

Spirit

of Sandhurst



Issue 12
OCTOBER 2015

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Front Cover: Jahna Correa - St Patrick's Primary School Pyramid Hill

Front Cover:
- *inside*: Students from St Patrick's Primary School Tongala

Back Cover:
- *Main photo* Hunter Middleton - Holy Rosary Primary School White Hills

- *Inset photos* *From top:*
Claudia Welsh & Ava Saunders - St Joseph's Primary School Benalla
Declan Patrala - Catholic College Wodonga
Rhys Driscoll - Sacred Heart Primary School Yarrowonga
Kyle Said, Bella Sheehan & Angela Noonan
- St Mary of the Angels College Nathalia

From the Director...



At the time of writing this article for Spirit of Sandhurst we are witnessing another human tragedy in the millions of persons displaced from their homelands and fleeing into Europe to find refuge. As an educator, but more importantly as a human being, I cannot help but be stunned by the plight of so many, particularly the children. Their desperation and the incredible suffering is almost overwhelming. Amidst the confusion is a clear, strong voice of reason. Pope Francis has asked Catholics and all good people to open their hearts and their doors to the multitudes. In many practical ways, the Pope's voice has been heard, but at this point in time, there remains so much to be done.

As I make my way around the Diocese of Sandhurst I am constantly encouraged and hope-filled as a result of the goodness I encounter in our schools and parishes. In so many ways, our young people are generous and seeking to make the world a better place. They are offered opportunities to be involved in projects and campaigns which are designed to bring about positive outcomes for those who do not have what we have (and too often take for granted) in Australia. I remain a very big fan of our young, of their capacity to dream and believe they can contribute much to a better world.

This is a theme which is very well expressed by Pope Francis. On his recent visit to the United States he spent time in a poorer part of New York City and spoke to a large group of students there. He asked them to follow their dreams and never allow a sense of despair to violate their human nature. The idea of pursuing dreams led Pope Francis to speak of the inspirational Martin Luther King Jr and his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. *"His dream was that many children, many people could have equal opportunities. His dream was that many children like you could get an education. He dreamed that many men and women, like yourselves, could lift their heads high, in dignity and self-sufficiency. It is beautiful to have dreams and to be able to fight for our dreams. Don't ever forget this"*, the Pope explained. *"Today we want to keep dreaming. We celebrate all the opportunities which enable you, and us adults too, not to lose the hope of a better world with greater possibilities."* Hopes and dreams are central to the Christian message and a Catholic education. The Pope concluded his address with *"Wherever there are dreams, wherever there is joy, Jesus is always present. Always."*

As our nation looks to welcome refugees to our shores, as we have done throughout our history, we too should hold fast to the words of Pope Francis and encourage our young to keep dreaming, to imagine a better world for all and to work to make this a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Desmond". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mr Paul Desmond
Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst

WORLD YOUTH DAY

In July 2016 young Catholics of the world will gather in Krakow, Poland for World Youth Day.

World Youth Day is held internationally every two to three years at different locations around the world. In 1995 the largest number of pilgrims attended the event with more than 5.5 million young people coming together to celebrate their faith.

The theme for WYD2016 is 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy'. Krakow is where St John Paul II was Archbishop before his election to the papacy. World Youth Day in Krakow will celebrate John Paul's vision for young people, renewed again with the presence of Pope Francis.

FROM SANDHURST TO POLAND...

"I ask the youth of the world to come together to celebrate their faith in Krakow, Poland in 2016."

With these words as he closed World Youth Day 2014 in Rio de Janeiro Brazil, Pope Francis announced to the world that the ancient city of Krakow, in the centre of robustly Catholic Poland, would host one of the largest gatherings on the planet.

In the year that the Catholic Church will focus upon Mercy, the Pope has asked the young to hold as their theme: *'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy'*.

Across Australia, many young people are planning to participate in world Youth Day. Here in Victoria, we have a program for both school-aged youth and young adults, each very distinctive, each very meaningful. My role is to co-ordinate the program for the post-school young men and women from Victoria who will attend. While the young adults for whom I am responsible will not require supervision as a student does, there remains an absolute imperative that the planning and the content of the program must be precise and relevant to the faithful.

Our post-school youth are attracted to WYD for the same reasons the younger school-aged participants sign up- a genuine interest in deepening their relationship with God through a commitment to the Church. WYD will open up for them an enormous array of faith-related activities and opportunities to witness to the faith with 'brothers & sisters' from every continent and culture. Events such as WYD serve also to remind all that our Church is genuinely universal and the beliefs and rituals which define us as Catholics are timeless.

