

# 2015

# Annual School Performance Report



**Mountain District**  
*Christian School*

# Mountain District Christian School



## **MDCS VISION STATEMENT**

It is the vision of the MDCS Association to provide by God's grace, a flourishing Prep to Year 12 school community where Christ centred education is paramount.

## **MDCS MISSION STATEMENT**

The MDCS Association serves the families and the Christian Community of our district who desire a Christ centred education.

We do this by providing quality biblically-directed teaching and learning in a nurturing environment.

Such education seeks to develop the God given gifts of each child and, together with parents and the church, equip the child for a life of service in God's world.

## ***Introduction***

Mountain District Christian School is a P-12 non-denominational independent school located in the picturesque Dandenong Ranges east of Melbourne. Established by Christian parents over thirty years, Mountain District Christian School has at its heart a desire to partner with parents in educating young people in values consistent with its biblical foundations. Mountain District Christian School is a welcoming school that seeks to nurture students in a supportive learning environment. Set on seventeen acres of bushland, Mountain District Christian is blessed with attractive learning and play spaces.

## ***Principal's Message***

In 2015, on the first day of school, we asked the students to consider what it means to be a Mountain District Christian School Student. The day began in multi-age groups from Year 1 through to Year 12. It was wonderful to hear the responses from our students as each group shared their thoughts at a whole school assembly. Words such as caring, kind, smart, encouraging and welcoming featured strongly in their responses. Following the assembly we travelled to Silvan Dam to enjoy an afternoon together encouraging stronger relationships across our school. It was a wonderful way to start the year.

This theme continued throughout the year as we explored it further each term. The question of what it means to be an MDCS student was unpacked through the following three questions, "Who am I?" "What's my role?" and "How do I respond?" Below are the questions and the desired understandings that follow.

### **Who are we?**

We are His creation

- Made in the image of God
- Fearfully and wonderfully made all unique
- Known by God
- Made to live in community with others and with God
- We need Jesus

### **What is our role?**

We are a community that

- Searches for truth, sometimes individually and sometimes with others
- Recognises that something went wrong when sin entered the world
- is eager to share our learning journeys with others
- is eager to hear what others have learned
- Seeks to understand the work and purpose God has made for us.

### **How do we respond?**

We are a community that

- Seeks to serve God, our communities and others now and in whatever vocation God has planned for us
- Seek justice and mercy and are beacons of hope!
- Seek to apply our learning outside of the classroom
- Wisely look after the world that has been entrusted to us



## ***Principal's Message (cont.)***

2015 saw the introduction of two Year 7 classes. This was a wonderful opportunity for our Year 7 students as it allowed greater pastoral care due to smaller numbers in each of the classes. This in turn assisted in the transition from primary to secondary school.

Another highlight of 2015 was inviting the current Year 12 students to the EGM to participate in the evening before having their final 'Celebration' day of classes. I look forward to seeing this continue into the future.

Above all, what I most appreciate about everything that occurs at MDCS, and not just the learning but all activities, is the desire to see God honoured in all that is done. This may be when writing curriculum, honouring Him in the stewardship of our resources, determining policy and how we desire to see student's come to an understanding of how they can have a life of faithful and active service in God's world.

We have much to celebrate at MDCS! Thank you to all those that made 2015 a wonderful success.

Jason Riding

## ***From the Board President - Looking forward***

Greetings Association members and families! We are thankful for the advances in the school in 2015. We are grateful for a firm foundation, a strong and rich inheritance, which is ours

through the Lord Jesus Christ who sustains us in everything. We are thankful for a rich heritage of pioneers that went before us, the hope that lies before us, and the commission and charge that lies with us to provide a flourishing educational community in the Yarra Ranges by God's grace.



2015 saw the refurbishment of the Multi Purpose Room, which has been very well received, the installation of the solar panels to the Gymnasium and the retrofitting of LED lights throughout the school. Internet speed was improved through additional external lines, and mobile phone reception onsite was improved. A new student management software was introduced (SEQTA) which continues to be rolled out with training and familiarisation. The scope of this package is exciting, and it will

progressively enhance communications, monitoring, sequencing, reporting and diagnostics across the school.

Please pray for the Board and School Executive as we implement the Strategic Plan, continue to assess the viability of new construction within the Master Plan and provide for the maintenance and enhancement of existing infrastructure and resources, all whilst maintaining a manageable level of debt.

We farewelled Tony Drummond and welcomed Andrew North early this year and Andrew's transition into the Business Manager's role has been very pleasing.

