

FROM THE PRINCIPAL



We are finishing 2016 with exciting activities for the students. This follows a very successful alternate academic program last week that was our most highly attended ever. We want to thank parents and students for supporting these programs, we worked hard on them.

My thanks to Oliver Wigg and the Student Representative Council for a great night at the Junior Social last week. This event is a bit of a

full stop on the year, with the junior students letting their hair down and students saying goodbye to 2016 – this year’s social was noted for the energy and non-stop dancing. The children looked lovely all dressed up, and they had fun. Thanks to the staff who attended and supported the event. I love watching the students connect and appreciate each other. There was a moment when students were all softly singing together, to a chill out song, just before the meal, that brought a tear to my eye. It was powerful moment of connection.

Acting Head of Dance Steven McTaggart, Royal Academy of Dance Leader Janne Blanch and I were honoured to attend the Royal Academy of Dance Genee held at the Sydney Opera House on Sunday. It was fantastic to be part of the large Royal Academy of Dance community and part of this important competition. While our students were not successful getting a medal they were highly competitive and had a great week. Well done to all the participants and junior winners. Ms Blanch will report the details in this newsletter.

I want to thank all staff and students for their hard work this year. I regard this a hardworking and successful year, particularly our amazing Victorian Certificate of Education results this week. The performances and activities this year have been incredible and for that I thank our students—there are so many highlights. I thank all program Academic, Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts.

In 2016 we welcomed sixteen fine young actors to our Theatre Arts Program and they proved our faith in them, they were major contributors to our school ethos and culture. We add in another sixteen students in 2017. The Theatre Arts Program is at full strength with 32.

My thanks to Assistant Principal Hilary Bland for all the support she has given me and all of us. She is an outstanding leader and I could not be as effective as your school principal without her. Thank you to Head of Student Services Rosina Gannon, Head of Academic

Donatella Mannolini, Head of Dance Tim Storey, Acting Head of Dance Steven McTaggart, Head of Visual Arts Andrew Landrigan, Head of Music Michael Sargeant and Head of Theatre Arts Chris Button for their inspiring leadership. Thanks to Leading Teacher Neil Adam and all the other leaders in our school for all they do. To their teams my thanks as well. My thanks also to Business Manager Martina Ferraro, Registrar Ema Yandall, Reception Tiffany Dias and Assistant Business Managers Stacy Mitchell and Darcie Virtue who do so much to support me and the school. They are the unsung heroes of our school.

We say goodbye to Sarah Coleman and Catherine Cash who are on family leave and Adrienne Ward who has achieved a promotion to Leading Teacher at Essendon Keilor College. Our IT team will miss Matt Guida, who has received a promotion to ICT Manager at Charles La Trobe P-12 College. We wish them all well and will miss them, our school has been enhanced by their work. We welcome a number of new staff and we will introduce all of them to you next year.

Many people tell me they have found 2016 challenging. Things seem unusually unsettled in our world, with international concerns and lack of consensus of a way forward on world problems. I continue to have faith in young people and their potential positive impact on these things in the future. Each day this school fills my heart and soul with optimism and hope. This optimism is fed by all we do, people in the arts coming together to make art and performances. Being a school leader is a very rewarding role and I feel truly blessed. I hope I have, through my leadership, in some way improved the journey your child has growing up. I want to thank our students for all they offer us.

Merry Christmas and all the best for the festive and holiday season to you. School resumes at 9:00 am on Tuesday 31 January 2017.

COLIN SIMPSON



END OF YEAR PROGRAMME 2017

It's been a busy three weeks! While most schools are winding down with many students already beginning their school holidays VCASS has whipped up another exciting end of year programme for its students. In week 8 and 9 year 10 music students were involved in music recording programme. In week 9, year 10 students were also offered a career planning programme during academic hours. Some year 10 and all year 11 students attended the academic Headstart classes and preparing themselves for VCE in 2017. It was also advantageous for our new senior students to attend Headstart. They had a chance to get to know the school better and meet many of our current students. PFA funded our Welcome Event at the beginning of the week and this was enjoyed by our new VCE cohort. We sincerely thank PFA for helping to make this a more enjoyable event for both students and staff.