For those who have attended recent WYD celebrations, the common attitude is that it has been a life-changing experience which cemented their commitment to their Faith, but also developed within them a yearning to know and to experience more.

In co-ordinating WYD for young Victorians, I remain acutely aware that the celebrations and experiences will have a deep impact on all participants and will remain with them for the rest of their lives.

Paul Desmond - Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst



EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME!

In the lead up to World Youth Day they try to explain to you that it isn't a trip, it's a pilgrimage, so you will probably be kept up late and then woken early, you won't get a hot shower, and you might not even get a spot on the train, because it'll be like nothing you've ever seen before.

Nothing prepared me for the reality! I had been to parties where you just can't help but dance and sing. And I'd been to reunions where you just had to scream with excitement and then hug someone. But I'd never been to a party where the venue was a city, and there were 500,000 of us all celebrating FINALLY being together. And the crazy thing was we were all celebrating being Catholic, the fact that each of us believed in God who loves us, and calls us to live our lives in radical and world changing way.

Before World Youth Day I had never thought that I'd ever meet more than maybe 20 other people who believed in God enough to let it change their lives, at World Youth Day, I had my mind blown, because I didn't just meet 20 people I met thousands, and even though we had never met before when we saw each other we were overjoyed and we sang and we danced and we screamed and we hugged, and yes it was a culture shock because since when do people celebrate being Catholic?

World Youth Day showed me so many reasons why we should celebrate being Catholic. So, get out your diary and in big bold pen add in World Youth Day in Poland if you're up for the biggest experience of your life!

Darcy De Losa - Sandhurst Diocese Youth Ministry Worker



REGISTERING

Are you interested in joining the Victorian World Youth Day pilgrimage to Krakow in 2016? Have you registered your interest with the organizing committee? To keep up to date with the latest World Youth Day news for the Victorian pilgrimage, join the mailing list at <http://www.cam.org.au/wydvictoria/Registration>.

The pilgrim journey has already begun for many young Victorians, with applications now being received to join the pilgrimage to World Youth Day 2016. With some of our pilgrimages filling fast, it is time to register your interest at wyd2016.com.au. Once you have registered you will then receive an application pack by email (you will have 21 days to return your application by post). Your application will be reviewed, after which time you will receive login details to enable you to complete your online registration. You will then have 14 days to submit the \$500 deposit required to secure your place with us on the Victorian pilgrimage to Krakow.

Having conducted information nights across our diocese in August, interest from Sandhurst youth has so far been encouraging with several students and other young people, including teachers, submitting applications. We hope that similar numbers as for WYD Rio in 2013 will join us but obviously the sooner you register and begin the application process the more certain you will be of having a place on one of the four exciting Victorian pilgrimage options! Itineraries and indicative prices can be found at <http://www.cam.org.au/wydvictoria/Pilgrimages>.

Note that students have only one pilgrimage option available to them (Krakow Connect).

Do zobaczenia w Krakowie! (see you in Krakow!)

David Walker - Education Officer: Secondary Religious Education



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Yingadi

a spiritual immersion

On a chilly morning on the 10th of August a group of CEO Sandhurst educators gathered in Bendigo and headed north as part of the Yingadi Immersion. This five day Aboriginal spirituality experience was organized by the Catholic Education Office Sandhurst in collaboration with the Edmond Rice Centre (Amberley) and in partnership with Vicki Clarke, a Mutthi Mutthi woman and spiritual leader for the group. Yingadi was not only a spiritual journey. It was a journey through this nation's history, set within the ancient story of Lake Mungo. This experience proved to be one that will be long remembered by all participants and the messages and personal connection to Aboriginal spirituality will be carried for a lifetime.

Vicki, generously supported by her family, helped participants connect Aboriginality, Christianity and spirituality. Vicki shared her love of, connection to, and respect for the land, particularly of the Lake Mungo area. She invited each participant, together with their ancestors to 'come' (Yingadi) on a journey that connected God and the rich spirituality of the Aboriginal people.

The group was introduced to many Aboriginal leaders and guides across the Immersion. Each Elder shared their own expertise and explained their spiritual connections to land and invited participants to join them in experiencing and understanding this connection. Each Elder tapped into their deep spirituality.

The first stop was to connect with Frank McKinley, an Elder and custodian of the local message stick. Unfortunately, Frank recently passed away – Return to the Dreaming 3rd September. Frank welcomed the group to country and spoke of his deep connection to the land the people. During this significant welcome he handed the group a message stick from his wife's people and told us it would provide safe passage and connection to each Aboriginal guide on the journey. The journey was complete when the message stick was safely returned.

