From the Principal

Over the past 5 years the Castlemaine Secondary College community has worked to create a safe and supportive environment where students are challenged to achieve their best. This is done with a particular focus on meeting student and family needs and aspirations.

Castlemaine Secondary College Year 7 and 8 students select a class choice and area of interest that allows them to transition successfully to secondary school by being part of a class with students of similar interests and passions. The offerings focus on Music, Art, Sport, Resources and Performance. These areas of focus provide all students with a comprehensive education and some time to build a sense of achievement and success in their area of interest, including extra music, sport, drama, technology or art activities both within the school and as part of the school extra-curriculum program. This initiative supports the development of adolescence who can often find the change to high school challenging by focusing on each individual student’s skills and abilities while gaining confidence as they experience recognition of their achievements.

The Castlemaine Secondary College structures are flexible and responsive to student subject choice in years 9 - 12. They offer initially a broad range of subjects and then move towards student interests as subjects and pathways are formalised with course selections. This ensures that if there are more students in one year who are interested in Maths or a particular Science then more of those classes will operate in those areas. In this way, the school can respond to student interests each year to ensure a personalised program. The College’s mentor program provides support and communication to students and families with each teacher grouped with an average of 12 students. This is to ensure that each student and family has a staff member at the College who knows them and is able to support them both in the younger years as they move into the school and the high pressure final years of VCE. Our average subject class size is 17. This means that within a class, teachers have the time to work with and talk to each students and meet their learning needs. There has been recent research which indicates that class size does have a significant impact, something that Educators have known through experience for a while.

The teaching staff at the College are passionate learners who are continuing to develop their “craft”. There is a strong professional development program that all staff particulate in including peer observations, teaching techniques and focus on individuals and groups of students learning needs through the use of data. This work is resulting in both engaging and motivating classes in which students become active in their learning, role modelling on their teachers as learners and gaining an understanding that learning is a lifelong process.

With our new Wellbeing Precinct now being used, it is exciting that there is funding of 5.5 million to start the next building program at the College. The next stage is the Engineering Precinct which will link Science and Technology to provide rich and divergent learning opportunities as students are able to apply the theory to real life situations.

Mary McPherson
The musical production for the year is over and all is back to normal. But what a triumph it was. "13" covered so many facets of the lives of the characters, which are similar to issues teenagers all over the world have to come to terms with. The cast put in so much time and effort into it and the results spoke for themselves. It was lively and thought provoking and the singing and choreography were brilliant.

Darren Lowe, the Director and Kirsten Boerema, the Musical Director, as well as the many supporters should be rightly proud of the performances and judging from the enthusiastic feedback from members of the audience, it was very well received. The support of the many staff and family members is greatly appreciated and it would not be possible to put on such a performance without their help.

The new Wellbeing Centre, at the Blakeley Road Campus was warm and comfortable, and a great alternative to The Phee Broadway, while it is being renovated.

The annual musical is a fantastic example of the high standard talent at Castlemaine Secondary College.
Wear it Purple Day!

Wear it Purple Day is a yearly event which celebrates diversity, while helping to eradicate homophobia and homophobic language in schools and the wider community. LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, inter-sex and queer) youth are often perceived as being exclusively defined by their sexuality and gender identity, but this is a very limiting way of viewing individuals. Wear it Purple Day 2014 aims to identify stereotypes and preconceptions to educate about sexuality and gender diversity. Unfortunately the official Wear it Purple Day is a student-free day, so we will be celebrating it on the first week of September. There will be a wide range of activities and events throughout the week, including an out of uniform day on the Blakeley Road Campus and purple cupcakes for sale! This day will be a fantastic opportunity for the school to come together in support of LGBTIQ youth, and have a great time while doing so!

Dress Up Day

Blakeley Road students recently enjoyed an American themed dress-up day, with a hot-dog lunch and treasure hunt activity, run by the students who will be traveling to the USA during the Christmas holiday. The students will spend 3 weeks in the USA, briefly enjoying the sights of LA, experiencing Disneyland on New Year’s Eve and then attending school in San Diego for the majority of the trip. They will be hosted by families of students at the school and the money raised by their fundraising efforts will be put towards the cost of educational excursions run by the host school.
Science Competition

Students entered the UNSW Science competition and received the following certificates.

Distinction – Year 8 Joe 96th Percentile and Nick 94th percentile

Credit – Year 7 Ella

Year 8 Rachel

Year 9 Auryn and Saskia

Merit – Year 9 Judzea and Georgia

Participation – Year 9 Meaghan, Georgina, Torsten, Tamara and Angela

Spring Recital at the Castlemaine Art Gallery
Sunday 7 September, 5pm

Come and enjoy an evening of music presented by the VCE Music Students from Castlemaine Secondary College. Take in the artwork as you enjoy solo and group works from the students preparing for their end of year performance exams. Enjoy food and drinks prepared by the Music Support Group and chat with the students, staff and other parents in our wonderful music community at Castlemaine Secondary College. A great way for younger music students to see where their music studies can lead.

