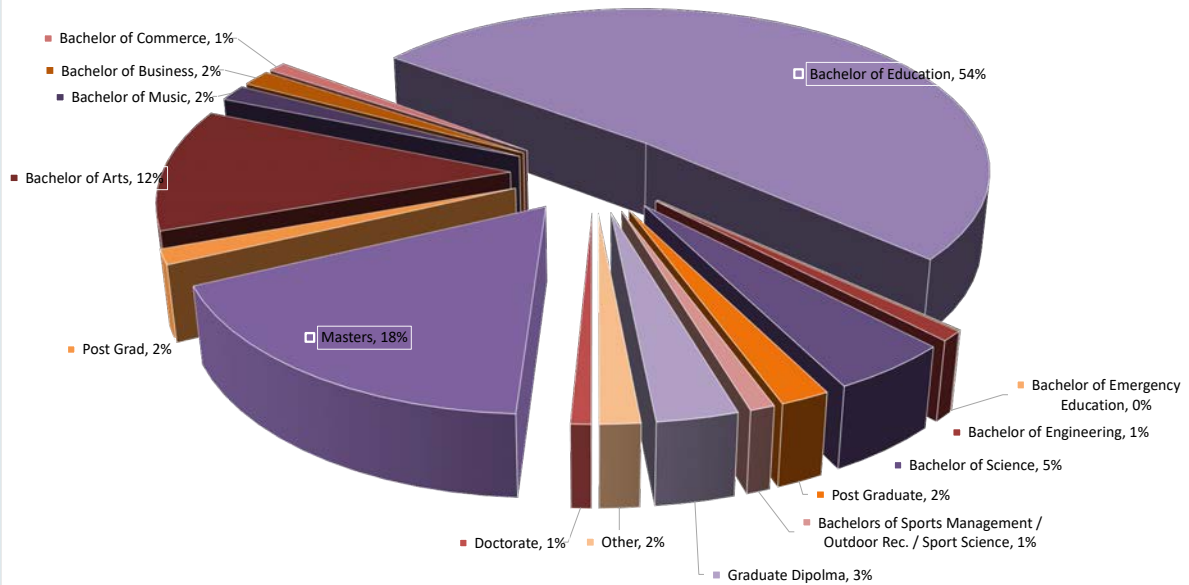


### STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

The staff at Gilson College are highly qualified professionals, with the vast majority having earned a university degree, and many having multiple other professional qualifications. The graph below gives a percentage of all the acquired qualifications of the teaching staff at both campuses of the College. Staff are encouraged to continue their professional learning with incentives offered and time within the program available for further study.



### TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS



## SECTION 3 – STUDENT FOCUS

### PRIMARY – TAYLORS HILL

Our Primary school is a fun and engaging learning environment where students are encouraged to explore, think, grow, reflect, learn and serve. It is a place where Christian Values are taught and promoted through learning experiences in our varied programs. The Adventist Identity of our school is a unique part of our ethos that promotes our students to develop a loving relationship with Jesus.

After the COVID traumas of 2020, where staff learned how to deliver meaningful online lessons, we had hoped that 2021 would see us returned to some kind of regular school year. This was not to be as we launched into another disrupted year.

More than 65 staff are commended for the tremendous effort and sacrifice they made to build on the skills they learned to again deliver quality educational experiences and outcomes for online at home and in school classes for up to 110 essential worker's children daily. This challenging hybrid way of doing school was made even more complicated by the eventual staged return to full time classroom learning.

Administrative staff were in a constant state of flux as they successfully navigated the daily changes to protocols to ensure the safety of staff, students and their families.

None of this prepared us for the very unfortunate effects of mandatory vaccinations and the restrictions placed on classroom teachers and support workers. Through the most difficult circumstances we applaud our staff for taking up the slack and families as they continued to support the school through trying times.

We welcomed four new staff, three of whom began their teaching career with us. We also applaud the three teachers who very successfully demonstrated their teaching professionalism in gaining their VIT registration. During the year we said goodbye to some staff while welcoming others to our team, both as teachers and Education Support Workers (ESOs).



God has sustained and blessed us with an excellent group of Relief Teachers who became an valuable and stable resource to see us through to the end of the year. Some have become full time teachers!

We thank both the Chaplaincy and Wellbeing teams for their support of both students and staff, navigating through spiritual and emotional challenges. Student Support became a more valued aspect of our school program and we thank the team for their consistent and professional work in improving individual student outcomes, and providing direction and support for families.

Our school days begin with staff worship each morning and in classes with our 517 students. We thank our student leaders who assisted us with our Monday morning assemblies under our new stadium sized cover where we sang the National Anthem and awarded students from each class for their efforts the previous week. Our attention was drawn to the Value of the Week and we sought God's protection and presence with us and our families.

Positive Behaviour for Life (PB4L) took on greater meaning for our students as the new reward system developed greater interest and buy-in with a greater and more interesting variety of choices, including having the Principal's chair for a day! Elements of the Berry Street model of classroom management also became more firmly embedded into teacher professional development and practice.

Although many of the usual sporting activities were cancelled, the Cross Country and Athletics were able to be enjoyed. Whilst all excursions were sadly prevented from happening, the Year 6 students were able to go to Coal Creek in November.

While all students finally returned to classes by November 5, we were then able to host Prep Readiness and Orientation days as well as modified programs for the fun day, Awards Ceremony and Year 6 Graduation. Whilst parents were unfortunately unable to attend the end of year events, they were able to see them live through the wonders of technology.

Whilst we appreciated the financial input of the Government into the new Tutor Program, it was very challenging to find tutors to assist students with improving their learning due to the constraints of the past 2 years. We appreciated the staff who were able to assist in this program.

This year we were able to extend students through the Enrichment Program which included spelling bees, debates (both internal and interschool) writing club and ICAS competitions. These activities have given students the opportunity to excel and extend their knowledge and skills beyond the curriculum.

## **SECONDARY – TAYLORS HILL**

### **Introduction**

The Annual Report for 2021 serves to shine a light over Gilson College Taylors Hill by sharing with its community the school's operations and achievements throughout the year. This Report provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students.

Gilson College is an open school with a multicultural, socially diverse and geographically dispersed student population. Gilson provides equal opportunity for all students to achieve excellence in academic, cultural, sporting, civic, leadership and social endeavours, in an inclusive environment that supports learning, teaching, service, friendship and spiritual connection. Since 1988, Gilson's culture has been characterised by a pursuit of all round high achievement, a focus on tertiary preparation, diversity in student programs and high-quality outcomes. Gilson College (Taylors Hill campus) is uniquely positioned as the only Seventh-day Adventist School within the Western Suburbs of Melbourne. Although our interview process is rigorous and follows a systematic school-based selection process, entry into the College is open, and non-selective. Gilson's important community organisations include:

- Gilson College School Council
- The P&F Association and its sub-committees
- G-CCC (Church)
- The Gilson College Alumni, and
- MyMission

It is also important to acknowledge that here at Gilson College, we deeply value the relationship we have built with Avondale University (NSW) and as such, our Year 11 students annually visit the institute to attend Open Days and have the opportunity to consider the institute as a possible pathway to further their tertiary education. It was unfortunate that due to the two years of remote learning (2020 and 2021) that our young people were unable to participate in this program.

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

The focus in the Secondary school is to achieve excellence in all aspects of our value-based educational program and to facilitate a learning culture that motivates students to get in and give all things a go, no matter their ability, and to find their God-given place within the school community. Ultimately,

there is a desire for every student to embrace their uniqueness and therefore – thrive as an individual.

The Year 12 Class of 2020 achieved excellent academic results

Despite all the challenges 2020 held, the graduating class of 2020 excelled across the board and achieved great success which opened the door to a wide range of opportunities in the next stages of their lives. We saw our students develop new levels of independence and an overwhelming commitment to striving for personal bests, often overcoming isolation and dislocation, illness, learning difficulties or personal hardships. The Gilson College graduating class were congratulated on their perseverance and resilience, and we looked on from the sidelines as they continued to create positive change in their lives beyond Gilson.

- 2% of ATARs scored above 95 (in the top 5% of the state)
- 5.7% of ATARs scored above 90 (in the top 10% of the state)
- Almost a third of all ATARs were above 80 (in the top 20% of the state)
- 54.47% of ATARs were 70 and above (in the top 30% of the state)
- 74.56% of ATARs were 60 and above (in the top 40% of the state)
- The Gilson College media ATAR was 63.45
- There were four perfect scores (study scores of 50) in VCE
- 100% of our students completed their VCE certificates
- 100% of our VCAL students completed their VCAL qualifications

These overall results reflect the commitment and diligence of all our students over many years at Gilson College, and especially through the challenges of working remotely. In partnership with our parents, our sincere thanks went to our outstanding team of teaching and professional staff for their expertise, dedication and support of our students, not just as the year 12 level, but throughout each student's entire Gilson journey.

The Year 12 Class of 2021 also achieved excellent academic results







The 2021 graduating class proved that they too were able to develop unbelievable levels of independence and display an even greater commitment to not giving up, to getting up when they're knocked down, to just keep on keeping on. The 2021 school year was an onslaught of challenges, lockdown after lockdown robbed them of experiences and opportunities that no other group endured. They shone even though at times they overcame disappointment upon disappointment. It was a privilege for every educator to work alongside the 2021 cohort of seniors. Ultimately, their hard work paid off, and undoubtedly their achievements opened doors to a wide range of opportunities. These students were congratulated on their champion determination and stellar resilience. It was a difficult year they all shared, and to their credit they dusted themselves off and held their heads up high because their hard work was not in vain.