## ***From the Board President - Looking forward (cont.)***

The recently conducted CEN School Review has been extremely helpful and insightful, and approximately two-thirds of families and staff



responded which, we are told, is a very good outcome. Of particular note is the strong affirmation of Jason Riding's leadership of the School. We are thankful to CEN for the guidance and input of Yvonne Bradley and Geoff Bateman through this process.

The Board started 2016 in a reflective state, examining what it means to be good governors. We assigned each of the portfolios of Community, Teaching and Learning, Students, Staff, Resources and Governance to a board member so that they may become more of a 'specialist' in their preferred area. The aim of this is to develop further robustness around these portfolios. Adopting the recommendations of the CEN review, and Compliance and Risk Management will be a focus at the Board level in the coming months and over the course of the next year.

Mal Turner has stepped down from the Board recently on account of his work commitments. We thank him for the time he has devoted to upholding the vision and mission of the school. We welcome Christy Allisey and Tim Messenger

who will stand for election to the Board of Directors at the AGM. We commend them to you. We are pleased they accepted nomination and we look forward to their insights and future contribution on the school Board. Also, upon request of the Board, I will accept the

nomination to maintain the position of Chair for a further year, making it my fourth year as Chair.

In closing, I am very thankful for the freedom we have to maintain the education to our children that we desire, in a society and culture that is increasingly becoming biased against and hostile toward any mention of God. It is my prayer and hope that together we will shine like a light in

the darkness and hold out the promise of life, with an intimate, firsthand knowledge of the goodness of God, to those in our community and well beyond. May God's blessing, grace and peace be upon you and your family in 2016!

Merryn Van Bremen



## ***From the Treasurer***

In 2015, the school has continued with sound financial stewardship with another surplus of \$228,070 (compared to \$184,004 in 2014). It is important to achieve a surplus because we need to:

- Be able to make ongoing debt repayments on a regular basis (of around \$100,000 per year)
- Invest in new assets and infrastructure
- Ensure we have funds available for unplanned events

Although revenues did not grow significantly, there was a slight increase in employee benefits expense, as staff salaries increase at regular intervals. Most expenses have remained stable, however a decline in property maintenance and other expenses ensured our surplus was maintained at a suitable level.

It is important to note that we must balance financial stewardship with ensuring we maintain

a suitable and safe environment for the children and staff that encourages learning.



Part of the spending for 2016 is focusing on improving and upgrading a range of areas around the school to ensure we continue with this.

As with previous years, a review of our balance sheet shows we have a strong equity position (our assets are much higher than our liabilities or debts). However, two important items are



noted for your attention. Our cash balance is deliberately very low (at \$12,596) and our short-term (current) liabilities appear to be very high.

Firstly – our cash balance is low because we use all extra cash to reduce our loan balances. So, we have access to appropriate levels of cash to meet all our payments as required, but minimise our interest expenses.

Secondly – our short-term liabilities are high because we receive a significant proportion of 2016 school fees in December 2015. As these fees are paid in advance, we have an obligation to parents to provide schooling in 2016 (or alternatively repay this money). So, having fees paid in advance provides significant benefit to the school, but is presented in an interesting way in the financial statements.

Student numbers were lower in 2015 and have declined again 2016. If left unmanaged, this can be a significant financial risk. There is careful monitoring of budgets and planning to ensure that the school remains in a sound financial position, and so there are no current concerns in relation to this situation. There are no other major areas of concern to raise with the association, and the audit has indicated that Tony Drummond performed his role diligently and enabled a smooth transition to Andrew North.

Courtney Clowes

# Mountain District Parent Controlled Christian School Association

ACN: 005 633 670

## Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2015

	Note	2015 \$	2014 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	12,596	6,551
Trade and other receivables	6	56,566	40,186
Inventories	7	11,154	9,686
Other assets	8	56,568	46,386
<b>Total current assets</b>		<u>136,884</u>	<u>102,809</u>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	9	4,945,540	5,059,717
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<u>4,945,540</u>	<u>5,059,717</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<u>5,082,424</u>	<u>5,162,526</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	10	195,932	218,294
Financial liabilities	11	364,743	195,091
Short-term provisions	12	353,663	376,605
Other liabilities	13	426,566	523,494
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<u>1,340,904</u>	<u>1,313,484</u>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Parents' deposits	10	65,900	67,200
Financial liabilities	11	126,005	465,497
Long-term provisions	12	51,415	46,215
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<u>243,320</u>	<u>578,912</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<u>1,584,224</u>	<u>1,892,396</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>3,498,200</u>	<u>3,270,130</u>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Reserves		662,064	662,064
Accumulated surpluses		2,836,136	2,608,066
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<u>3,498,200</u>	<u>3,270,130</u>