After arriving at Lake Mungo a fire was respectfully lit. This fire was to remain lit for the duration of the stay and symbolized the connection between participants and to the Aboriginal spirit.

May the sacred fire be in our minds, helping to make our thoughts true, good and just.

The three group 'smokings', led by Aboriginal Elders, signified purification and a cleansing of minds. These ceremonies clearly made the connection between personal spirituality and Aboriginal spirituality.

May the sacred fire be in our eyes, to open our eyes to see what is great in life.

There were many memorable experiences. The group was introduced to the Dipipo tree, on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River, and told of its spiritual connection to new life and birth. The group was asked to feel the presence of spirit, as mothers past and present have experienced during childbirth at this significant site.

May the sacred fire be in our arms and hands, so that we build up love and protection for all people.

The group spent time watching each sunset and sunrise and reflected on the life and spirit of the ancient peoples of the land. They reflected on how the sands of time are uncovering their bones, bones that have been laid to rest for over 42,000 years.

Ernie, an Aboriginal park ranger, helped the group understand the flora and fauna of the land long ago and reflected on the current complexities of ownership and the complexities of preserving this ancient world and the implications of it resurfacing.

May the sacred fire be on our lips, so that we may speak the truth in kindness.

A night was spent watching the ancient sky and participants located the Emu who lay across the Milky Way. Local Dreamtime stories were told and the group learned that the night sky was,



and is, used as a navigation tool. This evening was most memorable for all present.

The group spent time in conversation and reflected on the changes in history, early government policies and the establishment of sheep stations that impacted on the history of Aboriginal people in the area. The current situation for Aboriginal students in our schools across the Diocese of Sandhurst was also discussed. There were stories of strength and determination in local communities and the vulnerabilities effecting student learning was shared.

May the sacred fire be in our minds, helping us make thoughts true and good and just.

Time was spent in personal prayer, being in relationship with God, the earth and others. Bernadette Pearce, and Education Officer from the Catholic Education Office remembers her experience with 'Dadirri' saying, 'We had an opportunity to engage in this special Aboriginal practice of deep inner listening and quiet still awareness. As is intended by this practice, is the renewal that it brings to self as well as a sense of peace and wholeness. The importance of taking

the time to listen is what I have taken with me. To be comfortable in the silence and learn from the Aboriginal way of being still and waiting. To let things take time and follow their natural course. Dadirri reminds us that we have 'deep springs within each one of us'. This is our spirit. We need to harness this for our good and the good of all.'

May the sacred fire be in our legs and feet enabling us to walk Mother Earth with respect and care.

Participants felt the sand on their feet, watched huge kangaroos stand sentinel as they walked toward sacred sites and saw the iconic sand structures that transform Lake Mungo into a lunar landscape.

The Yingadi Immersion was an experience that transformed thinking and took participants on a wonderful personal spiritual journey.

Ellen Hauser

Education Officer: Teaching and Learning – Literacy
Catholic Education Office Sandhurst



The Integrated Catholic Online Network

ICON



With the transition of ICON set to commence in 2016 we take a look at what ICON is and how it will benefit students, teachers and admin staff in Catholic schools.

The Integrated Catholic Online Network (ICON) project will provide the core technologies for Victorian Catholic education for the next decade and learning solutions to foster rich and deep student learning.

ICON is a collaborative project between Victorian Catholic schools and the four Victorian Catholic education offices in the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the dioceses of Sandhurst, Ballarat and Sale.

The Integrated Catholic Online Network (ICON) is underpinned by our commitment, as educators in Catholic schools, to ensuring that every student in Victorian Catholic schools has access to the same educational opportunities and resources.

For the first time, every Catholic school in Victoria, regardless of size or resources, will have equal access to a package of learning, teaching, collaboration, administration, planning and reporting technologies.

Through ICON schools will be able to:

- Support and enable high-quality learning and teaching
- Keep parents up-to-date with their child's progress at any stage of the year
- Make regular school involvement easier for working parents
- Enhance collaboration between parents and teachers
- Streamline the management of school administration and communications.

A customised portal will function as a gateway or starting point for parents, students, teachers and staff to access the ICON applications that are relevant to them.