- 2.2% of ATARs scored above 95 (I the top 5% of the state)
- 10.1% of ATARs scored above 90 (in the top 10% of the state)
- 41% of ATARs scored above 80 (in the top 20% of the state)
- 62% of ATARs scored above 70 and above (in the top 30% of the state)
- 75.42% of ATARs were 60 and above (in the top 40% of the state)
- The Gilson College media ATAR was 67.33
- 10% of our current students completed their VCE certificates
- 100% of our current students completed their VCAL qualifications

## NAPLAN

Due to the COVID-10 pandemic the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing did not take place in 2020 and in 2021 there was no make-up test.

## School Attendance

The College takes its legal responsibility for student welfare seriously and we make every effort to ensure students' safety and know their whereabouts at all times through the school day. Parents are regularly informed that if their child will be late or absent it is essential that they notify the College

through telephone communication or email address by 9:00 am. This ensures that the College can accurately monitor student attendance. When learning on campus, students arriving late to school must sign in at Reception. Students leaving early must have parent verbal or written authorisation in order to sign out. This information and additional guidelines are available in the school Handbook and on the school website.

## Camping Experience

Once again, for year 7 students the school year kicked off with four full classes - of which - 33% were new additions to the College and in term 1 the year 7 students were fortunate enough to experience the annual Howqua adventure camp. Their camp to picturesque Howqua is a yearly highlight. The 104 students of Gilson College Taylors Hill campus combined with the 30 students from the Gilson College Mernda Campus for five days of adventure packed fun in the foothills of Northern Victoria. It was a great moment to see the students from both campuses become friends as they enjoyed the opportunity to engage in new activities; such as - archery, horse riding, high and low ropes courses, zip lining, water sliding and bushwalking that challenged them to go beyond their comfort levels and develop their resilience, self-confidence and independence. However due to the pandemic and the threat of contagion, the Year 8 students only got to experience a portion of their five-day camp experience which was also in the foothills of the Victorian Alpine region but at a different location. As per usual, for both camps there was a normal mix of nervous excitement, an abundance of curiosity and palpable enthusiasm. Our year 7 & 8 teachers were equally thrilled about connecting with their students and spending time in nature.

Year 7 teachers and Year 11 teachers embarked on the first ever Peer Support Program, which was essentially - a mentoring program designed to connect students vertically. This program called for Year 11 students to be matched with year 7 students to provide them with positive mentors from the senior end of the College to allow students from both ends of the school to teach and learn from each other



about ways to positively negotiate their Secondary school journey. The program engaged inspirational speakers to share with students, topics around resilience, respect and responsibility. These values underpin everything that is done here at the College.

Year 9 students camping experience was also set amongst the gum trees, and devoid of any 'usual' creature comforts. Their experience is typically an intentional immersion into team-building amongst the rustic landscape of the great outdoors with a slight twist – to test their ability to adapt and to build their overall levels of grit. However, their camping experience over the course of the year was also heavily compromised. Once again and due to repeated pandemic setbacks and the transition to remote learning, they were unable to gain the full benefit of this program. Sadly, the Year 10 cohort's resilience was tried and tested in a similar way and their annual Outdoor Education program was also marred by the threat of cancellation due to the need for postponement. In the same vein, our Year 11 students forfeited their trip – the second year running – to Avondale University and Queensland. Our students missed out on more than just experiences, they didn't get the opportunity to experience growth.



## DEPARTMENT NEWS

### Humanities Department

2021 has been an exciting year for the Humanities Department. The year so far has been full of exciting adventures, both inside and outside of the classroom. These rich learning experiences have helped our students to become informed global citizens who are active in their communities. The information below provides a snapshot of the opportunities the Humanities Department has provided to enrich student learning:

Earlier this year, our Year 7 students engaged in the study of Civics and Citizenship. Throughout this unit, students examined the features of Australia's Constitution, explored the purpose of referen-

dums and evaluated their role as citizens of this nation. Through a series of investigative tasks, class discussions, debates and group tasks, students developed a deep understanding of Australia's federal system of government and further developed their capacity to become active and informed citizens.

In Term 3, our Year 7





students completed an inquiry project on Ancient Civilizations. Students were required to present their research projects and 3D models to their teachers and peers, as well as engage in reflective discussions about their learning journey. The presentations were insightful, engaging and effectively demonstrated the wonderful learning that has and is continuing to occur in the Year 7 team.

As part of the Humanities curriculum, our Year 8 students examined the features and characteristics of medieval writing. Students learnt that before the invention of the printing press, texts were all handwritten and included decorative details and embellishments to bring words and stories 'alive' for readers. As a result of this, our Year 8 students were given the task of bringing God's word to life by creating Illuminated Manuscripts based on their favourite bible verses. Students were able to use their creative skills to develop handwritten manuscripts with fine detail, lavish decorations, vibrant borders and radiant colours. This is just one example of how God's word is living and active in our classrooms at Gilson College.

In Term 3, our Year 8 students studied Landforms and Landscapes which required them to examine the 7 different types of landscapes and their distinctive features. Students analysed the way people create and attach meaning to different landscapes through analysing the spiritual, aesthetic and cultural value of landforms for different groups of people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Through an inquiry into a Coastal Landscape of their choice, students identified the geomorphic processes that produce landforms, analysed the human causes and effects of landscape degradation and identified ways of protecting coastal landscapes. This was an enjoyable unit for everyone involved.

Year 9 Humanities: Learning 4 Life report has been produced by Phil Goltz and as part of the Year 10 History course, students had the opportunity to analyse Australia's involvement in the Second World War. Students investigated the experiences of Australians during WWII through the analysis of the Kokoda Campaign and well as the Fall of Singapore. Students also examined the contribution of women and Indigenous people to the war effort, and evaluated the effectiveness of wartime government controls. This was an enjoyable unit for everyone involved.







In Term 3, our Year 10 Geography students explored the concept of Human Wellbeing. They examined the different ways of measuring and mapping human wellbeing and development, and investigated the issues affecting the development of countries around the world. The class also examined and begun to evaluate the role of governments and non-government organisations in improving human wellbeing in Australia and in other countries. To assist students with this unit, they undertook a series of case studies and used geospatial technology, such as Google Earth, to further develop their understanding.

The Year 10 International & Legal Studies students had the opportunity to study Australia's system of governance and undertake a comparison with other systems of government around the world. In this unit, students also examined the features of Australia's executive, judicial and legislative systems. Students researched why Australia's systems of government are based on a bi-camera system due to Westminster influences at Federation. Students then evaluated these features and compared them to other systems of government around the world that range from democratic societies, dictatorships and socialists' systems.

In Semester One, our Year 10 Economics & Business Studies students had an opportunity to learn about the stock market by participating in the 'ASX Schools Game'. This activity provided a hands-on approach to learning about the Australian economy and enabled students to analyse the features of the share market. Through this initiative, students were given the opportunity to buy and sell shares and receive dividends from their investments. This experience enabled students to recognise the importance of making wise financial decisions and has given them an appreciation of how the economy runs and an understanding of how world events impact the economy. This was a valuable opportunity for students to put into practice all that they had learnt in class.

Throughout Semester One, the Economics & Business students worked in small groups to create a small business proposal that was presented to their teachers and peers. These proposals required students to develop their own small businesses, create a logo of their choice, as well as choose a location for their proposed business, and identify how they would market their business to consumers. Students

also calculated the costs associated with running various businesses so they could determine the long-term viability of their companies.

As part of the VCE Geography course, Year 11 students were given the opportunity to explore the geological features of the Organ Pipes National Park. Today, the region forms part of the Western Volcanic Plains which extends from Ballarat across to Mount Burn in South Australia and is the third largest volcanic plain in the world. This field trip helped students to examine the processes associated with geological hazards, including their causes and impacts, the human responses to hazardous events as well as explore the interconnections between human activities and natural phenomena.

As part of the VCE Geography course, Year 12 students were given the opportunity to examine human populations and patterns of change, movement and distribution. Students were able to examine how governments, organisations and individuals have responded to changes in population structures over time. Students were able to undertake various case studies that included Bangladesh's response to their growing population; the 'Five Year Plan' & the 'Women & Children First' campaign, and Japan's response to their ageing population; the 'Angel Plan' & the 'Plus One Proposal'. Students then evaluated the effectiveness of these strategies in relation to the issues and challenges experienced in each country due to changes in their population structure.

To enhance their studies on the Victorian court and jury system, our Year 12 Legal Studies student participated in a virtual tour of the Melbourne's Magistrates, County and Supreme courts. Students were given the opportunity to speak with a local magistrate who gave them a detailed overview of the court system. This virtual excursion also provided students with not only a valuable insight into the court and jury system, but also allowed them to reflect upon the importance of making positive life choices for themselves and those around them.





Throughout Semester One, our dedicated Humanities staff implemented the use of 'Brain Breaks' in our classrooms. To prepare for the implementation of these 'Brain Breaks', staff undertook a series of readings, professional development sessions and engaged in useful conversations with one another about best practice. When implemented in the classroom, these 'Brain Breaks' focused on physical movement, mindful exercises and sensory activities that were designed to foster rest, relaxation and peacefulness amongst our students. These 'Brain Breaks' then allowed students to return to the set learning activities revigorated and refreshed which helped increased student engagement and motivation in the classroom setting.

The Head of Humanities, Sarah Hanley, worked with staff around improving their pedagogy and ensuring we met the requirements of best practice. Staff were selected to take part in a series of Evidence Based Observation and Coaching sessions to identify areas of their practice they wish to improve upon. These observations and discussions focused on lifting teachers up and were reflective and collaborative in nature.

