

Academic artistry

Dr Pauline Turner, like Mr Gebhardt, was an agent of change. It was a deliberate Council decision to appoint such a Principal to succeed Mr Sheahan in 1996. A key difference between Dr Turner and Mr Gebhardt was that the College community seemed more prepared to accept change by the mid-1990s. She possessed exactly what the Council wanted: strong academic qualifications, an incisive focus on education and excellent administration skills. A BA from the University of Western Australia was followed with a Master's degree from the University of Paris, and a PhD from the University of Sydney. While Head of Languages when teaching for seventeen years at Abbotsleigh in Sydney, Dr Turner was the founding coordinator of Languages Professional Development of the Association of Independent Schools in New South Wales, and also on the New South Wales Board of Studies. At co-educational school Pembroke, in Adelaide, she was Head of the Senior School from 1993.¹

Despite this impressive background, initially it was Dr Turner's position as the first female Principal of an APS school that caught people's attention, and a ripple of surprise went through the College community. Once the novelty wore off, her educational aims for the College took centre stage, and she is now widely admired for her formidable intellectual capacity and academic strengths, and for her immovable commitment to providing a well-rounded education as well as fostering academic rigour. She has a formal manner and also a deep thoughtfulness about everything she says and does.² Students saw this, too, and more: 'She ran a tight ship, and didn't suffer fools', reflects Old Collegian John O'Brien (2002), school Vice Captain, 'but once you get to know her, you see her great warmth and wit'.³

Dr Turner's educational philosophy had at its heart an emphasis on high academic standards and high teaching standards:

As far as curriculum is concerned, I am at one with the College in favouring a broadly based, generalist education. We need to encourage a curriculum that is *liberal* in its offerings, *rigorous* in its standards but also *innovative* in its pedagogy. All of our students must acquire basic skills and a strong sense of their 'cultural' heritage through the study of traditional disciplines but at the same time we need to be nudging at certain frontiers and enhancing curriculum and learning opportunities for all.⁴



Dr Pauline Turner

Margaret Lethbridge, 2000



The focus on rigorous academic standards began immediately, when comprehensive end-of-year examinations were introduced in 1996 for Years 9 and 10.

Her even-handed approach to the provision of a well-rounded education was seen in two major, but very different, new facilities: the Aquatic Centre (now known as the Rec Centre) and the Keith Humble Centre for Music and the Performing Arts. As well, it was seen in the close and continual attention to academic improvement and the enhancement of other areas from social service to outdoor education. The best of the past, such as the reintroduction of the Founders' Day Service in 2002, was coupled with the new, such as the intense development of modern information and communication technology (ICT) facilities.

The focus on rigorous academic standards began immediately, when comprehensive end-of-year examinations were introduced in 1996 for Years 9 and 10. These students had previously sat tests in only some core subjects, such as Mathematics, Science and History. 'There are several good reasons for our decision', Dr Turner explained.

In the first instance, it is desirable for students to revise a sustained body of knowledge periodically. Secondly, examination technique is something that requires regular practice, and it is to every student's advantage to have accumulated some reasonable experience in working under timed conditions before entering the more pressured VCE years.⁵

Academic achievements of Senior School students were recognised with the award of Academic Colours at Speech Day from 2002. From 2003, recreational Physical Education was withdrawn from the Year 11 group of core subjects to allocate more time to English and Mathematics. By 2006, more than half of the Year 10 cohort elected to get a head start by taking a VCE subject.⁶ Mathematics and English received further support in 2008 with the introduction of an after-school tutorial program. From that year, too, Year 12 students were given supervised study periods.⁷

The appointment of Mary Mason (2003–present) as Director of Teaching and Learning became fundamental to the College's future educational aims and academic outcomes. Her work on the academic programs at Methodist Ladies' College and Wesley College had profound impact on those schools, and she warned the community about the big challenges ahead: 'We have a diversity of voices to which we need to listen because each one offers us an insight into direction. It will be hard and at times painful work. Change means reconceptualizing what we are doing now as well as moving into new things.'⁸ Mrs Mason encouraged teachers to continually reflect on their teaching methods, explore new research, read widely and attend courses and conferences and other professional development opportunities in a continuing cycle of renewal. By 2008, ten College teachers had enrolled in a Masters of Education Studies at the University of Ballarat, subsidised by the school. The College joined the Ithaka project in 2005 at the University of Melbourne on the development of intellectual character – which aligned nicely with one of the College's goals in the Strategic Education Plan.⁹ Experiential learning flourished with the introduction of Art in the City in 2004, under the guidance of Art Teacher Mary Preece (2004–07) and Mrs Mason. The week-long program for Year 9 students involved intensive study and expressions of art by exploring Melbourne's inner city. In 2005, the program was extended to include History and Geography, led by teachers Di Black and Deb Filling. Science, Media and English were added by 2007 and students regard the City programs as a highlight of Year 9.