ICON will include three main areas; eAdm in, ePlan and eLearn.

eAdmin will provide all Catholic schools in Victoria with a streamlined and efficient way to manage human resources, finances and interactions with parents. An added benefit of eAdmin will be that student records and information will be able to follow a student when they change schools, making the transition easier for both parents and schools.

ePlan will provide comprehensive, easy-to-read reports on student learning and wellbeing to help school leaders and teachers to work with families to support the full flourishing of each student.

eLearn will provide teachers and students with access to a streamlined, efficient and integrated suite of collaboration tools and learning resources that will support and enable high-quality learning and teaching.

Collaboration improves learning by allowing learners to share content, compare and contrast ideas and points of view, and build new understandings and knowledge through collective engagement.

Through eLearn tools, such as Google Apps for Education, student collaboration with peers and teachers will be enhanced as they will be able to easily collaborate online with others in their school, other Catholic schools in their area and across the whole Victorian Catholic system.

ICON will provide all of our schools with access to a range of technologies that will help teachers to transform learning by facilitating deep learning opportunities in both a local and global environment.



SANDHURST ICON UPDATE OCTOBER 2015

Integrated Catholic Online Network (ICON) Project Update:

A number of personnel from the Diocese of Sandhurst hold positions of responsibility on various Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) committees which are developing aspects of the Integrated Catholic Online Network (ICON). This project which has been underway for six years will have a great impact on the services provided in schools and via Catholic Education Sandhurst, and indeed Catholic Schools across the State.

Mr Tom Sexton, Assistant to the Director: Planning & Resources, recently provided an update for Sandhurst school leaders in order to give confidence that a very workable tool is being developed.

Those who have had the opportunity to see the ePlan (business intelligence tool) are very excited by the possibilities of this tool to analyse student and administration data. Administration Officers and Business Managers will be looking forward to a system wide eAdmin package which will automate reports and surveys required for diocesan, state and federal accountability, reporting and resourcing needs. Principals and teaching staff will be delighted to know that learning management systems and reporting packages that are common to Victorian Catholic Schools will be integrated into ICON as part of the eLearn component.

As part of eLearn preparation, Google Apps for Education (GAPE) training continues across Sandhurst. Implementation training for ICON is well underway, Sandhurst schools will start migrating to ICON in 2016, we are planning to have all Sandhurst Schools migrated over by the end of 2017.

Schools will receive training, using a 'train the trainer' model over two terms before migrating in the following term. Sandhurst schools are looking forward to the benefits that ICON will bring to school administration, reporting requirements and enhanced teaching and learning opportunities.

The first group of six Sandhurst schools will commence the transition to ICON in Term 1, 2016, with a further ten schools beginning their journey in Term 3, 2016. It is anticipated that all Victorian Catholic schools will be switched over to ICON by the end of 2018.

Tom Sexton

*Assistant to the Director: Planning & Resources
Catholic Education Office Sandhurst*



Small Schools **BIG** **Communities**



SANDHURST

**Chiltern
Elmore
Inglewood
Pyramid Hill
Tallangatta
Tongala**

Small country towns are a wonderful part of the great Australian landscape, no matter which direction you travel rural communities are dotted across the map, they are a destination for tourists, a place to stop for a coffee and something to eat, or for some, a place to call home.

Within these small towns are some of the proudest and most innovative communities in Australia. Over the years some of these towns have had to reinvent themselves, not once, but in some cases, many times over. In Victoria a number of these towns were built on gold as people flocked to the region in the thousands in search of their fortune. When the supply of gold dwindled, a large number of the population moved on and the towns were left to find other ways of being.

Farming, primary industry, health care, food and retail outlets became the staple businesses in these towns and those who stayed did so because they actively chose the 'good life' for themselves and their families. The Church has also played a large role in shaping the identity of these towns and has provided ministry and spiritual support and to the people over the years.

But how does a small country town attract families to the area if they cannot provide schools for the children? If children are the future of these small Australian communities then country schools are more than just a valuable resource, they are the lifeblood of the small country town.

Rural schools provide more than just a place to learn, they provide a space for community to gather and a place to belong. In turn children are taught the importance of being a part of a community and learn how to be active citizens.

Catholic schools are committed to providing an important part in raising the quality of local life and ensuring the future of these rural communities.

St Mary's Primary School

INGLEWOOD

Founded in 1859, Inglewood was an important gold mining centre during the Victorian Gold Rush of the 1850s and 1860s. In its heyday the population on the field was estimated to be greater than 40,000, ranking among the biggest rushes in Victoria's history

School: St Mary's Primary School (Est. 1860)

Parish Priest: Fr Rom Hayes

Principal: Ms Sharee Whiteacre

Students: 38

Community

St. Mary's School Inglewood is a small school with a current enrolment of 38. We take pride in our school and all its involvements in the local community. We feel that being involved in the community allows us to share in its vision and provides important relationships with all involved. We have a sense of integration in the community.