### **Drama Department**

The year commenced with planning and preparing for the annual College Musical – The lion, the witch, and the wardrobe. Rehearsals were on schedule and going smoothly, and then, a week out from performance it was required that we cancel due to the pandemic. But being a creative and resilient department, the hurdles perceived as disappointments only became opportunities. Despite cancelling the musical and other junior productions such as: Chapel performances, Year 8 Presents, Commedia del'Arte Masquerading and Clowning Around which were all designed to engage with a live audience from both Secondary and Primary levels. Despite the setbacks to our program, we still managed to deliver quality, creative and worthwhile learning experiences to our students. The success and buzz from performing live is often what piques students' interest to want to study Drama in Year 9 and 10. As a team we demonstrated that adaptability and creativity is all that is needed sometimes to get the show on the road again.



## Music Department

Music is traditionally well established at Gilson College and operates seamlessly to facilitate many facets of the College's program. With the need to adjust to remote learning, the team worked tirelessly to develop and consolidate online lessons and reference materials to support student learning. Both junior and senior students completed work that was not really modified. It was particularly interesting to note, that they essentially mastered their tasks to an even higher standard than was achieved in previous years. This was possibly due to the one-on-one sessions and use of break-out rooms. Contrastingly, practical tasks for the junior students appeared to struggle with one-on-one sessions and break-out rooms, so they were eliminated from the program. Senior students even managed to learn some new technological skills in the remote music-making context. The team learned how to facilitate music lessons remotely for all instrumental students. In addition to this, the team was also able to complete band and ensemble songs remotely by using mastering and recording facilities. In VCE Music, the five students were well supported when they were onsite as practical ensemble learning is more challenging when they are working remotely.

## Art Department

In Semester 1, many students were quite engaged whilst on campus with Art making activities, however this dropped off suddenly as we transitioned to remote learning. Even so, during 2020, Art students continued to create self-portraits, ceramic pinch pots, Aboriginal Art and remained engaged in activities on the Elements and Principles of Art.



In Semester 2, with the change-over of electives and the fatigue of remote learning set in, many students struggled even more to motivate themselves to engage in Art lessons. We were compelled to adjust our lessons during online learning so that our students could feel a sense of accomplishment. Learners explored how other artists created work from home and drew on this inspiration while learning new techniques to

create artwork of The World from their Window.

Students learnt colour theory and how artists create and manipulated elements to create illusion, depth, space and emphasis. Modern art was explored and students investigated how we consume it in everyday life. Students were then able to create designs for wearable hats and explored the artists' lenses and looked at how they perceived the world and drew on past learning to create. Graffiti art was also a focus of student learning and by far, was the unit.





Gilson offered Visual Communication and Design for the first year for Year 11 (Units 1 and 2) in 2020 with a class of six creative and extremely keen students. They had planned to go to Top Designs, however COVID lockdown meant they were not permitted to attend this event. Students had the opportunity to significantly develop their design skills using the Adobe Suite which helped them to remain motivated and engaged.

VCE Media Studies & Studio Art – In Media Studies, some of the students had to rethink their entire production due to not having access to actors and sets. Many had to make drastic changes to their planned artworks and production. In Studio Art, final artworks had to be restarted due to a lack of access to equipment, tools, proper environment, and materials. Despite the art kits that were provided for students to use at home, the teachers were delighted to still be able to see their students continue to create. It was this that kept the fire burning and the passion alive. The highlight in Studio Art was, the virtual tour that the students participated in. Notably, the curator that worked with our students couldn't stop praising them for their participation, manners and appearance. He was astounded that although our students were participating from home, they all managed to have a shirt and tie. Comparatively, none of the other schools that also participated in this event looked as ready to learn as our Gilson students did.

### **Maths Department**

There were 9 teachers in our department this year. Out of the nine teachers, two taught only Maths classes and the rest taught both Maths and other subjects. There were two teachers who also taught VCAL Maths.

The VCE side of Mathematics ran smoothly this year for both the Further Maths and Maths Methods classes. Hopefully we'll be getting some good results when the VCE results would be released. VCE teachers were once again been helped by the Mathematical Association of Victoria in writing up their SACs for this year. Next year will be the last year for the current Study Guide.



Thanks to the tutoring program initiated by the government, our junior classes were able to have tutors who assisted the teachers in helping those students who struggled in Mathematics. From next year onwards the junior classes would return to the traditional way of learning Mathematics. The Maths Pathway program will only be used as a homework tool. Teachers have been working on their Programs and updating their Scope and Sequence to meet the Australian Curriculum. Textbooks have been ordered and they would be distributed next year.

### **Science Department**

The Science department was blessed with the completion of new science laboratories (used for senior Physics and junior science classes). The additional laboratories enabled classes to enjoy learning in a much bigger space and improved overall student engagement. On a more sombre note, lockdown proved to be a constant hindrance in that it hugely affected the running of science practicals. Despite the setback to onsite learning, teachers did their absolute best to deliver online learning, including semester one examinations via Zoom. In addition to this, most of the planned excursions were also cancelled due to lockdown interruptions.

### **French Department**

Small modifications were made to the program. Verbal conversational aspects of the lessons were removed and replaced with students writing their answers down. Most of the students managed to complete their assigned work. A minority however, did find remote learning a struggle. Teachers found being able to give instant feedback on students work, especially regarding pronunciations, particularly frustrating as giving feedback is a vital part of learning a new language. A few minor changes were made to the programs and these related mainly to the mise en pratique part of the lessons which focused on conversations and role-plays using the vocabulary learnt within the Units studied. Noted, nearly all of the students who attended the Zoom sessions were able to complete the work set most of the time and the few who did not blame it on technology and related issues. Year 9-12 classes were productive and worked diligently with regard to engagement and participation.





## VCAL

2021 was the second year of the VCAL program. With 21 students who have chosen the VCAL pathway, we have been learning many new things and are planning for even more hands-on-learning experiences to take place. Students began the year well, with 13 students enrolled in external VET courses. Four of these students were offered a School-based Apprenticeship/Traineeship (SBAT). WRS was audited in mid-Term 1 and successfully passed. We got this under our belt just prior to lockdown. Term 1, students planned for the VCAL camp that would have taken place early in Term 2. The students had also planned and looked forward to attending the Australian Grand Prix in Term 1 Week 7, but due to lockdown none of this was possible. On a more productive note, it's been great to have a dedicated planning period each week to discuss our programming, working on outcomes, devising assessments and providing ways to support our students' learning needs. It's been challenging for students and teachers to try and keep classes engaged during remote learning and also in returning back into the classroom whilst adhering to physical distancing. It was wonderful news when restrictions allowed our potential graduates to attend school to work on their projects and we were eternally grateful for the magnificent VCAL teachers who volunteered their time to supervise our students. Towards the end of 2020, we had seven Year 12 students along with two Year 11 students who were going to complete



their VCAL certificate. Five would go on to further study and three had been already offered an apprenticeship/traineeship.

Term 1 Literacy students spent time learning basic literacy skills as they planned for their VCAL camp. This was done across strands and enabled the students to get a real taste for how literacy can be used in many areas of planning. Term 2 and 3, students studied and researched the text *Crashing into Potential* by Scott B Harris and were able to get a few zoom sessions with Scott himself where students were able to ask him questions about his bike accident and how he dealt with his own setbacks. The students explored their reading & writing outcomes for Literacy through the text, while growing in their own understanding of the brain and themselves. Term 4 was a deliberate focus on oracy outcomes as these were too difficult to pursue via zoom and remote learning.

Semester 1, students planned for the VCAL Camp and attending the Grand Prix. Students were still able to mark off many outcomes as a result of their complex and detailed planning, even though they couldn't attend the event due to imposed COVID restrictions. We did our best to implement applied learning and in Term 2, we had the Foundation students attend a few Primary classes where they were able to read to the children and assist the teacher within the classroom. Semester 2 enabled our Senior VCAL students to plan, organise work and reflect on their individual projects. The projects included: a breakfast club, a bookshelf, locker-bay litter barriers and a promo video. Mrs Cowled also cooked up many scrumptious meals with the VCAL students to share with staff and students. Mr McAndrew commenced work on a herb garden with the Foundation students that would be used by the Hospitality classes. Work Related Skills and Personal Development Skills work hand-in-hand in that WRS looks at all the Occupational Health and Safety aspects of a workplace and what the students may encounter when working on their projects.

WRS keeps track of the student's progress with their external courses as well as their work placements. Due to COVID, all work placements were put on hold except for the student's studying a trade. We would have a few opportunities in Term 4 for students to still complete their Structured Workplace Learning unit via a few virtual industry tours organised by Future Connect.

Teachers worked well to get students completing tasks that had students thinking about numeracy. They investigated COVID data, measuring and making themselves masks, calculating costs for running the VCAL camp, and creating a budget for the herb garden. Students also undertook a wide range of activities designed to target specific outcomes from their study design.

VCAL students are still able to use the Encounter program while other teachers worked closely and collab-





oratively to help students complete Literacy outcomes through reading and written work. In Biblical Studies, students looked into Biblical authenticity and reliability and delved into Biblical truths such as identity and purpose. Students also had the unique opportunity to be more practical and lead the class in Bible studies and sharing truths that resonate with their hearts.

### **HPE Department**

Year 7-10 there was a systematic approach to revising the scope and sequence which was represented to the department at the start of the year. Scope and Sequence was re-presented to the department at the start of the year. Years 7, 8, and 10 chose to begin with new SEQTA programs to achieve a clean-up of their marks book and overall planning, Year 9 used what was developed last year and overall, there has been a dramatic departmental shift in the way curriculum was being presented to students. There was more of a focus and emphasis on the skills being developed and not the topic being used to teach the unit. The focus of year 11 Physical Education program was to incorporate more practical sessions into term 1 and 2 (while still meeting curriculum requirements). This was done through frequent double sessions down to CS Lake. Students were given the option to run or walk, and the activity was recorded on STRAVA. 2023 will be the last year for the current study design thus the focus on curriculum across the board. VET Outdoor Recreation and Sport & Recreation, there were certainly more camps and excursions planned.