Senior teachers had important roles to play in supporting the culture of academic renewal, in particular, Joint Heads of Senior School Mrs Lethbridge (2000–07) and Roger Smith – the latter Director of Curriculum since 1997 and Joint Head of Senior School since 2000 – and Joan Gill, who succeeded Mrs Lethbridge in 2008. Many teachers thrived on the intense professional development. But it brought considerable challenges, too, with a confronting focus on teaching quality and standards, and extra hours required for continual professional development. Council's response was supportive: 'Dr Turner was focusing on getting the best out of students, and teachers were prepared to work extremely hard with students to implement the programs that she assisted in creating', states Alan Williamson, Chair of Council (1997–2006). He continues: 'she developed an education policy, which is still being implemented, that was quite radical in terms of the programs created from it. It certainly required a good deal of change on the part of teaching staff.'¹⁰ Change is ongoing: in 2004, a Council-based Education Committee was established; in 2006, in collaboration with university academics, teachers began extensive research into the school's literacy and numeracy teaching and students' results in those areas. As a result, a Literacy specialist began an intervention program for Year 7 students in 2008.¹¹ 'Pauline Turner's vision of educational advancement, and engaging people who share that vision, has been the major strategic change of her period at the College. It has created an environment where students learn how to learn', reflects current Council Chairman Hugh Seward.¹²

It has been a concentrated period of educational change, which tested Dr Turner's management skills and everyone around her:

A teacher's life is always a busy life, particularly when you have full involvement in a co-curricular program, so to find the space in their heads and the time to be able to embrace change was very tricky. Change is messy sometimes and doesn't necessarily lead to improvement straight away. We've tried to consult and to set common goals and many staff recognise that there's been great advantage in those changes, and that we are a very different school now from the one we were a few years ago.¹³

Alan Williamson



Dr Hugh Seward



To encourage and reward outstanding teaching at the College, a new Exemplary Teacher Class category was introduced in 2009, taken up by a small number of teachers at first.

The College was the highest performing school outside Melbourne, from 1996 to 2003, on the basis of achieving VCE scores of 40 or more.¹⁴ Premier's VCE Awards, now also regarded as a measure of academic excellence, began to flow the College's way when four Year 12 students of 2003 gained Premier's Awards: Annie Xin, Sophie Betts, Timothy Hobday and Claire Varley. In 2005, Stephanie Smith gained two Premier's Awards and Stephen Green one, and four students gained awards in 2006. Although Mrs Lethbridge found that among a proportion of the students it was still not 'cool' to be academically strong, unless you were also a successful sportsperson, recent graduate Amanda May (2006) found that by Year 12 almost every student wanted to learn and 'to do as well as possible'.¹⁵ Despite their heavy workload, the high standard of teaching and the additional out-of-class help and support are characteristics of College staff that are consistently praised by School Captains in their end-of-year reports in *Pegasus*.

As well as an emphasis on academic excellence, the traditional College aim for a well-rounded education remained fundamental to the school's philosophy. 'Academic rigour is just one of our aims', says Dr Turner.¹⁶ She 'cultivated a real sense of the importance of all the contributing extracurricular activities and College students became known for more than just being a member of a 1st XVIII Team; they became the whole package. She always touched on the importance of giving everything a go.'¹⁷ As more diverse subjects and activities were offered, the wide range of interests and abilities expected of an open entry school were more fully embraced. This, of course, provided challenges for student and whole school unity. Freya Langham (2007), School Captain, understood that part of her role as a school leader was to

encourage unity 'in a school that manages to integrate sports players with musicians, "Urbans" with "Rurals", academia with artists, the Year 9s with the Year 12s'.¹⁸ Nevertheless, certain activities, such as participation in the Student Representative Council, and debating – despite the Year 9 team's coming second in a statewide competition in 2004 – were still unpopular with most students, according to Amanda May.¹⁹

There were many ways in which the College sought to foster students' physical, social and mental capacities. The Artists-in-Residence program continued, with artists visiting the school every year, including Robert Ingpen, Elizabeth Honey, Tim Costello and Stelarc. Arts Week was introduced in 1996, and took over Morrison Hall with scores of student activities and visiting artists. Proposed by Terry Egan (1972–97), the week highlighted the presence of fine arts and applied arts in the College, the long tradition of the House of Guilds itself and the development of new subjects such as Wood Technology. In that first year, students created a huge mural of painted tiles; in 1997, they tried sand sculpting in an enormous sand pit. During Arts Week in 2007, and inspired by Bulgarian artist Christo, items in the school landscape ranging from large tree trunks to the main scoreboard were wrapped in bright pink fabric.