The students from St Mary's participate in many community based activities which connect students, staff and families to the wider Inglewood community. One program which brings together local primary schools from Inglewood and neighbouring Bridgewater is an incursion/excursion program which fosters relationships between the schools and allows the children to develop relationships outside of their comfort zone.

As a school, we utilise the local facilities to have a visible presence in the town, school productions are held at the Town Hall and the local football oval is used for our Caritas Ks Fun Run. Grade 5/6 children visit the elderly citizens at the Inglewood Hostel every fortnight and the Parents and Friends cater for many local events.

St Mary's School holds a Breakfast Club twice a week and community members are invited to help run this. The local Lion's Club provides food for the Breakfast Club with the 'Helping Hand' initiative and a local program called 'Mentoring Mates' assists children who need extra assistance with their learning.

Inglewood area has a rich and wonderful history and St Mary's school has proudly been a part of this community for more than a hundred years.

- *Sharee Whiteacre*



St Michael's Primary School

TALLANGATTA

The township of Tallangatta holds a unique place in Australia's history. The original township of Tallangatta was founded in 1871 on the Mitta Mitta River. But with the construction of the Lake Hume Dam in the 1950's the township was moved 8km west and the new township was founded in 1955.

School: St Michael's Primary School (Est. 1958)

Parish Priest: Fr Joseph Pothenparampil

Principal: Ms Elizabeth Vaughan

Students: 44

Community

Although St Michael's is considered as a small school, the role that the school plays within the Parish and Tallangatta community is perhaps even more important than schools which are located in more populated areas. A declining population in rural Victoria due to economic factors and agriculture; impacts significantly on the viability of schools in small rural communities and this poses challenges for a small school such as St Michael's to build and sustain robust school-community partnerships. As a principal, it is vital to be aware and proactive in nurturing and building relationships with the parish and the local Tallangatta community.

At St Michael's, the life of the school is connected to the parish and local Tallangatta community through initiatives such as the Tallangatta Sports Festival which is organized and run by the Parents and Friends (and staff) of St Michael's and has consistently grown into a major community event with involvement of a number of community organizations (the Shire offices, SES, CFA, local businesses etc). St Michael's students are involved in Shire run programs – walk to school, movie nights, Healthy Achievement Program and St Michael's participates with other local small schools in local activities and events.

The partnerships our school seeks to establish with our local community needs to be effective and sustainable.

If St Michael's did not contribute valuable support for community functions with our parish and local community, the school would not be viable. In Tallangatta, parents have reduced choice in terms of educational provision, therefore the vitality of the contributions that St Michael's offer to the Tallangatta community; are a crucial consideration for parents and students.

- *Elizabeth Vaughan*



St Patrick's Primary School

TONGALA

Tongala is located between Echuca and Kyabram, and is the main service centre for its immediate rural community. The main industry of the area is dairy and agriculture, especially dairy with Nestlé Australia's operating a major liquid manufacturing unit in Tongala. Other significant industries include grain processing, abattoirs and dairy related businesses.

School: St Patrick's Primary School (Est. 1959)

Parish Priest: Fr Michael Morley

Principal: Ms Katrina Johnson

Students: 41

Community

Our small school of St Patrick's would not flourish without the support of our local parish and wider Tongala community. Our school, our parents and our community work together to maximize the learning, wellbeing and life chances for our students and ensure that they are given the best opportunity to succeed.

Tongala is a vibrant and proactive community that is committed to providing services, choices and support for its members. Our school benefits from the combined strength and power of this community and our students participate in many local activities. An example of this is the Tongala Lions Club Public Speaking Competition and regular visits to Rocky McHale, the local Aged Care Facility. We take an active part in Lone Pine Ceremonies, Beersheeba Day, Anzac Day, Remembrance Day and the Tongala Community Book Week activities. Student's benefit from being on the roster for Meals on Wheels and learning how to play lawn bowls from local members at the Tongala Bowling Club. The emphasis is that we know our community and its members and they know us. We look out for each other and enhance one another.

- *Katrina Johnson*



Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School

ELMORE

Elmore is a small town in Victoria north-east of Bendigo. Established in 1864 on the Campaspe River to serve pastoral runs, Elmore is a farming region and is home to the renowned Elmore Field days held annually over three days.