Sport 7-10 included House competitions which were moved to lunchtimes so that all students had the opportunity to come and be a spectator. Students were once again given the option of choosing their sports for each term. SSV competitions were not affected by COVID in semester 1. Therefore, teams that have progressed through to regional competitions included senior table tennis, junior boys netball, swimming teams and individuals. Three students made it through to State Swimming Championships, with one coming home with a third place medal

Gilson College successfully hosted the intermediate and senior girls SSV volleyball tournament,



and looked forward to hosting the junior volleyball in term 3. Swimming Carnival - Another successful swimming carnival where Marshall and Gilchrist drew for first place and the Athletics Carnival was up and running in 2021 however, students were unable to complete sandpit events due to the athletics track completing



### **Design and Technology Department**

Obviously repeated lockdowns impacted the completion of some of our practical projects but we have still been able to enjoy many successes throughout 2020. In Design Tech students have successfully completed various projects across different year levels with more in the works to be completed in Semester 2. Conversion of the CNC router to UCCNC software which simplifies the setting-up process making it easier and faster to use. - New tool wall and organisation of tools in the metal work room using labels created with the department's CNC router.

Year 7 Digital Technology - Students have learnt about cyber crime and types of cyber crime and solutions/preventions on cyber crime. They have learnt how to use google slides and how to create a basic multimedia program called iMovie.

Year 9 Digital Technology - Students have learnt MS Excel (database) formulas and how to create a document with mathematical formulas. In addition, students had learnt some basic python coding language to create a simple GUI (Graphics User Interface) and they thoroughly enjoyed creating their personalised GUI.

Junior Home Economics - Students enjoyed using the brand-new stoves/ovens in the kitchen and these have reduced the cooking time for all recipes. This has been great for making sure our classes finish on time and are able to produce superior food products. Here are just some of the wonderful dishes the students have made:

Year 7 Sewing - Students enjoyed learning how to use the sewing machine and making and decorating a tote bag. They also went home during remote learning with a kit for making a hand sewn woodland critter and enjoyed making these with Mrs Clark over Zoom.

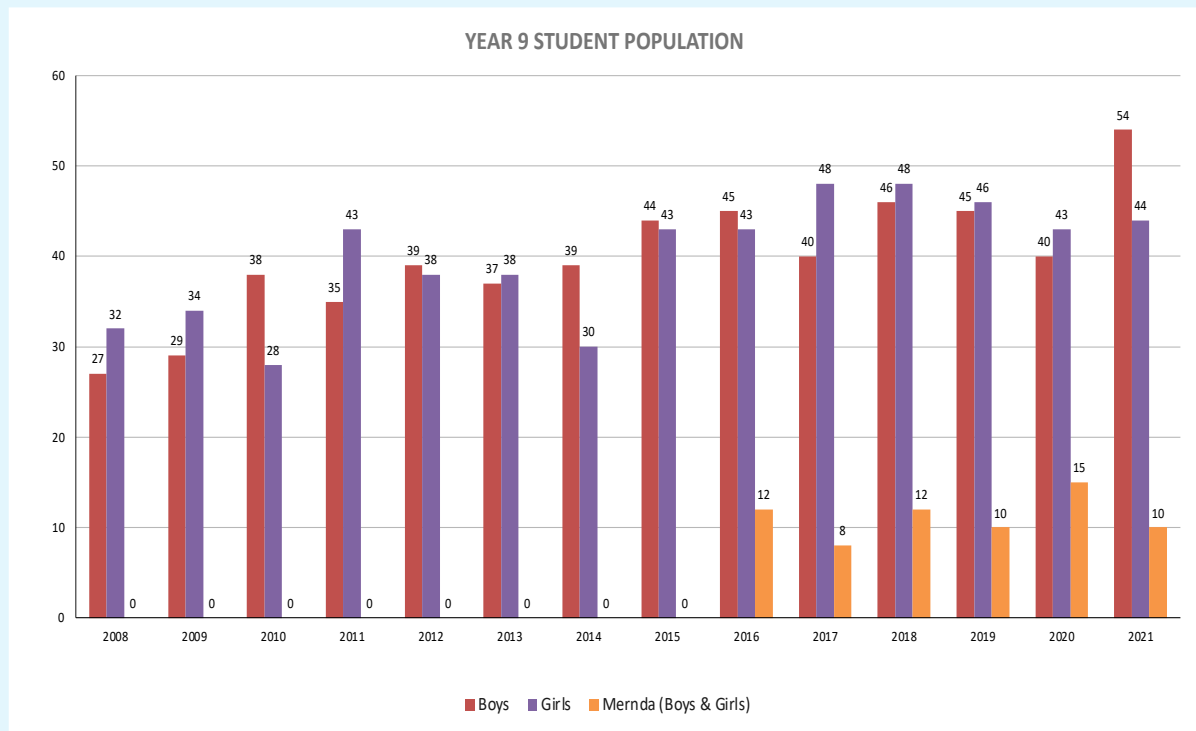
Year 9 Textiles - Has been running this year for the first time in quite a few years with 5 students opting to take this class for Semester 1. The students have learnt how to use the sewing machine confidently and have produced some lovely items. This semester they made: A simple skirt, pyjama pants, market tote bag and a dress using a sustainable fabric.



Hospitality Events - During Covid Lockdown in 2020, Mrs Cowled supported students in the Primary School with lessons during their Technology-free Fridays. The Year 4, 5 and 6 students who attended school, whose parents were essential workers learned some basic kitchen skills, such as how to measure ingredients correctly, how to crack eggs hygienically, how to safely use an oven and a stove top, the correct procedures for washing up and cleaning the kitchen, and leaving it as you found it.

### Learning 4 Life - The Rite Journey

The Learning 4 Life Experiential Education program continues to develop and mature. Below is a graph of student population.



There are 6 full time teaching staff with support in the areas of Home Economics, Art, Information Technology and Industrial Technology. We keep parents informed with 2 information nights (one in November of the previous year and the other in February), and 18 parent newsletters starting in term 4 of Year 8.

The year is made up of 3 major components: Expeditionary Learning, Urban Learning and Service Learning. Personal reflection and journaling are highlighted throughout the year and offer a rich evidential source of growth and development.

The focus for Experiential Education in semester 1 was on the Expeditionary component of the Learning4Life program. Students have been well prepared for their final expedition on the Bogong High Plains through a number of graded walking experiences which included a 10km day walk in the Werribee Gorge State Park, a 5-day base camp at Buangor State Forest with a 20km overnight experience and a 3 day/2 night 20-25 km expedition in the Fryers Ranges Heritage Park. In preparation for these expeditions students studied topics that included minimum impact bushwalking, risk & safety, hygiene, first aid, hut etiquette, food, energy requirements, cooking & nutrition, clothing, tent skills, packs and packing, navigation, map work and weather.

Unfortunately in Term 2 the outbreak of Covid-19 meant that we were not able to follow through with the planned Experiential Education events. This meant that we were only able to do 3 urban days and we had to cancel the service camp to Warrnambool. We were however able to complete the Bogong High plains expedition. This year due to COVID some parents chose not to send their student. This resulted in a smaller group of 60 students attending. Those that did attend reported that they felt challenged and so glad that they came and completed the hike.

Some Comments from students about how they have changed this year.

- I have changed in personality
- I have more motivation
- I've become more fit
- I am overall happier
- I have learned that we can push our body over the limits and when tired, our body may hurt but we can still go.
- I have learned to interact with other more, complete more activities and demonstrate to not give up and teamwork.

Whenever necessary I wait patiently then I continue.

- I feel like a-lot more involved and motivated in class than I was at the start of the year. Also a lot more healthier than before.
- I think I've changed by how I view myself and others. I never would have believed that I could hike up a mountain for 2 days and be in the higher groups but I could. I have become more proud of myself and my capabilities. I think I have also improved socially and being a better friend to others and helping them. I believe I have also improved in my time management and my effort in school work.
- I've become more responsible with not only my time but my actions and taking accountability for my mistakes





- I've become more organised and am able to finish my work on time or earlier than it is due
- I can now understand things that I would need to know when hiking like reading a map and using a compass
- I've become more mindful of my effect on nature and the world around me
- I've realised what I have
- I've become closer to my classmates and developed a feeling of compassion by caring for those in my group that I would have never spoken to
- I've become more resilient and don't complain about simple things that sound childish
- I value things more than I did before the hikes
- I have become more efficient with my work
- I have put more emphasis on choosing good friends
- I have put more emphasis on religion
- I have put time and effort into pursuing my passions
- I realised that there is so much we haven't seen and so much to explore
- working together gets you further than working alone
- you have to keep moving forward no matter what



- some things are harder than they seem
- you never know what something is really like unless you experience it yourself
- I'm more organised with my books.
- I get to school on time more often.
- I go outside more often.
- I have become more resilient
- I have learnt to be more organised
- Learnt to stick to deadlines and due dates
- Become more independent
- I've learned about life and how it's just not about me
- I've learned the importance of independence
- I've learned the quality of teamwork and beneficial it is
- I've learned about the nature and the world around me

### Planned Events

Students are out of the regular classroom 37 days of the year as follows.