# Mountain District Parent Controlled Christian School Association

ACN: 005 633 670

## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 31 December 2015

	Note	2015 \$	2014 \$
Revenue	3	4,032,151	3,952,661
Employee benefits expense	4	(2,882,421)	(2,798,546)
Finance cost	4	(36,851)	(52,856)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	4	(300,832)	(302,858)
Tuition expense		(186,176)	(189,643)
Administration expense		(67,702)	(59,949)
Bus transportation costs		(81,138)	(79,719)
Property maintenance costs		(79,001)	(99,060)
Other expenses		(169,964)	(186,026)
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>228,070</b>	<b>184,004</b>
Other comprehensive income for the year		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>228,070</b>	<b>184,004</b>





## ***MDCS Staff***

Mountain District Christian School employs over forty people. In addition to teaching staff there are a number of people who work behind the scenes to support the school including educational support staff, maintenance and cleaning staff, bus staff, a chaplain, and administration team members.

Tony Drummond, a well-loved member of the Administration team, resigned at the end of 2015, to join his wife in the running of a Bed and Breakfast on the northern New South Wales Coast. Tony's contribution to the school in the role of Business Manager was always carried out with a desire and passion to see MDCS become a flourishing community. His heart and passion for the school was noticeably evident.

## ***Teaching Staff***

Mountain District Christian School has a talented teaching team with a range of teaching

experiences and qualifications. In 2015, we welcomed new teachers to MDCS. Mr William Baird began his teaching career taking on a class teacher role in addition to some physical education and junior mathematics.

Three teachers took leave in 2015, Mrs. Lia Burke, Mrs. Bronwyn Hamilton and Mrs. Thea Maguire

Mr. Thomas Gibbs very capably fulfilled the role of secondary art specialist and Ibu Sue Sumarno to the role of Indonesian specialist.

MDCS sadly said farewell to Mrs Sian Conway after seven year of service, of which the last two were in the role of VCE Coordinator. She leaves a wonderful legacy of hardwork, organisation and determination. In addition we also said goodbye to Mr Ben Heckathorn as he pursued opportunities elsewhere.

There are currently no employees of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent.



## MDCS Teachers and Qualifications:

Mr. W. Baird	BEd (PE)
Mr. J. Beer	BA(Hons), GradDipEd
Miss E. Bennett	BEd(Prim)
Mrs. J. Bratton	DipTeach, Grad DipEd
Mrs. A. Callow	BPhys. Ed.
Mrs. A. Chaney	DipTeach, BEd (Conversion)
Mrs S. Conway	BTeach, BSc.
Mrs. H. Denny	BMusic, BEd
Mrs. E. Diprose	BA, BTeach
Mrs L. Dube	B.ED (PE),
Mr. S. Duke	BEd(PE), GradCert (Theology)
Mrs. E. Fensham	BA, GradDipEd
Mr T. Gibbs	BA (Fine Arts), Grad Dip Ed (Sec)
Mrs. G. Godman	BA, BTeach
Ms. S. Hanscamp	BA, DipEd, MEd
Mrs. N. Heading	BA, DipEd
Mr. B. Heckathorn	BEd (Primary)
Mrs. R. Holland	B Early Childhood Ed
Miss K. Jackel	B Env Sci, Grad Dip of Secondary Education
Mrs. L. Knight	BTeach, Grad Dip Sp. Ed, Grad Dip Grief Counselling

Mr. K. McDowell	BA (Biblical History) Grad Dip Ed
Mr. T. Nyhouse	Cert III Carpentry & Joinery, Cert IV WPT&A
Mr. J. Riding	BEd (PE), Grad Dip Chr Ed, Dip. Management
Mrs. D. Scott	BA, Dip Ed, Grad Dip Maths Ed
Ms. S. Sumarno	BA, B Teach
Mrs. C. Wyngaard	BEd, Grad Dip Ed, MEd



## ***Teacher Professional Development***

It is a key goal of MDCS to build the capacity of the teaching team to deliver quality educational programs from a Christian perspective. While below there is an outline of some of the professional development



activities undertaken, building capacity involves growing culture, establishing and providing time for staff to work in teams, as well as providing mechanisms for real growth through appraisal and professional development programs. A key component of our efforts to grow staff in their understanding and development of teaching content and developing teaching practice from a Christian perspective includes our participation in Masters Studies with the National Institute of Christian Education (The Institute). The Institute is the training arm of our national Christian schooling body, Christian Education National. As a condition of employment at MDCS, teaching staff are required to study with the National Institute, completing two units towards their Masters of Education. In 2015, seven staff undertook study with the Institute and three staff completed the Certificate of Christian Education as part of their induction program.