Adults $10, Child/Student/Concession $5, Family $20

Japan Trip 2015

Plans are underway for our next trip to Japan in September/October 2015. Our inaugural trip last year was a huge success and we plan to offer this trip every second year to years 9 to 12 students.

The details of the trip aren’t confirmed as yet, but we are looking at 10 days covering Kyoto, Shizuoka and Tokyo. During our stay we will be sightseeing as a group, homestaying with Japanese families and visiting their schools.

You may note your expression of interest or obtain further information by contacting Lyn Ellery on 5479 1111.
**Friday Breakfast at Blakeley Road Campus**

During Term 2 a Friday breakfast was commenced in Lawson Hall. The breakfast provides Milo, toast, cereal and fresh fruit. The School Nurse Tara Gilbee, teacher Caroline Cook, student volunteers and community volunteer Deb Taylor have teamed up together to provide a warm and healthy start to the day. The importance of breakfast is a theme for this project alongside the opportunity for students to connect and enjoy time together before class. We are lucky to be supported in this program by the generosity of donations from Red Beard bakery and Food Bank Victoria. We are always happy for any community donations or volunteer time to assist this project.

The School Nurse, Tara Gilbee, is employed by the Department of Education to visit the school two days a week. Her role encompasses broad health promotion approaches and builds on the work of the teaching staff to enhance community and health related initiatives for all students.

**WOT’s Up Wednesday**

Castlemaine Secondary College Year 11 student, Matilda, has a passion for fitness and nutrition. Inspired by her wish for all people to live a healthy lifestyle. Matilda created a program called ‘Wots Up Wednesday’ which is running during term three for students and staff.

Matilda says ‘in his current day we are starting to neglect our bodies and making lifestyle choices that are not healthy because we aren’t informed’. This program educates people on the benefits of healthy living and introduces just how easy it can be. The Wots Up Wednesday program educates people on different aspects of healthy living including nutrition and exercise.

The Wots Up Wednesday program consists of three sessions which rotate throughout the term on Wednesday lunchtimes. The program launched on 30 July with a free, nutritious lunch provided for students in the canteen, catered by CAKE. Students also have the opportunity to participate in cooking classes run by Master Chef finalist, Beau Cook!

This project has been kindly sponsored by a Mount Alexander Shire Council Youth Grant.

Program Creator, Matilda says ‘I would like to thank the Mount Alexander Shire Council, Beau Cook and CAKE café in particular Deb Taylor for their continuous support of my program. It’s been amazing to gain recognition and see my passion come to life’.

**Waratah Project**

Early this year Castlemaine Secondary College was invited to participate in a state wide research project called the Waratah Project. The Waratah project is an in depth study of menstruation with the aim of creating a solid body of research and opening up the collective conversation to bring about positive change.

Letters were sent home to outline the project and to offer some young women a place in this research, unfortunately due to small levels of returned consent, the project did not take place at the designated day. However if you felt it was an important project to support and that your daughter may be more comfortable participating in private or conversation with yourself, please follow this link to go to the online survey: [http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1533593/The-Waratah-Project-Questionnaire-for-Women-and-Girls](http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1533593/The-Waratah-Project-Questionnaire-for-Women-and-Girls)

This is a survey for all women, if you would like to host a conversation feel free to contact the team at Adrienne Bogard: Research and Administration: The Waratah Project P 03 9642 0422 F 03 9642 0016 W www.vwt.org.au E adrienne@vwt.org.au

RosieRespect.org.au is a space where young women can connect with the best web resources out there, helping them to navigate life’s tricky situations. Rosie has a range of tips, links and videos all centred around a theme of respect – for body & mind, in relationships, work & study and for the world we live in. Rosie believes girls have the courage and resilience to change our world for the better.
Parents are Having Much Farther Reaching Effects Than They Know

We were pretty good at keeping computers and televisions out of bedrooms, but as technology developed we somehow missed that phones and tablets ARE computers.

One of the main conversations I have with parents is about their exhaustion at parenting with so many devices in the home. Parents feel out of control. At my seminars I often ask for a show of hands and the majority of families own a collection of iPads, iPods, other tablets, an Xbox, a Wii, a DS, iPhones and more...

Most parents wonder if their limit setting is actually worth it. It’s so constant isn’t it? I have 3 children and it feels like I have to remind them of the boundaries with technology regularly. But be encouraged, it IS worth it.