Date	Event	Description
Feb 5	Parent Info night	Starts 7.00 pm to give info to Year 9 parents re the walking program
Feb 7	Werribee walk and Calling Ceremony at Mt Macedon	Initial assessment of student ability. Leaving 9:30 am returning about 9:30 pm, 10 km Bring lunch. BBQ for dinner supplied.
Feb 18 - 22	Departure Ceremony and Buan-gor Training Camp	Parent involvement 7:45 am to 8:30 am at school Base camp and overnight walk, 22 km. Leave 9:30 am Monday return 3.00 pm Friday. Camping and orienteering skills

March 13 - 15	Fryers Ranges State Forest	Leave 9:30 am Wednesday return 3.00 pm Friday. Camping, orienteering skills
May 2	Urban Day 1	City studies
May 16	Urban Day 2	City studies
May 30	Urban Day 3	City studies
June 12	Urban Day 4	City studies
June 27	Urban Day 5	City studies
Aug 8	Local Service Day 1	Working in local areas
Aug 15	Local Service Day 2	Working in local areas
Aug 29	Local Service Day 3	Working in local areas
Sept 9- 19	Warrnambool Service Camp	Warrnambool. Leave 10:30 am return 3.00 pm Thursday 19th
Oct 24 - 25	Training Hike for Bogong	Refresher and training hike in preparation for the Bogong Expedition.
Nov 13 - 21	Bogong Expedition	Walking and orienteering skills, 40 - 60 km. Leave 9:00 am returning 3.00 pm
Dec 3	Year 8 Walk	Lerderderg. Blackwood to O'Brien's Xing
Dec 5	Reflection Day	Return to Werribee Gorge/Mt Macedon where the walk started to reflect on the year, Lunch at Lerderderg Gorge, 10 Pin Bowling if available.

Further improvements have been made in addition to the procedures put in place in 2009.

2009

- Each student to have a walking buddy
- No student to walk without access to communication
- Groups remain together (within cooee) unless planned and safe to do otherwise
- Splits within groups only take place if planned and safe to do so
- If lost a student should retrace steps (if able and safe to do so) or stay put (erect tent) and wait for help
- Students to use whistle if required
- Leaders to count students often, particularly after separation, or a change of circumstances. (eg.

Before leaving a place)

- Prior to the expedition, police be given notification of planned routes and times.
- Ground staff to have all contacts required
- Students numbered and numbers called randomly

2010

- Learning 4 Life Experiential Education "Safety Guidelines and Supervision Procedures"

2012

- Upgrading our communications system to a repeater station
- Increasing the number of 2-way radios to 16
- Increasing the number of GPS units to 22
- Training for The Rite Journey with a view to integrating elements into the program

2013

- Replacing 22 tents
- Purchase of 100 compasses
- Replaced all tires on the 2 box trailers
- Regular planning for greater purpose and focus for Integrated Studies

2014

- Purchasing tents, packs, jackets, cookers and tarps for the new class expected in 2015
- Purchase of a new tandem box trailer (This was to be delivered in 2015)
- New compass sets were purchased so that there would be one set per class.
- Dr Tony Robinson prepared and produced an excellent 10th anniversary historical picture documentary of the Learning4Life journey, a copy of which is in the main office foyer.
- This year we introduced a welcome pack for the students, given at the parent information evening. We intend to continue this initiative with improvements.

2015

- 10 additional SPOT devices purchased as well as some additional Radios to support the Groups while Hiking.
- The date for the major expedition was moved later in the year to allow for better weather and more meaningful outcomes for the students. The Croajingolong part of the hike was deleted



and instead students spent 6 nights/7 days in the Bogong High plains culminating in some time spent at Howmans Gap to rest and reflect on the hike and how they had changed over the year.

- Students were given the opportunity to present to their peers the changes and biggest impacts on their life in the Year 9 Program.
- Purchase of a Toyota Troop Carrier 4WD as a support vehicle for the expeditions.

2016

- Purchase of a smaller luggage trailer to use behind the Toyota Troop Carrier.
- Additional packs and tents purchased to cater for the growing numbers.
- The involvement of Mernda campus on several of the camps.

2017

- An additional hike was planned at Lerderderg but due to the weather and inadequate reconnoitering it was cancelled. This area has now been more thoroughly investigated with the view to have this hike included in 2018
- Purchase of additional packs and spare sleeping bags due to Japanese students joining us on the Fryers Ranges Hike.
- Purchase of a Mavic Pro Drone – this is to be used in for the production of promotional material as well as giving students access to the footage for their presentation evening.

2018

- Purchase of an additional 15 Rain jackets and 10 packs to increase the number of different sizes available for student use.
- High capacity battery purchased for the repeater station to negate the need for charging during extended camps.
- Additional SPOT trackers purchased to allow for tracking of larger groups.

2019

- Purchase of 5 additional jackets and 5 packs to increase the number of different sizes available for student use.
- Purchase of 3 new radios to increase the total number of radios to 25, this allows for more groups that are smaller but still stay in contact with the coordinator and other groups.

2020

- Purchase of 20 new Wurley 2 tents to replace the aging ridge back tents.

- Purchase of 1 new radio to replace an old radio that failed.

2021

- Purchase of 10 new rain jackets to replace worn jackets and provide additional size options for students.
- Purchase of additional radios to replace aging ones and have a uniform battery platform
- Purchase of Dji Drone to update aging equipment.

Affiliations

Avondale College of Higher Education continues to be an integral part of the program with students taking part in the Bogong walks.

All L4L staff members have qualifications or are in the process of obtaining qualifications from Avondale College of Higher Education in Outdoor Education.

Future

In 2022 we will continue to go to Buangor and Fryers Ranges, both in Victoria. These areas have proved to be suitable and have good outcomes, so will continue to be developed further. The Bogong High plains continues to be a valuable experience with good outcomes for the students. We will continue with this practice and reconnoiter and develop additional routes on the high plains to meet the various fitness levels and needs of the students.

It has been recognised that with the growing numbers and the need for trained staff there may need to be some changes in how the camps are run with one suggestion being to split the cohort in two. This would mean less staff from outside the program used and the ability to have a smaller total number of students in the one area. This option continues to be investigated. For 2022 there will be less interaction with Mernda campus as their number continue to grow and when we combine the two groups we are in excess of 110 students which makes it difficult to visit many places.

### **Chaplaincy**

2021 began with the student leadership retreat in Anglesea Baptist camp. With great excitement and enthusiasm our senior prefects spent two days in team-building activities and immersed themselves in learning about what it truly means to be a servant leader. The attitude of both staff and students was remarkably positive, as everyone looked forward to the new year and everything the students would be able to facilitate of course with the support of the Head of Secondary.

The year commenced with our annual dedication service inside of the school gymnasium. This event usually brings our entire school community together. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions the event had to be live-streamed to our parents and friend's community.

- Students pledge of commitment to service



- Staff acknowledge the responsibility to be part of the partnership (parents and educators)
- Families and friends pledge to support the school

Weekly Chapels still continued whether face to face or online. Students received a blessing from these sessions as they might have been the only opportunity for engagement. There was an oscillation between presentations in person and a video. Secondary school chapels featured inspiring messages and there was always a segment called "Gilson's Finest" which showcased a different student or staff member being interviewed each week to acknowledge and celebrate their gifts and talents. Those interviewed are people who excel in some form of activity from music, to sport, to academics. Secondary students are steeply involved in planning for music and icebreakers from week to week.

Bible studies were completed through a discussion-based group model with each group lead by one of the chaplains. Therefore, 96 students in total commenced studying the Bible in the Secondary College. It is our prayer that each person connected to our school community will discover the plan that God has for them to live their best life.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS

Results from the 2021 SRC Survey combined with the QAS (Quality Adventist Schools) Improvement Framework were used to ascertain the focus areas for further school improvement. Although this was now a second year of lockdowns, it was necessary for the next steps to be pursued so that the momentum for improvement was not lost in the challenges of remote learning. Instead, both the 2020 SRC survey nor the 2021 survey was feeding into the QAS School Improvement Framework (which supports all ASV schools throughout Australia in the pursuit of excellence by providing clear descriptions of high-quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and learning were recognised and carefully considered.

In the 2020-2022 school plan the initial focus was as required:

- Identifying where the school sat in the QAS Framework
- Working on ways to move from sustaining and growing into excelling in as many areas as



possible

- Having all staff understand the QAS Framework and support improvement measures

Over the course of the previous two years, time was systematically dedicated to training staff, reporting and improving elements of the School QAS Framework during Protected Time meetings and at staff-wide Professional Learner's exchange where teachers were able to meet and present (within Department groups) their Action Research to discuss their findings. 2021 was unfortunately interrupted due to the extensive lockdowns which uniquely impacted all Victorian schools. As a result, our teachers were unable to present their departmental findings during the course of the 2021 academic year. Nevertheless, it was still the intention to focus on pedagogy and keeping driving success in spite of being online. Professional development with regards to improving our pedagogical focus on stimulating engagement, motivation and wellbeing was embraced. Three staff-wide PD days (two on line) along with smaller departmental meetings were dedicated to training teachers how to deal with students with complex, unmet learning needs and to successfully improve all students' self-regulation, relationships, wellbeing, growth and academic achievement. The Berry Street Model was a natural fit for our school because it was so seamlessly adopted within the Primary and Secondary schools and Gilson already shared all of the program's pedagogical strategies:

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- Trauma-informed teaching
- Positive education (PB4L) and
- Wellbeing practices

Teachers were trained in how to use brain breaks effectively within the classroom, how to continue to implement PB4L language in their lessons, how to use trauma-informed teaching strategies to improve engagement and to ensure there was commonality in the language used. Teachers also completed training on how to administer and implement EBO practices within the classroom





(evidence-based observations). Assessment and reporting were also improved through the refinement of how visible thinking through the use of thinking routines and growth-mindset skills were reported. More specifically, teachers were instructed to:

- Create more success experiences for students within the classroom (starting with how they planned their lessons – using success criteria and learning intentions)
- Judge performance against standards (refined their rubrics)
- Assess growth over time (focusing on implementing student profiles and learning plans (ILP))

Culture and wellbeing at the school also improved through the continued work done by the PB4L Committee in building support that was more function-based and comprehensive. By using the Tier 1, 2 and 3 levels of intervention teachers were better able to understand why behaviours in students kept reoccurring. In addition to this, our student SEQTA mapping revealed that the building of the PB4L support framework (targeted interventions) appeared to help reduce problematic behaviour as well as, leading to overall academic, social and emotional student success.