Technical subjects attained a new credibility when vocational education and training (VET) subjects provide an alternative to VCE subjects. A small group of Year 11 students enrolled in external VET subjects in 1998, and VET Multimedia was introduced at the College in 2007. Successful student wood designers, Jaron Martin (1997) and Nicole Raven (1997), were selected to participate in the National Timber and Working with Wood Exhibition in Melbourne in 1996. In 1997, Technological Design and Development became a Year 12 VCE subject.²⁰ Jon Arrigo (2004) won several awards from the furniture industry for his outdoor furniture designed and built in Year 12. The House of Guilds continued its involvement with set design and construction for school productions, which became even more elaborate. The long-term commitment to the House of Guilds by teachers such as Mr Egan and Mr Cummins made them crucial to the production of these sets, and their skills and enthusiasm were passed on to students over more than two decades each.

Sport retained its central role in the College's identity. An expansion of parent support groups from the end of the 1990s underlined this, when athletics, football, netball, swimming, and tennis groups began, joining those already established to support cricket, rowing and hockey. A swimming pool for the Senior School had been included in the plans for the Rolland Centre since the 1960s, but was relegated to Stage 3 in 1968. The lack of a pool was continually blamed for poor APS swimming results and from 1983 boys no longer participated in the swimming competition. A major fundraising appeal was launched in 1997, for building would not commence until \$1.5 million of the \$3.8 million cost had been raised by donations.²¹ When the Aquatic Centre opened in 1999, it encouraged membership from the wider community as well as use by College students and sports teams. Boys' Swimming, Boys' and Girls' Diving, and Boys' and Girls' Water Polo were added to the school's sporting teams in 2000. No APS Premierships in Swimming and Diving or Water Polo have yet eventuated, but the Girls' Swimming Team has improved greatly. Small numbers of boys meant the formation with Geelong Grammar of a combined Geelong Schools Swimming Team from 2000 to 2004. Rowing, however, remained the pinnacle of sporting endeavour, seemingly inextricably tied to the College's identity. Strong friendships, sheer strength and determination produced a winning combination in 2000 when a delighted Boys' Team became APS champions, despite rower Tim Allen's (2000) belief that they 'can't possibly win having this much fun' during the



Campbell House Artist-in-Residence Viktor Cebergs in 2000. He made several sculptures for Campbell House. Children helped with the sanding. Nicholas Fulton assists with an ibis



Dr Turner and twenty-seven Year 9 students entering the pool for the first time at 9am, 24 November 1999. The right to enter first had been auctioned off in order to raise additional funds for the Aquatic Centre Appeal

season's preparations.²² The community was elated when, in 2003, and despite the permanent removal of the Head of the River from the Barwon River to the Nagambie Lakes, both College Boys' and Girls' Teams were APS champions.

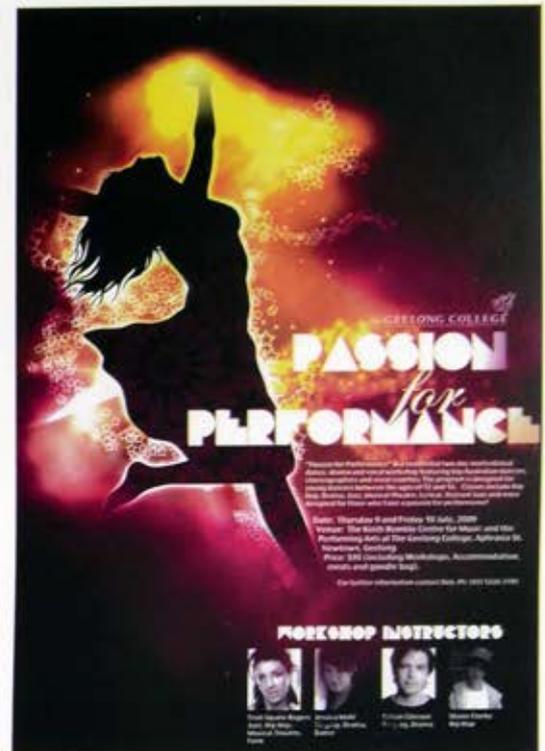
Dr Turner firmly placed the building of a Music and Performing Arts Centre on her list of priorities when she arrived at the College, saying: 'it is apparent to me that many of our aspirations for the arts cannot be realised in the absence of a decent facility'.²³ Planning commenced and in 1999 Jill Humble made a generous bequest to the College that was to go towards the building of a Music Centre in memory of husband, Australian composer Keith Humble. The Keith Humble Centre for Music and the Performing Arts Centre opened in 2006, and has inspired every aspect of the performing arts. Beyond the magnificent three-level foyer are recording and editing booths, a music technology laboratory, bio box, green room, music library, rock studio, classrooms and music practice rooms. There are also two drama rehearsal studios that are used as well for dance, introduced as a subject in 2007 and as a VCE subject in 2008. The George Logie-Smith Music Auditorium provides an appropriate rehearsal and performance venue for many instrumental and choral groups, and