School: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School (Est. 1902)

Parish Priest: Rev Alex Nim

Principal: Ms Elizabeth Trewick

Students: 28

Community

Elmore is home to approximately 600 people and there are two schools in working within the community. We are very lucky to have the opportunity to raise a significant amount of money through volunteer work in this wonderful community. The Elmore Field Days runs for three days in October and parents from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School (OLSH) work with 15 other community organisations to provide the catering for all visitors to the event. We also work with the Elmore Primary School in waste management, each evening 10 workers from both schools organise rubbish bins so they can be emptied. For the first time this year the two schools will travel to the Field Days site and work together to EMU Bob the site for left over rubbish from the Field Days, I see this as community in action.

As a principal, a positive relationship with community organisations is important, sometimes it's as simple checking dates for meetings before setting our own meeting dates. Often parents that need to attend our meetings are also involved in other organisations, so it is important to recognise this and work with them. Involving the parish in school celebrations such as Sacraments, beginning and end of year masses and fundraising events is important, this is how we learn and live in faith. It is vital that we teach our students the importance of supporting our small community, teaching them the history and tradition of Elmore will enable them to become valuable community members and ensure that Elmore continues to flourish.

- *Elizabeth Trewick*



St Joseph's Primary School

CHILTERN

The township of Chiltern was surveyed in 1853 but not established until gold discoveries in 1858-59 during the Victorian Gold Rush period. Chiltern is a historic town with many of the buildings classified by the National Trust. The 18th Prime Minister of Australia, Mr John McEwen was born in Chiltern in 1900.

School: St Joseph's Primary School (Est. 1901)

Parish Priest: Fr Brian Carey

Principal: Ms Maryanne Saxby

Students: 36

Community

Chiltern is a generous community. It is known for its willingness to reach out and support others. Most people are volunteers in several organizations or a member of several clubs. The school provides another point around which members of the Chiltern community gather to support each other, share and celebrate.

The school participates in Shire activities, ANZAC commemorations, supports Red Cross and is involved in recreational activities with our Senior Citizens. Our annual School ball is a much anticipated community event. The town knows that we are welcoming and can be called on when needed.

St Joseph's, or St Joey's, has a place in the heart of the town. St Joseph's has a tremendous history and a strong sense of tradition. Recently, we celebrated over 100 years of Catholic education, in revisiting these years we realized how much the school community has contributed to the life of the town and vice versa. Our continued involvement in the life of the town connects our Parish to the community. Parish, school and families, living out our lives in service to each other.

- *Maryanne Saxby*



St Patrick's Primary School

PYRAMID HILL

Pyramid Hill is a small town in Victoria's northern plains with a population of approximately 500. The township is named after a nearby hill that resembles a pyramid. Originally the town was situated at the base of Pyramid Hill, but was relocated when the railway station was built in 1884. Pyramid Hill is primarily a farming region.

School: St Patrick's Primary School (Est. 1956)

Parish Priest: Rev Eugene Dela Corte

Principal: Mrs Jasmine Ryan

Students: 21

Community

St Patrick's Primary school is a valuable part of the Pyramid Hill community. Each school, regardless of its size, has much to contribute and gain within its local surrounds. St Patrick's from all accounts has strived to have solid relations within the community and seizes every opportunity to invite members of the community in to enhance and deepen our learning. Our size is a gift that provides us with the flexibility to shape and tailor learning that not only challenges the children academically yet nurtures their gifts, talents and interests.

As a school we work with many entities in the community from the larger state school to the elderly peoples hostel. Through such relations there is a shared care and interest of all children in the Pyramid Hill community. This is fundamental to the wellbeing and success of children in small rural areas where the community is pivotal in supporting our young people's growth and encouraging their aspirations.

A school is usually the core of its community and our children are well adjusted and well known by everyone in Pyramid Hill. St Patrick's is larger than the building that it encompasses. It provides a central place for people to share, grow, connect, belong and simply be together. Our connections with our local community members, our Parishioners and our neighbouring communities are all relationships that are vital to who we are and what we do.

- *Jasmine Ryan*



HARRIETVILLE

“a jewel in the crown”

If there is a jewel in the crown of the Sandhurst Diocese, then picturesque Feathertop Chalet in Harrietville must surely be it.

A branch of the mighty Ovens River meanders through the chalet's grounds which are situated at the foot of Mount Feathertop. From every aspect the views and mountain surrounding provide a superb backdrop to exceptional facilities which can be enjoyed all year round, but Harrietville is more than just a magnificent destination, it is a place to gather, for spiritual retreats, conferences and to recharge the batteries. Feathertop Chalet meets the mission of the Diocese in a way that is both meaningful and extraordinary.