The change in the area of Teaching created a move from being fixed on excelling back to understanding and growing. Essentially, Protected Time was focused on providing teachers with skill-building opportunities that were based on positive education and growth mindset models of best practice for the classroom. Teachers were encouraged to begin adjusting their lesson plans to include:

- Building networks by promoting collaborative hubs for learning:
- group work
- mind-mapping
- implementation of lunch-time study clubs
- Focus on asking lots of questions;
- higher-order questions
- incorporating thinking routines
- Being an active listener:





- exercising wait-time
- making the speaker more comfortable
- empathise more intentionally
- embrace silence
- remove distractions
- heed the tone
- pay attention to non-verbal communication
- listening for underlying meanings and not words

In the area of Learning and Development the school was doing consistently well. In order to improve in the area of effective classroom practice greater support was given for teacher to plan collaboratively within departments and with co-teachers. While in 2020, focus was on how to give meaningful assessment, in 2021 the school continued to propel towards driving students to experience excellence through connecting with the classroom teacher. The school 2020 SRC survey process was helpful to





refine our school plan at that time however, in 2021 greater supports were provided which led to improvements in the delivery of education and wellbeing services for all of our students and staff.

## **PRIMARY AND SECONDARY – MERNDA**

### **Head of Campus**

In the ninth year at Gilson College Mernda campus we continue to grow in numbers with 250 students. In the Primary and Secondary 2021 proved to be another year with challenges due to the COVID-19 restrictions that continued to impact staff, students and families which has resulted in fatigue and staffing challenges presented by the introduced mandates and COVID restrictions. Learning, experiences and relationships were forged despite these challenging circumstances and students engaged in learning opportunities, and growth. Every student was encouraged to take part in all that the school had to offer and staff endeavoured to do more than deliver an academic program; knowing the child and committed to growing young people to the best of their abilities for God and community.

The year commenced with training for all staff in Child Cafe practices and all teachers maintained their First Aid – Level 2 credentials and Resuscitation upgrades. We also worked with Dynamiq on our Emergency and Evacuation plans and ran several drills with their support in 2021. We completed

our VRQA audit at the end of 2021.

From the formal commencement of the school year at Dedication Night, reflected the 2021 theme which Year 12 selected 'He Creates the Calm in the Chaos' & the primary SRC chose 'God's Perfect Promise'

Once again we focused on our Positive Behaviour 4 Learning (PB4L) program to enhance wellbeing and to further foster a positive learning environment. Our leaders trained in Berry street Educational Model in order to grow their skills and support student wellbeing and develop skills of teachers through some professional learning around wellbeing strategies and supports. Our challenge to be Respectful, Responsible, Resilient and a Learner proved to be particularly important as continued with constant changes of remote learning. We encourage a welcome routine in 2021 that started with greetings, positive primers and gratitude by reflecting on what went well (www). Maintaining what we were already doing was our main focus rather than adding anything new to the program, we recognised that with the significant impact of the pandemic that we needed to complete what we started and maintain what we were already doing.

Our Wellbeing team provided zoom sessions for vulnerable students and follow up emails/phone calls from the start of lockdown. Ongoing check ins and support was provided as needed. We worked on maintaining a Tier 3 wellbeing team, as well as looking at programs and supports that we could develop further. Anxiety support and strategies have become more critical and something that we would develop support further for in 2022. On return to school our camps and excursions program resumed when able, this provided a significant element to support wellbeing of students and social connection.

The grounds at Gilson College- Mernda were improved by mulching, replanting and removing some of the older plants/trees to improve the visible look of the College. With a plan to look at long term beautification and maintenance of the College.

The annual Award Night in 2021 was held during the day and live streamed for families. The program was a reduced program due to COVID but we could still celebrate the achievements of students and Celebrate the end of the academic year. As things opened up again, we planned ahead for the 2022 Calendar year of 'normal' school programs once more.

Staffing was challenging and continued until the very end of the 2022 calendar year in order to



secure the staff needs for 2022, some were not met which meant our timetable was stretched and spread further.

2021 ended with many challenges but also with possibilities for the following year to continue to grow and develop our College in all areas further.

### **Learning and Teaching**

2021 was a yoyo kind of year for learning, transitioning back to Face-2-Face learning and then back to remote learning.

- With the adjustments, although fatigued, we were more adaptable to the different ways of learning.
- With short notice, the IT team was able to support students to access loan devices.
- NAPLAN 2021 resumed - our student NAPLAN results were not negatively impacted by remote learning
- Registered to Digital Assessment Library (DAL) developed by Department of Education Victoria
- Tutoring Initiatives were implemented successfully both in the Secondary and Primary
- Students had individual access to support via ZOOM from teachers and Education Support Officers.
- Combined Reconciliation Week and Book Week, culminating with a Book Week Parade.
- Selected Year 5-12 students participated in The Australian Mathematics Competition receiving 7 Credits and 5 Distinctions.

### **Learning Support**

Learning Support reviewed its processes and the effectiveness of the traditional Speech Therapy services.

The Speech Therapy Assistant (STA) program was proposed and initiated. The purpose & benefits of the STA program:

- consistent therapy services to students with speech, language and literacy difficulties.
- students receive three therapy sessions per week, which results in more rapid progress towards speech-language goals.

For students who are on severe language disorder, they still can access individualised therapy with the added bonus of practising at least twice a week with the Ed Sups.

### **Long Term Cost - effective**

upskill our EdSup to support our students more effectively,

Many of our students are long-term learning support students - we would like to reduce this, where students who come to learning support, utilising effective targeted intervention can develop learning-how-to learn skills and resilience to become independent, successful, and confident learners.





#### Action:

All 5 of our Education Support Officers (ESOs) were trained in the Speech Therapy Assistant Program. The pilot STA program was implemented for Term 4.

#### VCE

Our VCE results have been positive in that each year we have achieved an expected spread and have had one result above 90 each year. Teachers new to VCE have been encouraged by the high results and the lower results were not unexpected given the poor work habits of some students.

We continue to build on our experience and I see the VCE team growing in confidence and encouraging the students to meet high expectations. Our relationship with parents is very good because our small numbers allow frequent contact with parents as issues arise.

All of our students with an ATAR over 60 have been able to enter the tertiary study of their choice. Some of those students had to begin in associated areas, such as Science and then transfer to Medicine but in 2021 we had students enter their first choices of Medicine, Engineering and Psychology. We need to 'advertise' our VCE successes to the broader community further moving forward.

We have also established a system of interviews for Year 10 students entering VCE. The VCE Coordinator and the Careers teacher interview every Year 10 student about their subject choices and their future pathways. Many of the current Year 11 students had aspirations way above their abilities and it was a valuable discussion to have with them about different pathways to their 'dreams' before they chose subjects for Year 11 and 12.



## Primary 2021 Overview

In 2021 there were 161 students in Gilson College - Mernda (Primary). These students were taught by 8 classroom teachers and 4 specialist teachers.

'God's Perfect Promise' was the perfect spiritual theme to get us through our second pandemic year. Our Chaplains guided Primary students to end 2021 with our Festival of Faith. Over the course of 3 days, we heard our Chaplains share stories of Jesus' life and lessons for us. We learnt that Jesus came and lived among us, and taught us how to share His Word

with others.

Our Wellbeing program was given a Tier 1 reboot with all Primary staff involved in the rewriting of the Positive Behaviour for Learning Primary Matrix. Throughout the course of the year they also underwent training to understand and use the Zones of Regulation as well as being introduced to aspects of the Berry Street Education model. Our Foundation students enjoyed the benefits of nature by visiting our Bush School every week in terms 2-4.

2021 found us once again heavily focused on ensuring our planning and documentation was complete and up to date. This turned out to be of particular importance in Semester 2 when we faced a school audit. We are grateful to the staff and team who worked tirelessly to ensure all documentation was ready and helped to make the auditing process a smooth event.

We further supported pedagogical improvements in the Primary by carrying out a series of Evidence Based Observations (EBOs) with teachers. Unfortunately these were not all completed as we found ourselves in lockdown again throughout the year.

Our main Academic focus this year was in the subject area of Reading. Over a series of professional development meetings we unpacked the 'Science of Reading' and how we can improve our current practice to enhance reading outcomes for all students. This was supported with 3 staff members completing





training in the 'Sounds Write' program.

The introduction of a government supported Tutor in terms 2-4 for 2 days a week supported 45 individual students who had been directly impacted by the pandemic.

Highlights and major events throughout the year

- Year 5 Sovereign Hill Camp
- Year 6 Camp Activities via Zoom (Virtual Excursions)
- Guest Speaker Senior Constable Shannon Batten from Victoria Police (Youth Resource Department) presented to Years 5 & 6 on cyber safety.
- End of term dress up days 'My dream job', 'Crazy hair day', 'PJ day'
- Mothers Day Breakfast
- Corliss Won Primary House Cup
- Awards Assembly for the first time live-streamed to parents
- Book Week Multicultural Parade
- Festival of Faith- 3 days

What changes were made during the year?