a Wurlitzer pipe organ was added later. Sophisticated Senior School plays, such as *Dracula* (2008), are staged in Costa Theatre, which enables students to learn and practise every aspect of stagecraft in the most modern of facilities. Productions such as *Treasure Island* (2007) have the space, too, to be creatively produced – in this case ‘in-the-round’, on an island in the middle of the theatre. Sometimes school plays are staged elsewhere to take advantage of a special setting, such as in 2006 when *The Importance of Being Earnest* was put on in the College’s atmospheric dining hall. Large-scale College musicals such as *Godspell* in 2004 and *Sweet Charity* in 2008 continue to be staged in the Geelong Performing Arts Centre.

In response to the ‘information revolution’, an emphasis on the development of modern ICT facilities was unavoidable, and the decision to introduce laptops had been made before Dr Turner’s appointment. Computers were now accepted learning tools and students were encouraged to have an IBM-compatible computer at home running the same software as they were required to use at school.²⁴ The College’s intranet gave students easy remote access to tutorial guides and worksheets from 1997, and student email accounts were introduced the following year. Laptops entered the school gradually: Years 4, 5 and 6 had small numbers of laptops to share in their classrooms; Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 were expected to purchase individual laptops from 1998, and this was extended to Year 7 in 2007 after the usual difficulties (cost, reliability, underuse) had been resolved. Despite what would inevitably be a costly digital future, by 1998 Dr Turner saw technology’s ‘beckoning to us quite strongly as a more radical option’ of developing something to give the College an edge in a highly competitive market, ‘as we start to forge a more compelling future’.²⁵ Electronic whiteboards, introduced in 2007, were immensely popular with students, and add to the suite of teaching resources by bringing out the strengths of those students who are ‘visual’ and ‘hands-on’ learners.

New major facilities, expensive ICT infrastructure, specialist staff and more teacher professional development all put a huge strain on the College Budget. Dr Turner and Michael Dowling, Council Treasurer with a background as an accountant and businessman, ‘ran the College on a shoestring’ during the late 1990s.²⁶ The complexity of the operation of a modern independent school is demonstrated by the doubling in numbers of the non-teaching staff from 1985 to 112 people in 2005. The biggest growth during this period was among administrative and ancillary staff. Considerable numbers of staff are also needed to run the boarding houses (matrons, caterers and cleaners), and the remaining staff attend to the grounds, maintenance of buildings, business functions, community relations, marketing and archives. Several of the College’s longest serving staff have been non-teaching staff, among them: Head Groundsman, Stuart Rankin (48 years); his uncle Edwin ‘Teddy’ Rankin, Curator (40 years); Matron of Warrinn, Mary McOuat (41 years); Cook and Catering Manager, June Sturzaker (48 years); Gardener, Neville Ash (34 years); Principal’s Secretary, Dianne Williams (33 years); and Maintenance Foreman and Property Manager, Ray Deans (33 years).

One of the newer non-teaching staff functions, the Director of Community Relations, was created in 1994 when Maria Smith (1994–98) was appointed to oversee the reunion program and the coordination of activities of the Old Geelong Collegians’ Association. With large-scale fundraising, including annual giving, by then an established part of The Geelong College Foundation’s role, a welcome shift occurred in the emphasis of the Association. The deluge of intensive fundraising activities and direct mailing to Old



Flyer for a two-day residential dance, drama and vocal workshop held in the Keith Humble Centre, 2009



Interior Keith Humble Centre, 2009

Collegians by the Association during the 1960s and 1970s had led to fundraising fatigue for some, and overt suspicion of the Association by others. Mr Ingpen and his contemporaries, for example, chose to have little to do with the College soon after they left school, because 'they introduced a set of curious conditions for the school community, whereby you as an old boy had to come back, raise and wave the flag, and dip your hand in your pocket in aid of some building program'.²⁷ A review of the Association's activities in 1980 included the comment that 'the idea of fund raising for the College is considered a highly undesirable activity of the Association'.²⁸ Since the 1990s, the Association's focus has been firmly on fellowship. Rather than one annual reunion dinner, several reunions of Old Collegians are held every year for those who left school ten, twenty, thirty, forty and fifty or more years ago; for the most recent leavers, who come back for a barbecue a few months after finishing school; and for special interest groups, ranging from the Glee Club to the Albert Bell Club. All of this has greatly strengthened the network of Old Collegians and their involvement generally in the Association.