A study of over 1300 families, by my colleague in the US found, “that parents are having much farther reaching effects than they know.” The study indicated some powerful benefits for children when parents set healthy limits on entertainment screen time (TV and video games) and limits of the type of content viewed.

Some effects are seen more immediately and others over time. (Please keep in mind that ‘limiting’ does not mean banning all technology or taking everything away – it indicates a healthy balance and an inclusion of many other actives, such as sport, drama, kicking a ball, going shopping, chatting over dinner...)

Two Immediate effects of placing limits on media (which seem obvious but are great to see):

1. Those children spent less time on TV and video games. 2. Those children saw less violent media content

However, it is the long-term effects that surprised the researchers the most. Children whose parents set more limits on the amount of time spent with media 7 months before:

1. were now getting more sleep.
2. were getting better grades in school.
3. had an indirectly positive change in Body Mass (because children were simply moving around more)

Additionally, parents limiting children’s content exposure (to violent media) 7 months before resulted in:

1. increased prosocial behaviour – exhibiting more helpful and cooperative pro-social behaviors at school
2. less aggressive behaviour toward their peers

Doug reminds us that the effect is not immediate and that makes it difficult for parents to recognise. We don’t notice children growing taller in a day, or see Maths grades improve after a week of extra maths lessons, but after a year? – well that is when we suddenly notice that our son has grown too tall for his trousers. Thus, this principle applies to media exposure, i.e. Our children are not going to become violent street brawlers after a few days of playing violent video games, or get an F in English after staying up for the World Cup, but over time the distributed effects on their lives are real.

It is important to remember that the largest growing market of gamers are adults, hence the games developed with adult themes. Yet there are far too many children playing violent (MA15+) games, while still in the process of growing and developing their sense of self, sense of others and learning about the world around them.

Please be encouraged

“When you tell your child that they’ve reached their limit of screen time for the day or that they aren’t allowed to play a particular game because of its content, you aren’t going to see their grades improve immediately or better behavior tomorrow (in fact, you might see a lot of complaining today). But this study demonstrates that the effects of setting and enforcing limits has powerful benefits for children’s health, school, and social outcomes. That’s remarkable when you realize that these are all very different types of outcomes, and setting media limits has a measurable impact on all of them for the future!” A/Prof Douglas Gentile

In our home we don’t always get it perfectly right, but this study is encouraging to all of us ‘limit setters’. It is worth it. We do have a positive effect, even if we don’t notice it today.

Collett Smart is a registered psychologist, psychology tutor at UWS, speaker, freelance writer and mum of 3. She writes on her blog here.
Blakeley Road Campus Magpies!

There have been a number of reports of swooping magpies at our Blakeley Road Campus. This is an annually recurring issue and we ask that all parents and students remain alert in regards to birds in the area.
Community News

MASH+ available to all CSC families

Mount Alexander Shire Mayor, Cr Michael Redden, has launched a new solar power project, Mount Alexander Solar Homes, or MASH+. MASH+ is a bulk-buy arrangement, using high quality components, heavily discounted prices and as much local involvement as possible. Its principal partners are the Shire of Mount Alexander, Elliott Mid News, Cantwell Real Estate and the Theatre Royal. 16 other well-known local organisations are supporting partners.

According to Cr Redden “We are supporting this initiative because we want to help all households in our Shire to benefit financially from going solar and as a Shire we want to help cut our CO2 emissions. We are pleased to support another not-for-profit solar initiative in our Shire. Climate change is a pressing concern for everyone and the more that we can do to address it, the better.”

The project has been organised by The Hub Foundation, a not-for-profit company which is associated with the Hub office and restaurant building in Castlemaine. Hub Foundation director, Neil Barrett, says he decided it was a great time to promote solar. “Prices have come down enormously over the past few years, people want solar but don’t trust the many people calling them on the phone, the government may take away the subsidy within a few months, the financial return is much better than bank interest and, above all, the planet needs it. The MASH+ project is very local. We’re working with the local electrical contractor, Stephen Breheny. Stephen and his staff have installed over 400 solar systems in the Shire over the past six years and they’re widely respected”.

And the plus in MASH+? That’s there to tell you it’s not just about solar power. As part of the price, participants in the project also get an energy assessment and a voucher for an energy efficiency kit from a local supplier.

STOP PRESS. The offer which was launched on 1st July ends on 31st August. At the half-way point at the start of August, MASH had 220 households registered and very keen to go solar. Low cost finance from a credit union is available if needed.

You can find out more about the project by visiting the web site, hubfoundation.org.au or, if you are not on the internet, by phoning Neil or Jo on 0455 589 065