A new Climbing Frame playground was installed early in 2021 and enjoyed by all.

Sinks were installed in the new outdoor classroom space. The roof was also approved at local council and is now waiting on construction. There have been significant delays in its construction due to Covid. Primary Chapels were split into 2 time slots to accommodate numbers of students and to better tailor the message to target student faith growth stages.

Was there anything of note achieved by teachers during the year?

- All Primary staff were trained in the Zones of Regulation and this was implemented in all Primary classrooms.
- Jodi Batten & Sadriani Kerta were trained in the Berry Street Education Model.
- Staff were introduced to elements of the Berry Street Education Model. Concepts including: Circle time, Check-ins, Brain Breaks, Ready to Learn Scale.
- 2 Education Support Officers





(ESO) became Seesaw Ambassadors (Brenda Edwards & Suzanne Mann)

- All ESOs trained in the Speech Therapy Assistant (STA) program
- Infants Teachers were trained in the Sounds Write Program: Adele Bergmann, Chloe Kent, Lucy Maclean
- Adele Bergmann got her bus licence

#### Primary Sport:

- On the 10th of February selected Year 4-6 students participated in the Gilson College Swimming Trials.
- The Year 6 students had fun at the SSV District Lawn Bowls Gala Day at Whittlesea Bowling Club on the 10th March.
- One of our Year 4 students qualified to compete at the SSV Regional Swimming Carnival at WaterMarc on Tuesday 16th March.
- On Tuesday 30th March all of the Foundation to Year 12 students participated in the Gilson College Cross Country.
- All of the Foundation to Year 2 students had swimming lessons each Thursday at King Swim in Mernda.
- The Year 4 students had a wonderful time at the ASV Athletics Day on Thursday 22nd April, with students from other Adventist schools.
- On Friday 23rd April selected Year 4-6 students participated in the Northern Regional Diving Competition at MSAC with a number of students finishing in the top 3 places.
- All students from Year 4 to Year 12 participated in the Gilson Athletics Carnival at Meadowglen International Athletics Track on Monday 3rd May.
- On Thursday 6th May the fastest runners from Foundation to Year 6 competed at the ASV Cross Country, which was held at Gilson College Mernda
- The Year 5&6 students had a great time learning how to play hockey at the SSV District Hockey 7's Gala Day at Greensborough Hockey Club on Mon 10th May.
- Selected Year 4-6 students enjoyed playing golf on Thursday the 20th of May at the SSV Division Golf Competition at the Heidelberg Golf Club.
- A number of Year 4-6 students qualified to compete at the SSV Division Cross Country at Bundoorra on Tuesday 25th May.

## Secondary 2021 Overview

In 2021 there were 89 students in the Secondary, an increase of 16 students from 2020. With an increase of students enrolling in Year 7 we added an extra stream to Year 7 to allow for growth moving forward.

Our goals were:

- PB4L Reboot
- As part of the reboot we developed a Secondary specific PB4L Matrix.
- Berry Street
- Leadership were trained in the Berry Street Education Model and introduced Brain Breaks and Positive primers.

### **EBO's**

Evidence Based Observations were started in the Secondary but the program was interrupted by lockdowns.

### **Documentation**

Teachers continued to develop their programs and documentation to support learning.

### **Careers**

Sadriani Kerta became a qualified Careers Practitioner/ Counsellor through the Study Grant offered by Independent School Victoria (ISV).

VCE Coordinator & Career Counsellor formalised the Year 10 into 11 Subject Selection Process

Although Year 10 students didn't venture out to the community to do their Work Experience, they were able to experience Virtual Work Experience offered by Career Tools.

Increased number of students were using the Gilson College Career Website: <https://www.gilsoncollegecareers.com/>

Real Industry Job Interview (RIJI) for students to experience looking for a job; applying for a job and prepare for Job interviews resumes online.

Highlights & major events throughout the year

- Camps Program
- Year 7 Camp to Camp Howqua
- Year 8 Camp to Campaspe Downs

### **L4L**

Year 10 joined the Year 9's on the L4L program from Term 2 this year as they missed out in 2020. Unfortunately we still couldn't run the Service camp and our Bogong Expedition was shortened due to the impact of Covid but overall the program was a success.

- Term 1 - Introduction to hiking camps to Buangor and Fryerstown.
- Term 2 - We squeezed in one Urban day before lockdowns.

- Term 3 - A new service camp to Wodonga was cancelled.
- Term 4 - 6 day Expedition to Bogong High Plains
- Year 10 - Term 1 camp with the Taylors Hill campus with some students caving, rafting and abseiling around Mt Buffalo and some student canoeing the Glenelg River.
- Year 11 - Avondale Camp cancelled.
- Year 11 joined Year 12 for an end of year camp to the Grampians.
- Year 12 - Started the year with a study camp at Melbourne University and finished with a social camp to the Grampians.
- Guest Speaker Senior Constable Shannon Batten from Victoria Police (Youth Resource Department) presented to Years 7/8 on cyber safety and Years 10-12 on Consent.
- Festival of Faith - The Secondary Festival of Faith had the theme - He Creates the Calm in the Chaos.

### **Sports**

- 16 students qualified for the Regional Cross Country.
- 6 students qualified for the Regional Swimming Finals with 1 student progressing to State Championships where she placed 6th.
- 5 students qualified for the Regional Athletics with one being awarded the Age Champion at Division.

Was there anything of note achieved by teachers during the year?

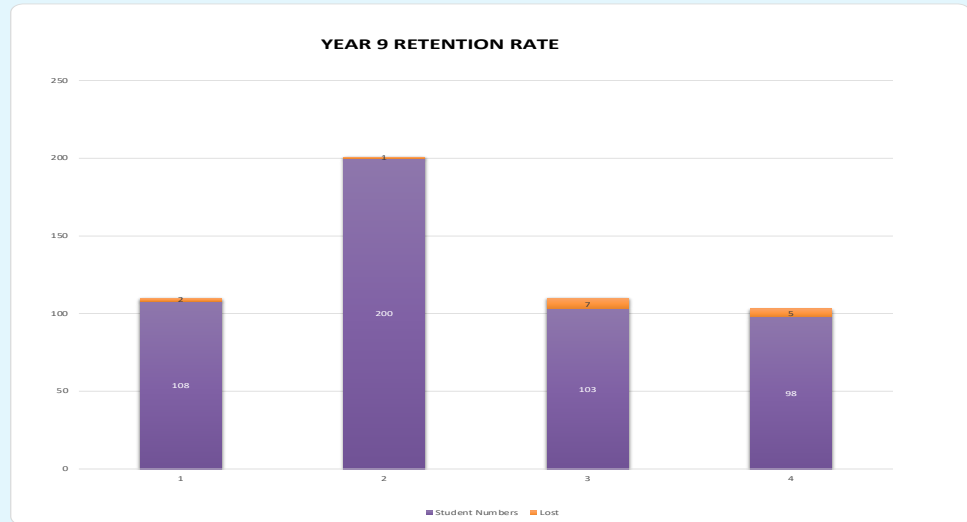
The Secondary Leadership Team Battedend the Berry Street Education Model Training



## STUDENT ENROLMENT STATISTICS

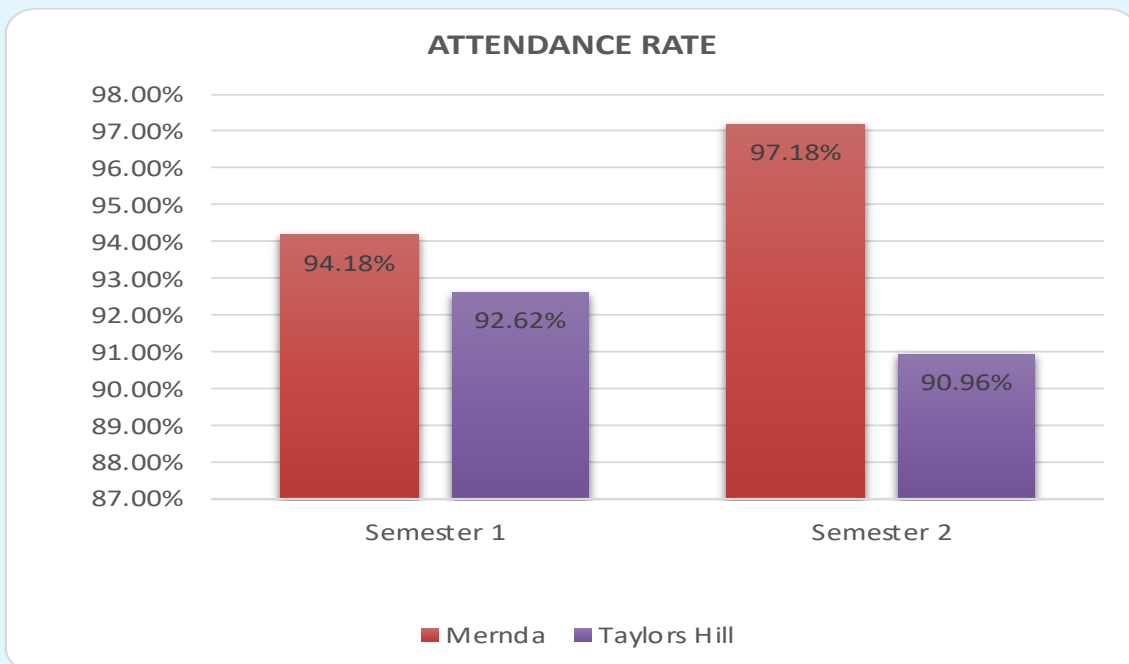
Student enrolments have consistently been on the increase at Gilson College for some years. With the continued expansion of the Taylors Hill Campus and the now established Mernda Campus it is anticipated that student enrolments will continue to grow for both campuses.