Marketing of the College, also one of the newer non-teaching staff jobs, is challenged by intense competition from other schools for local day students, especially those living in Newtown and its adjacent suburbs. Erratic enrolment patterns are part of the challenge, including the declining numbers of boarders from the Western District. A markedly strong enrolment from the Surf Coast and Bellarine Peninsula developed during the 1990s, with students coming by bus from Torquay, Jan Juc, Ocean Grove, Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff. An Australian 'surf coast vibe' became a new facet of the College's identity; students even arrived at school with their surfboards after going for a surf in the early morning.²⁹ Some were outstanding national and international competitors such as Troy Brooks (1996) and Jack Perry (2002). In 2001, the College was represented for the first time in a Victorian Surfing Competition between more than a hundred schools.³⁰ Another change in the same period was the increase in numbers of overseas students.³¹

The availability of scholarships, access to 'league tables' and both positive and negative publicity about individual schools all play a huge part in decisions about schooling made by parents, who are now less likely to follow generational loyalty to a particular institution. While Geelong Grammar is still a rival for wealthier clientele, low-fee independent schools near the College are attractive alternatives for many parents, especially Kardinia International College, as well as Sacred Heart, St Joseph's College and Christian College. Local low-fee competitors had been able to make such inroads into the independent school market because of the higher rates of funding they received under the Education Resources Index (ERI), used by state and federal governments to allocate government funding to schools. The Geelong College was one of the schools at the front of the very public lobby in 1999 that attracted considerable media attention, and convinced the government and much of the public that the Socio-Economic Status (SES) model was fairer, because it allocated government funds on the basis of socio-economic indicators.³² When it was introduced in 1999, the result for the College was an injection of funds, which helped contain fee increases. Before the 2001 federal poll, considerable anxiety attended the Labor Party's threat, if elected, to remove the new funding from the fifty-nine 'wealthiest' schools (those, including the College, which were formerly Category 1 schools), but the Coalition was returned to power that year. Despite a subsequent change in government in 2007, the SES funding model remains unchanged for the present. Council meetings and planning



Above: Emily Chakir climbing to the top of Federation Peak, 1999

Below: Students on the Kokoda Track, 2003



Administration and Services staff in 2010, Back row: Maria Santos, Ian Creek, Addy Bucek, Belinda Romain, Iain Gaylard, Nathan Allan, Marcus Saunders, Andrew Murton, Ray Russell, Helen Midgley, Joyce Taylor, Neil Fletcher, Joanne Marriner; Third row: Jenny Saunders, Julia Thompson, Kate Hackett, Jeanette Adams, Julie Tucker, Sam McIntosh, Andie Andersen, John Simandl, Casey Lang, Mick Lovell, Zlatica Kovac, Meredith Herbert; Second row: Meg Law, Jo Young, Julie Lewis, Jenny Kittelty, Pam Quick, Dale Carroll, Jodie Fuller, Julie Jeffreys, Angelika Moore, Mandy Weeks, Vicki Henderson, Jean Cameron, Rachel Skowronski; Front row: Murray Fanning, Noelene Groth, Felicity Sahistrom, Shannyn Leach, Mike Howell, Dr Pauline Turner, Daniel Mahon, Greg Tomkins, Kerren Wade, Deb Fanning, Catherine Middlemiss, Mark Nurnaitis

days exhaustively considered ways to maintain the College's standing in the community as a leading provider of education.³³ According to Mr Williamson, 'our education program and recent new facilities such as the Aquatic Centre and Keith Humble Centre show that we are moving forward in an obvious way. Our reputation, results and tradition still count.'³⁴ Furthermore, says Hugh Seward, 'with our heritage comes a high sense of our ethical values that we pass on to our students. And our offering is much broader, particularly because of the emphasis on sport and outdoor education and our involvement in the APS. That's a huge attraction for people who want an education that provides more than just a good academic result.'³⁵