When Feathertop Chalet was purchased by the Sandhurst Diocese in 1990 it was with a specific purpose in mind. The purchase was driven by a need to provide a suitable venue for school camps, retreats and as a base for the professional, personal and faith development of teachers and parish groups; in essence, Feathertop Chalet is a place dedicated to enhancing the mission of the Church.

Bishop Noel Daly who was the fifth Bishop of Sandhurst strongly supported the initiative, together with then Director of Catholic Education Adrian Sexton. After much consultation with Parish and Catholic Education communities the Chalet was purchased and the vision for Feathertop Chalet was established.

An important aspect of the vision for Feathertop from the beginning was to provide low or cost free holidays for families in need and particular for children with a disability, their parents and siblings.

“I make this promise to you: Feathertop will play a pivotal role in our care for families in need, in crisis and for those children with disabilities. This will be a key plank in the Mission Statement of Feathertop,” said Bishop Daly.

In addition to the chalet's original mission it continues to operate as a tourist facility for the general public including family holidays and as a home base for skiers. With extensive grounds and excellent facilities the venue appeals to a wide range of people and is a venue for all seasons.

Feathertop Chalet can accommodate large school groups and includes a 210 seat conference centre with state of the art facilities. Feathertop also features a 12.5m heated pool, tennis and squash courts, sauna, recreational hall and restaurant all set on picturesque grounds. Feathertop Chalet also welcomes groups back each year to experience the snowfields of Mt Hotham. The Chalet offers on-site ski hire, which includes skis, snow boards, clothing and accessories.

This not-for-profit facility is unique, not only because of the magnificent setting but because of the intention of Feathertop to provide a spiritual place for the people of Sandhurst and beyond. Feathertop Chalet is truly a jewel in the crown of the Sandhurst Diocese.

“With extensive grounds and excellent facilities the venue appeals to a wide range of people and is a venue for all seasons.”

WHY STAY?

FAMILIES

Offering beautiful scenery and a range of activities, Feathertop Chalet, Harrietville is the perfect holiday destination for families catering for all ages. From small to large extended families, the Chalet is the perfect setting for reunions and escapes.

ACTIVITIES

As well as the onsite heated swimming pool, mini golf, tennis courts, games hall and spacious grounds, guests can take advantage of the many activities this wonderful region offers. Take a mountain bike down to the trout farm, catch your lunch and bring it back for the BBQ. Hike for fifteen minutes or so along the Bon Accord Track past the Chinese Settlement and, with luck, you could get some great photos of the local Samba deer. Abseiling, archery, gold panning and fly fishing are just some of the other activities on offer.

SKIERS/CYCLISTS

At the base of Hotham, Feathertop is an ideal base and more economical option to access the slopes. The Chalet offers on-site ski hire, which includes skis, snow boards, clothing and accessories.

Escape the mundane, try walking Mt Feathertop or the Razorback, cycle Mt Hotham or enjoy the surrounds of the Alpine National Parks.

INITIATIVES

It is a chance for Feathertop Chalet to demonstrate some of the resource management initiatives and strategies they have implemented as well as receive feedback from the sustainability educators.

Feathertop Chalet in partnership with Catholic Education Sandhurst are committed to providing educational, informative and applied programs for school groups that attend the facility. These programs have been enhanced due to better resources, upgraded programs and innovative facilitation which enables school groups to embrace the unique outdoors of Feathertop as well as learn more about the alpine environment and how it can be cared for.

SCHOOL CAMPS

With room to accommodate up to 200 students, Feathertop Chalet has been providing a memorable camping experience for schools for over two decades. Excellent on-site facilities are complemented by extensive local activities including bush walking, mountain biking and of course, snow skiing throughout the winter months. School camps can be centred around a particular theme or focus, so the learning continues outside of the classroom in the beautiful surrounds of the Chalet grounds.



CONTACT

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Happy, healthy, active!

In recent years the spotlight has been on the obesity epidemic sweeping the world and Australia is no exception, in fact alarming statistics place Aussie kids amongst the most obese in the world.

The number of overweight children in Australia has doubled in recent years, with a quarter of children considered overweight or obese.

So what are schools doing to address this major health risk for students?

Healthy eating programs and education about lifestyle and exercise are critical to improving health and fitness for all students, and schools are rising to the challenge. With programs like Stephanie Alexander's Kitchen Garden and government guidelines for healthy canteens, schools are working towards creating a culture where nutritious foods and a healthy lifestyle are actively chosen.