In addition to this, the retention of our Year 9 students has been consistent over the years. In 2021 we retained approximately 94.5% of the class that began in 2018. Majority of the number we retained were students that had begun in Foundation in 2008.

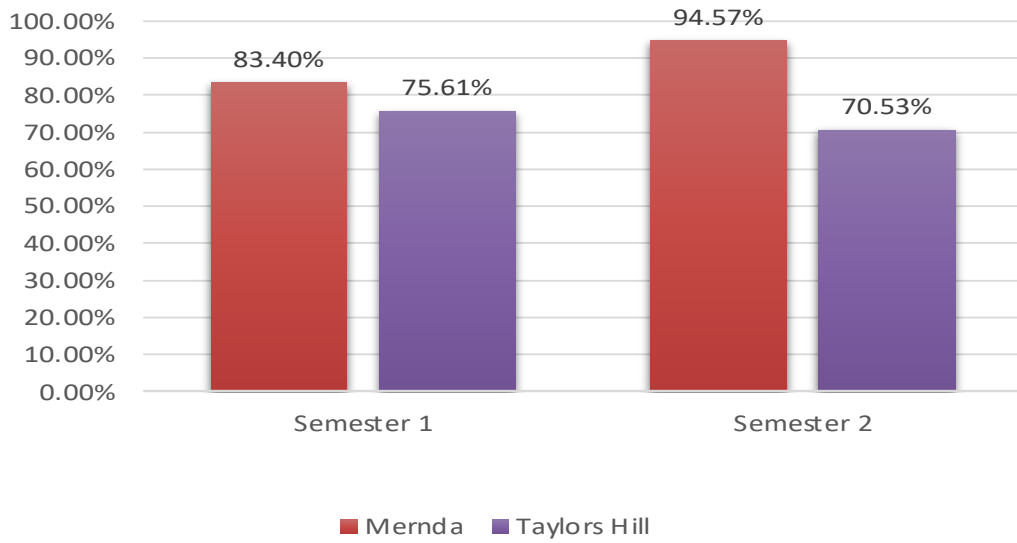


## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Student attendance at the College was impacted due to changes from on site learning to online learning. For most part it was consistent but the data graphed does not give a true reflection of the Colleges student attendance in a normal school year. Results for both campuses are graphed as shown.



### Overall proportion of Students attending at least 90% of the time



## LITERACY AND NUMERACY

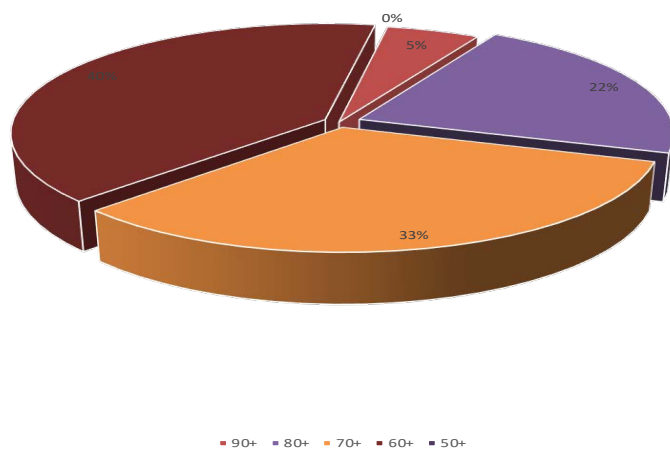
Due to the COVID Pandemic there were no NAPLAN exams held for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for the Year 2021.

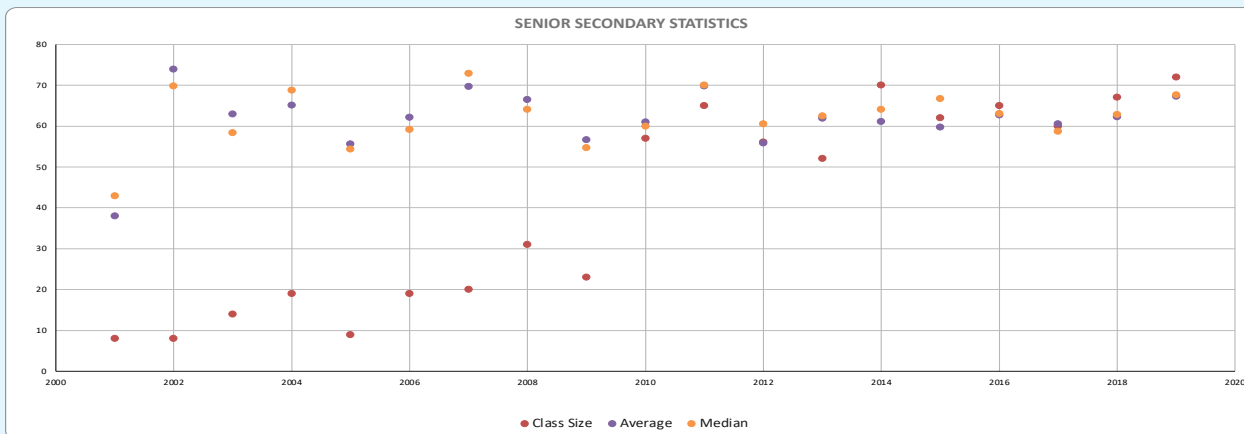
## SENIOR SECONDARY OUTCOMES

As shown in the graph the results for the Senior Secondary school has remained consistent across both campuses.

- 2.2% of ATARs scored above 95 (I the top 5% of the state)
- 10.1% of ATARs scored above 90 (in the top 10% of the state)
- 41% of ATARs scored above 80 (in the top 20% of the state)
- 62% of ATARs scored above 70 and above (in the top 30% of the state)
- 75.42% of ATARs were 60 and above (in the top 40% of the state)
- The Gilson College media ATAR was 67.33
- 10% of our current students completed their VCE certificates

SPREAD OF ATAR FOR 2021





- 100% of our current students completed their VCAL qualifications

In spite of the challenges that our VCE students faced during the year they persevered and achieved great results. The College is proud of our VCE students and their achievements.

## PASTORAL CARE AND CHAPLAINCY

### Chaplaincy at Mernda

2021 has taught us to be flexible and on our toes. When we were faced with numerous sporadic lockdowns, we wondered how we could continue to support and encourage our student's faith journey at a distance. It was definitely a learning process! In the primary school, kids would engage in our interactive chapels by recording their weekly Bible Treasure Verses and sending them in for our chaplain Sandy to put together into video montages. Other times, students would write a card for another student, who would then receive a surprise delivery live in our zoom chapels to receive their card.

In the secondary school, our online chapels became a story time, where each week we explored some of the most incredible true stories in history. In each story, we took a peek at one influential person who followed God with all they had. These were individuals like William Wilberforce, who fought for the abolition of slavery in the UK, Martin Luther, who began the Christian Reformation out of the Dark Ages, and Desmond Tutu, who opposed apartheid in South Africa, and called for the oppressed to forgive their oppressors.

The high point of our school calendar each year is our Festival of Faith, where for a whole week we celebrate our trust in God, and His centrality in our lives. For much of the year it appeared that we wouldn't be able to have this event in our primary and secondary schools because of the various covid lockdowns, but we now look forward to hosting Festival of Faith in Term 4, and finishing an unusual and challenging year with a 'bang'. We know that where we see challenges, God sees opportunities.

### Dedication Night

Global pandemics have a way of making you think more... creatively. Our annual Dedication Night is usually a tightly-packed affair, with everyone being seated in a semi-formal fashion in front of an equally packed stage. This year it was more... picnic-like. Families brought their picnic blankets, camping chairs and umbrellas and joined with students and staff in dedicating our school year to God.

Families and students were delighted to greet our retired Head of Campus, Mrs Jakupec, and to



wish her well for her plans to relocate to Brisbane in 2021 to support her parents. We were thrilled to welcome our new Head of Campus, Mrs. Raelene Delvin, to lead our school, and we know God will work powerfully through her leadership.

The Secondary Choir, led by Mrs Jess Beattie, were amazing, preceding the program and sharing a number of special items. The Junior School students all sparkled, performing two special items with the support of their music teacher, Mrs. Kat Bourjaili."

## SECTION 5 – COMMUNITY FOCUS



### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SURVEYS

Due to the COVID Pandemic there were no community, student or staff surveys collated for the year.

## SECTION 6 – CONCLUSION

The Year 2021 was a challenge, this is probably true for most schools as we navigated the constant changing landscape of onsite to online learning

In spite of the challenges with lockdown occurring for most of the school year, school life continued. We celebrated milestones, acknowledged achievements and supported each other via technological means. Excursions, outdoor activities and normal school events quickly became a thing of the past as we had to consider what we could and could not do. Temperature checking, sanitising hands and daily cleaing of touchable surfaces, physical distancing and donning masks became the norm. Current building projects that began continued to completion albeit the challenges of accessing building supplies.

The Colleges financial outlook continues to remain positive, this is a credit to continuing sound management at the local level, and of course, the leadership of God. This solid financial and philosophical foundation will provide for further developments to the program at both Taylors Hill and at Mernda.

As never before and mostly in time of need the College community came together and persevered. While the negative results of the pandemic are still being felt, there were silver linings in amongst the gloom, parents continued to actively support the staff efforts to educate our students online. We had time to reflect and change gears for the better.

Gilson College continues to be a place where students can feel safe and secure, where staff can feel supported and enriched, and where families can be a part of something larger and more permanent than themselves. That has always been the vision, and the results are as always, people of integrity and Christian character.