Junior students not involved in the wonderful dance or music programmes spent a whole week learning how to design and print using 3D printing software and 3D printers. The school has only recently purchased these printers and this group of students were the first to use them. It was a great week of planned design activities and experimentation. I can't wait to see what students will make with the 3D printers in 2017!

Week 10 we had the VCASS activities challenge. In home groups students battled it out to become the Activities Week Champions. The groups were named after a famous dancer, gymnast, musician, artist, actor, writer and scientist-mathematician representing the diversity of pursuits in the VCASS community. Gaining points was simple. All students had to do was attend school, be punctual to activities, encourage their peers, help the teacher and show enthusiasm. Throughout the week students engaged in a wide range of activities, such as:

- cooking healthy and delicious meals
- making a bright personalised tote bag with light sensitive ink
- learning about renewable energy and experimenting with solar powered cars
- completing a scavenger hunt in French
- learning more about animation & coding
- physical education (soccer, table tennis & Tan walk)
- sewing Christmas decorations
- digital photography & high quality printing

At the end of week 10 we had much to celebrate. Student attendance was the highest it's ever been and the activities extended students educationally and socially. At the inaugural Week 10 Activities assembly Mr Simpson presented the Week 10 Activities trophy to the Isabelle Carmody group. Congratulations to all the members of the Isabelle Carmody group for their outstanding participation in all the week 10 activities!



Week 11 is our JUST FOR FUN week! Every day there is an excursion and activities at VCASS. Students have had the opportunity to sign up to fabulous excursions such as the Kylie on Stage exhibition, Christmas Melodies concert, lawn bowls at Brunswick bowls, a guided tour of the Melbourne Aquarium, singing at Strike karaoke, watching a Christmas film at Hoyts and climbing at HardRock climbing centre. Staff work hard to choose excursions that students gain enjoyment from and this year is no exception.

On Friday 16th we will have our annual end of year BBQ and students do not need to bring their lunch that day. We are looking forward to celebrating the last day of term with the junior students. Thank you to the VCASS community for supporting this year's programme. Have a safe merry Christmas and a happy and healthy start to the new year!

SINCERELY,
ADRIENNE WARD, LAYNE NAUG, JANET MCCUTCHEON,
LIZ TOWNSHEND, AMELIA OLIVA AND LEE CROSSLEY ,
END OF YEAR PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

RAD**The Adeline Genee International Ballet Competition**

I, along with Jillanne Reynolds and former RAD@VCASS Coordinator, Susan Hill, have just returned from a most exciting week in Sydney attending the Genee and all the associated activities including the Genee Dance Challenge, for students not involved in the main competition and the RAD Conference – Dance Teaching for the 21st century: Practice and Innovation. Our four candidates, Olivia Castagna, Luke Dimattina, Lily Folpp and Holly Frick were fantastic ambassadors for VCASS not only through their onstage performances but also by their professionalism offstage. This was reinforced by the many favourable comments I received from audience members as well as RAD personnel. Although not selected as finalists they held their own against some amazing competition. Almost 90 dancers from 12 countries!

VCASS Dance Teacher and Australian Ballet Resident Choreographer, Tim Harbour was the commissioned choreographer for the competition – an added bonus for our dancers! Tim created two beautiful solos, one male and one female, which he taught to all the candidates.



Holly, Lily, Luke and Olivia after the semi finals



Genee Photo-shoot

Dance Challenge

Congratulations Milei Lee who won the Level 3 section of Dance Challenge. Milei was absolutely stunning on the night! She possesses such a beautiful and innate sense of artistry and performance for such a young dancer. Special mention must go to Amelia Menzies who competed in the Level 4 section and also gave an excellent performance. I was particularly proud of the way our Genee candidates supported and encouraged both these young dancers.



Milei with her Cheer squad!

Finally a huge thank you to Colin Simpson and Acting Head of Dance, Steven McTaggart who have been such a fantastic support to the whole Genee experience this year.

**JANNE BLANCH,
RAD COORDINATOR**

DANCE

We have just returned from seeing the Royal Academy of Dance Genee International Dance Competition in the Sydney Opera House. It was a beautiful evening with balmy weather and the fantastic view of the harbour bridge in the company of many luminaries of the dance and ballet industry.