Outdoor education found further expression in a number of ways. The Geelong College Exploration Society, re-established in 2000 by Philip Taylor (1991–present) and also championed by Roger Smith, renewed its acquaintance with locations visited decades earlier: Federation Peak was climbed once again in Tasmania; another epic journey was made through the Strzelecki Desert; the West MacDonnell Ranges were climbed. New challenges were attempted, too, such as the Kokoda Track. At the same time, the concept of a remote campus was reconsidered. Rod Ashby, College Council member, spent years trying

to acquire an alternative site in the Grampians after Parks Victoria refused permission, eventually, for the College to build a remote campus at Hankelow. The property was sold in 2005. In 1998, a new site called Mt Christobel in the Grampians was about to be purchased instead, but permission for access through the National Park proved difficult to obtain and the project lapsed in 2000.³⁶ Other properties were considered in detail and over several years.³⁷ By this time, more independent schools had established purpose-built remote campuses that were seen as integral to their Senior School offerings: Caulfield Grammar School opened a campus in Nanjing in 1998 and, closer to home, Wesley College opened one at Clunes in 2000.

Realistically, The Geelong College was neither big enough nor wealthy enough to contemplate an overseas campus, and was acutely aware of Geelong Grammar's failed attempt to establish a campus in Thailand. Led by Outdoor Education Coordinator Mr Parkes (previously also Head of English since 1989), the Year 9 Outdoor Education program continued at Wollangarra until 2008 when the students instead attended Charnwood in the Strathbogie Ranges. Until then, Wollangarra loomed large in the College experience for the personal and psychological challenges it issued to Year 9 students, many of whom returned elated with new skills of self-sufficiency and stories of considerable achievement. Mountains were climbed to reward the climbers with spectacular views: 'the mountains provided a challenge that had to be met'. Responsibilities at camp were shared: 'hard work brings personal rewards'.³⁸ 'My view of what life is all about was changed', declared Adam Toffolon (2002) in 1999.³⁹

In addition, the College's original aim of extending the Outdoor Education program to Year 10, with the development of a new remote site, was by this time being questioned.

Left: Mokborree

Right: Dr Turner with students





A visit to Shalom Christian College, Townsville

In particular, the possible offering of a VCE subject to all Year 10 students to provide greater motivation and challenge meant that a core or optional extended rural residential experience in the Grampians became less of a priority.⁴⁰ The problem of finding a distinct focus for Year 10 was resolved by shifting it from Outdoor Education to Outreach. A pilot project in 2002 took a group of Year 10 volunteers to Anglesea for immersion in local environmental projects, demanding hands-on experience with revegetation and learning about local flora and fauna and the ecology and erosion issues, blended with bushwalking, camping and sea-kayaking. Under the banner 'Fulfilling Lives', the Year 10 program came to include a range of one- and two-week choices. The options on offer highlight cultural diversity and community service. The 'Kool Skools' group wrote and recorded a CD of songs that explored local and global issues, then sold the CDs to raise money for charity.

'Desert Tracks' took students to Central Australia to immerse them in Indigenous history and culture. Internationalism was fostered with a visit to the island of Tanna in Vanuatu, under Mr Macmillan's guidance, where College students lived and worked with local secondary school students.⁴¹

During this period of changing emphasis – from 'outdoors' to 'outreach' – a less remote site at Wensleydale in the Otways was purchased as a new campus in 2006. It is only 45 minutes from the College and came complete with dormitories and facilities, and unencumbered by any need for unusual Council permits. It was named Mokborree, which means 'peaceful' in the local Indigenous language, and remodeled for a wide range of activities that began in 2009, among them: geography field trips, school camps, staff conferences, the Year 10 Fulfilling Lives program and weekend stays for boarders.⁴²

Outreach programs, particularly among communities less well off than that of The Geelong College, have also been established in more recent years for other students' benefit. In the quest for cross-cultural understanding, the College became the first Australian school to play AFL football against club and school teams in South Africa in 2007. The trip built on the successful visits by the AFL Indigenous Youth Team and AFL–AIS Academy squad. Led by teacher Jane Utting, the College Tour benefited from the participation of another key member, Council Chairman and sports physician Dr Hugh Seward, who had already participated with the AFL Indigenous Youth Team. A netball squad of College girls also went, and both the footballers and netballers ran training clinics during the tour.⁴³ Dr Turner's work in the Geelong community, which extended to being the Deputy Chancellor of Deakin University for many years, also acts as a role model for the students who are now engaged in a wider range of community service activities.



Boys' and girls' victorious Head of the River crews, 2003. Boys' crew included Harley Beaumont, Charles Boyle, Tom Donald, Andrew Hunt, Tim Jarrold, Andrew McLarty, Ben O'Brien, Jeff Watt (Coach). Girls' crew included Natasha Cluley-Bolsin, Annabelle Crawford, Jane Hawkins, Chloe Henderson, Isabella Henricus, Leah McKenzie, Angela Paton, Serena Peardon, Phoebe Stanley, Rob Gardner (Coach)



Students on tour in Denmark, 2004

Recent College graduates respected the way Uniting Church doctrine was not forced upon them, and appreciated the emphasis, instead, on the treatment of others according to Christian principles.

