



# A moment in time

MIKE HOWELL, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

In a year when we are celebrating our school's 160th anniversary and 100 years of life of the Preparatory School, both at the Senior and Middle School sites, we have been, literally, digging up our history.

Our school records showed that a time capsule was buried behind the Foundation Stone of the first Preparatory School back in 1921 (now part of the Austin Gray Centre). It was with delicate excavation skills and much excitement that we dug up a glass bottle containing a few coins, a school prospectus and a copy of the Geelong Advertiser. The prospectus showed that fees per term were then 30 pounds! It talked about the opening of the new Junior and Preparatory school. The principal at the time was the Rev Frank Rolland.

As part of looking back on our Preparatory School, now Middle and Junior Schools, Mike Howell, Director of Community Relations and Development, interviewed three previous and the current Heads of the School about changes that took place.



## Peter Hughes

Peter Hughes became the new Head of the Preparatory School in 1987 after Dr Ian Macmillan (see June Ad Astra).

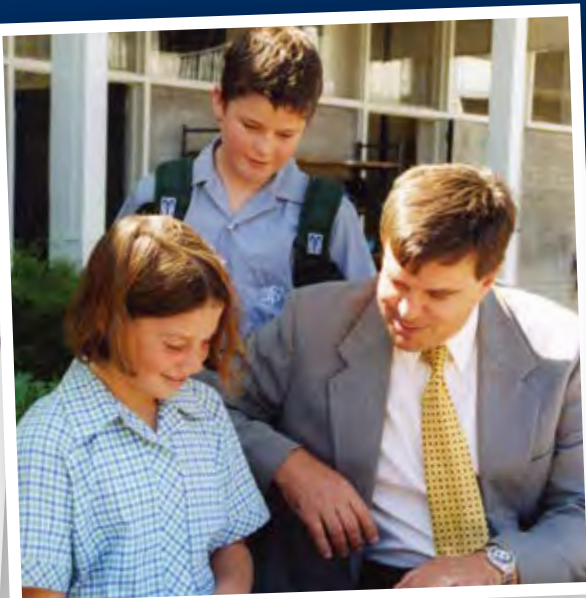
During his eleven-year tenure, there was continued infrastructure growth and innovation of programs. Numbers peaked at 560 in 1989 and then fell by a hundred during the following three years as the local economy suffered through the Pyramid Building Society crash and subsequent deeper economic recession.

Despite this, under Peter's Headship, Robertson Hall and the Music School were opened in 1990 during an exciting period of development. Around the same time there were big changes at Campbell House with a new Music classroom and a general-

purpose assembly hall (the Joan Sweetman Room). The next major project was the opening of the Art/Craft Centre in 1995 at Middle School which has spectacular views on the ridge overlooking Queens Park.

"Probably the most significant educational changes that emerged during my time were at the early years of the school with the establishment of the Early Learning Centre," Peter recalls, "and the investigation and incorporation of educational philosophies and practices that emerged in Reggio Emilia in Italy into the school curriculum."

With the new position of Coordinator of Curriculum and Development established by Peter, "the students at the Preparatory School enjoyed a rich program, in the classroom, on special days, through music and the arts, on the courts, in the pool, on the playing



fields and on camps. They bonded with each other, and with their skilful and caring teachers. Many students of the time are now leaders in their professions and careers."

In reflecting on his time at the school, Peter continues, "I regard my years at the College as the most satisfying and productive years of my professional career. I felt particularly at home with the people of the College community, and with their values."



### Chris Lawson

Chris Lawson took over from Peter Hughes as Head of the Preparatory School in 1998 and again oversaw exciting changes to both facilities and

our educational programs. One of the biggest innovations was to extend the use of the Environment Centre by Year 7 students to Year 4 with the introduction of the Enviro year. The inspiration and development of the program came from teachers Paul Jeffreys, Doug Wade and Will Johnston (who still heads up the program today).

Following the success of the Year 4 program, a themed Multimedia year was developed for Year 6. This was the start of harnessing technology, in changing how we learn, to be curious and creative. From managing their own radio station, the students became hands

on in developing design skills, creating videos and presenting radio plays.