Another challenge in the fight against obesity is targeting the sedentary behaviour of young Australians who are more likely to play a game on a digital device than seek physical activity. One program addressing this concern is the Bluearth Active Schools Program which is devoted to improving kids' physical, social and emotional health.

With the 'Bluearth' program having a large presence in the Sandhurst diocese it's a great opportunity to look a little closer at this program which has been embraced by more than 60% of Sandhurst Primary Schools.



WHO IS BLUEARTH?

Bluearth is a national health promotion organisations on a mission to improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians. Bluearth works with Aussie kids to give them the skills and motivation to lead active lives.

THE BLUEARTH STORY...

Founded by Mr Malcolm Freake OAM in 2000 the Bluearth Program is inspired by the simple philosophy that an active lifestyle instils confidence, resilience, determination, self-awareness and general good health. Since Bluearth was established the program has brought the joy and power of movement to well over 280,000 school students, 4,400 teachers and 1000 different schools across Australia.

In a very short time, the results of the Bluearth program clearly demonstrated many health, social and behavioural benefits to schoolchildren. With growing interest from schools across the country, Bluearth became a national entity in 2005. During this time the team realised that to build capacity in schools there needed to be an up-skilling in teacher delivery of activity and the Professional Learning Program was developed.

From humble beginnings, nurtured by the passion of one family, Bluearth has grown and now supports active living across diverse communities in Australia. Bluearth continues to work in schools but also recognises the importance of parents and families in creating active lives.

Bluearth is committed to delivering their own programs and with partners providing information, training and also advocating for a greater focus on physical activity for the wellbeing of individuals, communities and the nation. The Bluearth approach encourages children and adults alike to be active, to reflect, to learn and to enjoy.

**“As always we`ve
been very impressed with
Bluearth and the way they have
engaged our staff and students in
the program. They are continually
evolving and seeking ways
to enhance wellness
in children.”**

**Paul Maher
Principal
Sacred Heart Primary
Yarrowonga**



St Kilian's Primary School Bendigo

MOVING IS LEARNING

Physical activity and movement is essential for students to learn about themselves and to meet and solve challenges in their living environment. Engaging in regular physical activity offers students more than physical health benefits. It provides opportunities for social interaction; helping to develop their ability to listen to and follow instructions, wait for their turn and choose ways of action appropriate for the situation. Furthermore, physical activity provides them with opportunities to communicate, develop teamwork skills and the ability to co-operate with different people.

WHAT THEY DO

- The Bluearth Active Schools Program supports children's learning and development through delivering evidence-based programs, training teachers, and using physical activity to develop children's social and emotional wellbeing as well as their physical health.
- Bluearth works with the fitness industry to develop a strong community of people working together to ensure more people reap the benefits of an active life.
- Bluearth works in partnership with other organisations using the transformative power of physical activity to develop individuals and communities.
- Bluearth supports parents to create active families as well as providing information and resources.
- The Bluearth Program advocates for innovative solutions to provide greater opportunities for children, families and communities to be active.

70%
of Australians adults are either sedentary or have low levels of physical activity

Two thirds of our children
DO NOT
meet the daily physical activity guidelines

Less
than a third of children meet the sedentary behaviour guidelines of 'no more than 2 hours of screen-based entertainment' every day

60%
of Australian adults do less than the recommended **30 minutes** of moderate intensity physical activity per day

"We have engaged Bluearth for many years, they are integral to our school. They are always very professional and are always happy to come along to any activities on the weekend that promote a healthy lifestyle. Excellent."

Kitty Hancock
Principal
St Joseph's Primary
Beechworth

 **BLUEARTH**

CONTACT
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FESTIVAL OF THE SACRED

The second Festival of the Sacred for 2015 took place at St Francis of the Fields Primary School, Strathfieldsaye at the end of term three.

Over 700 grades five and six students from the Western Deanery took part in the festival which showcases the dramatic, choral and musical talents of students in the deanery. Cast members from the Catholic College Bendigo year nine production, Hairspray also performed at the event.

The Festival of the Sacred takes place across the three deaneries every two years alternating with Sandhurst Arts on Show. The final Festival of the Sacred for 2015 will be held later this term in the Goulburn Valley Deanery.



St Francis of the Fields Primary
Strathfieldsaye



Western Deanery Schools



St Mary's Primary
Inglewood



St Joseph's Primary
Kerang



St Peter's
Primary
North Bendigo



St Mary's Primary
Echuca



St Mary's Primary
Cohuna

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