We had 6 current students participating, Milei Lee, and Amelia Menzies in the Junior Dance Challenge and Holly Frick, Lily Folpp, Olivia Castagna and Luke Diattina in the senior competition itself. Milei deserves our congratulations for winning in her section and this success is a credit not only to herself but to her teachers and family for her hard work and focus. Go Milie!

Our senior dancers did us proud too, and got through to the semi finals with many favourable comments from teachers and panel members alike, including David McAllister. Of course we would have loved them to have gone further but they have made contact with other high performing students of their own age, been coached by many different expert teachers and had a week long experience of inspiration in dance.

It was revealing that many people I talked with mentioned how versatile all the students were in the two alternate variations they had to perform. In all the competitors solos there were many contemporary, acrobatic and theatrical performance skills intertwined in balletic choreography. This reinforced my desire for our students to excel in all of the diverse genres we offer at VCASS. In speaking to Richard House, an alumni currently with the Australian Ballet, who performed during the evening, the value of our versatility was consolidated.

He praised VCASS for his training, his freedom to be a secondary school student, his ballet, tap, jazz and acrobatic and contemporary development. He reeled off two stories where he and the other VCASS alumni in the company, were often the only ones with tap, jazz, acrobatic and contemporary skills in the company. These skills now help them to be selected for the varied roles required by many choreographers who work with the Australian Ballet.

Richard's experience underlined how expert our staff are at what they do. For example: Our acrobatic training develops greater flexibility in the boys, and more upper body strength and confidence in partnering for the girls. Our contemporary, jazz and ballet skills combine effortlessly in student and staff choreography, or stand alone in works specific to that genre. We are fortunate to have so much choice at our fingertips. The Genee was a reminder of the many successes we have had this year. Multiple tertiary choices for our year 12 students, excellent VCE and ATAR scores; fantastic results in exams with Cecchetti and RAD exams; success in the Ballet Teachers Workshop competition, the calibre of our year 10 and 11 seasons and of course our continued quality of work in each season of shows.

Thank you to our community for your support of the students, staff and school activities over this year. As a dance staff team we take this time of year to be inspired by the

burgeoning journeys our students are taking and reflect on the success of so many students in the past who are still bringing joy to the world through their art practice today. Dance has always been about joy for me, and it remains so at this point where I feel we pass it on to the future generations.

We wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season and look forward to more fun, excitement, training, choreography and performance in the dance of life, in 2017!

**STEVEN MCTAGGART,
ACTING HEAD OF DANCE**

ACADEMIC

Farewell from Adrienne Ward

I'd like say a warm formal farewell to the VCASS community. Very recently I have been promoted to a Curriculum Leading Teacher at Essendon Keilor College and from 2017 will become a permanent teacher on Essendon Campus. It's unfortunate that due to the timing of this promotion I have not been able to communicate this to the student population in person. There are so many students I wish I could say goodbye to in person and it's upsetting that I won't get the chance.

Like VCASS, Essendon Keilor College is a government school and I'm looking forward to continuing to play a role in leading initiatives that will promote quality educational experiences in government schools. While at VCASS I have served as a member of School Council, as Assistant Head of Academic, Acting Head of Academic, Achievement Coordinator, Literacy Coordinator and Year 11 Level Coordinator. I will sincerely miss teaching in such a creative event with such a diversity of talented people. It's been a privilege to work here and be a part of this community for the last 6 years.

I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year.

**SINCERELY,
ADRIENNE WARD,
ACHIEVEMENT COORDINATOR
ASSISTAND HEAD OF ACADEMIC**

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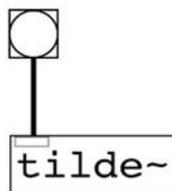
Tilde New Music Academy 2017

15-21 JANUARY
THE CHANNEL, ARTS CENTRE
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TUTORS INCLUDE

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PAULA RAE
GARY BUTLER
BRIGID BURKE
PHOEBE GREEN
BEN OPIE
MOHAMED KUBBARA
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MORE TO BE ANNOUNCED!



APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN
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