Research from Darryn Kruse on inquiry-based learning in Middle Schools saw the curriculum expand with several new electives in Year 8 being introduced and some cross disciplinary units of study being introduced at Year 7.

Chris said that he had many highlights in his time as Head which included "more of a team approach amongst teaching staff."

He was a role model for his colleagues at a time of innovative educational change and greater student engagement in their learning. He empowered teachers to bring about change to programs and electives. This included the introduction of the Year 7 boat building unit (now solar boats) which combined elements of design, maths and problem solving.



### Julian Carroll

Julian Carroll became the next Head of Preparatory School in Term 3, 2006.

"It was an honour and privilege to

be the last Head of the Preparatory School," (the role split in 2014 with the distinction between Middle and Junior Schools).

Julian built on the work of the previous Heads. For him the biggest change

was to differentiate learning to cater for the individual needs of the student and place the learner at the centre of decisions. This was done through the expansion of the existing Year 8 MESH Elective program where new project-based learning experiences were introduced. This was a particular highlight.

In 2011 major infrastructure changes were undertaken with an extension to the Middle School gym and the contemporary Campbell House library built, thanks to the Kevin Rudd Government and the Building Education Revolution.

The Middle School itself had a complete overhaul as the original structure was kept and, in some areas, their footprint extended (Year 6 and Year 8 precincts). The internal spaces were transformed and completely redesigned to create exciting, flexible, open, engaging, and modern spaces. This was to promote student collaboration, project-based learning, creativity and innovation but also importantly to cater for individual learning needs.

For Julian, "seeing the lives of young children and people grow and develop was an enduring highlight. The relationships and friendships made with students, staff and parents were wonderful."

His many highlights included the Sesquicentenary celebrations, Year 8 Productions, in particular 'School of



Rock' where teachers and Julian also performed, year level dinners, and the reciprocal visits to a sister school in Japan.



#### **Leanne Russell**

In 2014 Leanne Russell became the Head of Middle School, a role she continues to hold. Chris Dineen was appointed the Head

of Junior School.

Leanne shared, "I inherited a very good school." The use of technology in learning has been the biggest game changer and none more so than the

past two years of COVID-19 driven online learning. This has opened new opportunities, including the establishment of the Year 5 Design program, and will continue to expand. Education has moved away from the idea that success is measured in grades and scores, and more towards individual student growth. Other changes of note include more inquiry-based learning and more team teaching, which has developed across each of the year levels. Year 7 has seen the introduction of the Learning to Learn program where students are encouraged to take more responsibility for themselves and their learning.

In Year 8 this is extended further as students are challenged to investigate areas and issues of interests across a range of topics, subjects, electives and experiences.



#### **Sondra Wood**

At Junior School, the current Head, Sondra Wood, has highlighted how the brand-new campus encapsulates all that we are and want to be from both the perspective of

Reggio Emilia and the celebration of community. From the implementation of the Reggio Emilia in the 1990s under



## See the time Capsule

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Peter Hughes, the program continues to “align its approach to education with an authentic understanding of children as learners from EL to Year 3.”

Over the past few years, the Junior School has built on the understanding of Aboriginal culture and developing connections to Country. For instance, EL children have “walked down to the Barwon River below the campus where they met Corrina Eccles, a Wadawurrung Traditional Owner, who welcomed them all to Country with a smoking ceremony. Corrina shared stories about the importance of the river and shared aspects of culture with the children.”

Overall, the past and current Heads of Preparatory School, including Ian MacMillan, all come back to one thing – yes buildings and facilities are important but for all of them success can only be measured by the people they worked with – their passion and commitment to College, the teamwork and amazing teachers – this was the main message that came through and continues today.

Students in Year’s 3, 4 and 7 have written letters to the students of the future asking them a range of questions. Some delightfully curious, some more thought provoking.

Do you still have Lego?

Is Cadbury’s still a major chocolate brand?

The most pertinent note being: “I hope in a hundred years your world has not been ruined by climate change.”

These along with the Pegasus, Ad Astra, the Geelong Advertiser and a COVID-19 mask were reburied in the same spot behind the Foundation stone. To be rediscovered in 2121!

We have come a long way since 1921 and wonder what changes we will see in the next 100 years.