Closer to home, and in the spirit of lasting reconciliation, special ties with Indigenous Australians were established with the Shalom Christian College in Townsville. Versatile teacher David Curnow (1987–present), now the Spiritual and Community Outreach Coordinator, was responsible for helping to foster these new links and organised a visit to Shalom in 2003. Mr Curnow selected the first small group of students who had shown ‘interest in areas such as social justice, Christianity, reaching out to others and reconciliation with Indigenous people’.⁴⁴ A group of students from Shalom visited the College in 2004. Mr Curnow is an integral part of the College’s ongoing ties to its original Christian foundations. He is not an ordained chaplain, but he ‘certainly acts like a chaplain. He’s a very living Christian presence in the school and the students respect him enormously and listen to him. It helps that he is also a sportsperson and coaches rowing’, says Mrs Lethbridge.⁴⁵ Beginning in 2006 with one student, and then two from 2008, a program to provide places for Indigenous students at the College began.⁴⁶ The students from Alice Springs are sponsored jointly by the College and an Aboriginal investment corporation in Alice Springs. A part-time Indigenous Educational Support Officer was appointed in 2008. A full Outreach program has now blossomed at the Senior School, which continues to send students to remote Aboriginal communities.

Other modern attentions to the development of students as good citizens have come via a renewed focus on pastoral care and student welfare to tackle anti-social behaviour. A new Personal Development course was introduced in 1996, for Year 9 students, and a School Counsellor was appointed in 1997. Students began to complete citizenship surveys regularly from 1997, in which, among other things, they were able to identify bullies anonymously. An Anti-Bullying program was introduced that year, as well as a House-based ‘buddy’ system. Disappointing behaviour was firmly checked by suspension or expulsion when necessary. Mrs Lethbridge, when she took over as Head of Senior School from Mr Gilson in 1998, worked hard to strengthen further the school’s pastoral care. By 2002, Dr Turner had developed a policy on positive citizenship, which had at its core responsible, positive and ethical citizenship, equal opportunity, behaviour management, leadership, and social and community service.⁴⁷ The modern technique of restorative justice is now being used at the College.

At the same time, the place and relevance of religious education and religious ties were reviewed. The College is now a ‘Christian school’, and has students enrolled from a huge range of faiths. ‘Our beliefs are in line with the Uniting Church’⁴⁸ and the two organisations are still connected legally, as the Uniting Church holds the property in trust for the school. The main difference is that the Church has had no direct say in the daily operations of the College since the latter’s incorporation in 1982. In 2001, the Uniting Church established Uniting Education Victoria to maintain and expand existing relationships between the Church and Uniting Church schools.⁴⁹ Although the College Council has gradually been reduced in size, at Mr Williamson’s instigation, the Uniting Church Synod retains the right to appoint 25 per cent of Council members.⁵⁰ Council now has twelve members, with the Minister of St David’s included as an extra position. A charter is being written with each school to express its individual understanding with the Church on matters of worship and the expression of faith within the school community. From the College’s perspective, a better understanding was gained by everyone of what



was happening in schools: 'Even though we are catering for those who can afford our fees, we were and are teaching values that are clearly aligned with the values of the Uniting Church, and with its social justice agenda'.⁵¹

Thailand tour, 2004

Recent College graduates respected the way Uniting Church doctrine was not forced upon them, and appreciated the emphasis, instead, on the treatment of others according to Christian principles. Nevertheless, attendance at chapel services has remained compulsory, and students usually participated in House groups at least a few times each term. A Year 12 Prefect holds the portfolio of Chapel Representative and John O'Brien, with this responsibility in 2002, was allowed to introduce live acoustic folk music into services 'to make it more enticing' for students.⁵² His was the generation profoundly affected by the international events of 11 September 2001, and an emergency chapel service at school that morning provided some comfort for the shocked students and staff.

As well as the determination to 'impart a strong set of values and foster moral and spiritual awareness', community engagement, diversity and global citizenship also became part of the College's goals.⁵³ The Geelong College's students already enjoyed many links with schools outside Australia: in Japan, through long-standing ties established when Preparatory School Concert Band students first visited in 1982; in China, through a sister school in Shanghai from 2000; in Denmark, through the playing of AFL football from



Senior School and Preparatory School teaching staff, 2008. Back row: M. Andrews, S. Callan, C. Bennett, E. Kovacev, J. Shortland, A. Corrigan, G. Mack, W. Johnston, R. Kayler-Thompson, S. Hallows, A. Payne, F. D'Agostin, J. Xiao, G. Montgomery, R. Killen; Seventh row: L. Osborne, D. Cleary, M. Torpey, T. Parkes, T. Fleming, P. Clark, S. McIntosh, P. Hannah, L. Joyce, A.-M. Mahoney, C. Dinneen, M. Panckridge, D. Young, H. McLean, B. Hollander, A. Abrahams; Sixth row: A. McKie, D. Wade, J. Ekkel, R. Congues, C. Sullivan, M. Oates, T. Ovens, D. Andrews, M. Barnes, M. Thacker, J. Panckridge, R. Palmer, E. Davies, K. Zeravica, M. Ferguson, C. Watson; Fifth row: J. Peake, U. Kamburovski, K. Saunders, A. Jackman, D. Filling, R. Millen, S. Hannigan, A. Maher, A. Wightman, L. Gallus, C. Reeve, K. Sunderland, M. McArthur, W. Breer, J. Heath, S. Buchan; Fourth row: A.-L. O'Donoghue, J. Bickett, G. Tigani, L. Breen, K. Tol, D. Hynes, P. Jeffreys, K. Flanagan, M. O'Donnell, I. Henricus, K. Fyffe, O. Galluccio, S. Daly, G. Ulloa, A. Andrews; Third row: P. Porter, C. Guest, J. Gainey, E. Smith, D. Lannan, G. Gilby, P. Taylor, T. Coburn, B. Carlson, P. Armitage, L. Russell, A. Juros, L. Lee, H. Green, K. Robertson; Second row: S. Peace, T. Foley, V. Chabant, P. Henning, M. Cheatley, D. Curnow, M. Terry, M. Irwin, G. Smith, M. Gallus, J. O'Loughlin, D. Clifford, G. Naylor, E. Brownen, K. Jones; Front row: G. Smith, M. Brown, D. Hibbard, C. Thornton, M. Mason, R. Smith, J. Gill, Dr P. Turner, D. Mahon, J. Carroll, H. Roberts, C. Turner, L. Russell, K. Johnson, R. Molyneux, D. Black

2000 and a sister school in Copenhagen in 2005; in France, through a sister school in Chantilly since 2001; and in Thailand, through a sister school in Bangkok from 2002. Exchange visits of students from these countries to the College regularly took place. All of these visits became a firm part of introducing students to a global village and to the removal of classroom walls as artificial boundaries of learning. 'I can hardly stress sufficiently the importance of this process of international engagement', declared Dr Turner, 'particularly as Geelong College students do not form a direct part of the more cosmopolitan culture of Melbourne'. She continued: 'It is incumbent on the school to offer relevant curricular, co-curricular and interpersonal experiences so that our students gain the necessary familiarity, sensitivity and confidence to take their place in tomorrow's wide world of opportunity'.⁵⁴

Recent College graduates are now usually described as 'well-rounded' and 'confident' young people; 'there's an easygoing decency about them that is a tremendously worthwhile characteristic', says Mr Fielding.⁵⁵ Most genuinely appreciate the opportunities on offer at College: 'the rewards are great for the student who is willing to have a go', said Ben Broad (1996), School Captain.⁵⁶ The Geelong College's graduates also believe that they are inherently different from Geelong Grammar students – more friendly and socially confident, and with their feet more firmly on the ground. 'You learn respect and tolerance from going to The Geelong College', says Amanda May. According to Xavier Nicolo (2007), students learn 'values that define, subconsciously and intuitively, the way we conduct ourselves, and dictate not only whether we succeed in our respective careers, but also whether we succeed as people'.⁵⁷

Map of the Senior School

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|---|---|
| 1 Reception | 13 Medical Centre |
| 2 Student Administration | 14 Mossgiel Boarding House (girls) |
| 3 Morrison Hall (assembly/multi-purpose) | 15 Mackie Boarding House (boys) |
| 4 House Rooms | 16 Rolland Centre (Gymnasium) |
| 5 Helicon Place | 17 Year 12 Common Room/Canteen/ Aerobics Room |
| 6 Cloisters, War Memorial | 18 The Recreation Centre (Swimming pool) |
| 7 Science Laboratories | 19 Austin Gray Centre (House of Guilds, Fine and Applied Arts) |
| 8 George Morrison Library | 20 Keith Humble Centre for Music and the Performing Arts |
| 9 Dining Hall | 21 College Chapel |
| 10 Garnet Fielding Wing (Science and general classrooms) | 22 Community Relations and Development Office |
| 11 Davey House (Business Administration) | |
| 12 The Geelong College Uniform Shop | |