A focus for 2015 was on developing strategies to assist students with learning difficulties. We welcomed Michelle Hutchison from Independent Schools Victoria as she shared with teaching staff strategies

to assist students with dyslexia and general strategies for students with a range of learning difficulties.

In addition to the above, all teaching staff and learning assistants were given the opportunity to attend the International Transforming Education Conference (ITEC) held in Melbourne. This conference occurs every four years at various locations around Australia. Well respected Keynote speakers from around the world provided strategies, inspiration and challenged delegates to think critically about how they were being distinctively Christian in their approach to teaching and learning. These speakers included John Stonestreet, David I Smith, Rod Thompson and Jefferson Bethke as well as our local representatives such as Ken Dickens.

Approximately \$46000 was spent on professional development. This worked out to be \$2200 per teacher spent on professional development programs in 2015. These included courses in health, well-being and safety such as first aid and anaphylaxis training. Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) also provided seminars and training programs for our teaching staff. These included programs in literacy and numeracy, the use of Information and Computer Technologies in learning, and classroom management. Senior Secondary staff also participated in a range of professional learning activities specific to the subjects they deliver at the VCE level.



## Key Student Outcomes

It is a requirement of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.) that we maintain an Attendance Register. Children between the age of six and seventeen are required to be in full-time attendance at a government or registered non-government school unless they are undertaking approved home tuition or correspondence education through the Distance Education Centre. Mountain District Christian School requires parents to inform the school when their children are absent from school. Non-attendance is recorded on school reports each semester. Repeated non-attendance can have a detrimental influence on a child's educational outcomes. In circumstances of regular non-attendance the school will look to establish meetings with parents to assist them with any issues that may be attendance related and implement strategies to assist the student. In 2015 student attendance was



91.56%.

As part of teaching and learning teachers collect 'data'. This data is often very rich and can include classroom observations, work samples, assignment and test results, and standardised assessments. NAPLAN is one of the standardized assessments used by schools

within Australia to inform student learning. At MDCS other standardized tests used include the South Australian Spelling Test, TORCH and a number of assessment tools created by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). We do

recognize that standardised testing can have limitations and should not be considered in isolation from other available information on student learning. It is important, however, that data be used wisely to assist teachers, parents and students to establish good work programs within a safe environment and thus facilitate learning. Below are the NAPLAN results from 2015. Please note the small sample sizes.

### MDCS Students achieving National Benchmarks:

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Numeracy	Grammar
<b>Year 3</b>					
Total number of students in year	23	23	23	23	23
Number present for test	20	19	20	20	20
% meeting national benchmarks	100	95	95	100	95
<b>Year 5</b>					
Total number of students in year	12	12	12	12	12
Number present for test	10	10	10	10	10
% meeting national benchmarks	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Year 7</b>					
Total number of students in year	29	29	29	29	29
Number present for test	27	27	27	27	27
% meeting national benchmarks	96	89	92	96	100
<b>Year 9</b>					
Total number of students in year	23	23	23	23	23
Number present for test	22	19	19	21	19
% meeting national benchmarks	87	84	79	100	100

## Senior Secondary Outcomes

In 2015, twenty seven students undertook a Unit 3 & 4 sequence of study towards their Victorian Certificate of Education. In all, thirteen students completed Year 12 at MDCS. The students participated in a variety of subjects. These included Biology, Chemistry, English, Further Mathematics, Health and Human Development, History, Mathematical Methods, Physical Education, Physics (Distance Education Centre of Victoria), Psychology, Studio Art, Outdoor and Environmental Studies, Literature and Drama. The number of subjects offered at MDCS is very high when considering the number of students enrolled.

It was pleasing to note that 100% (13) of students that completed Year 12 achieved their VCE. The students completing a Unit 3 & 4 study sequence achieved some excellent results. 1.4% of students achieved a study score over 40. It was pleasing to note an improvement in the median study score for students completing a



Unit 3 & 4 study sequence in 2015. It rose to 28. The average ATAR was 53.64.

It was also pleasing to note that all students that applied for tertiary courses were provided with an offer. One student did not apply through the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC), however, was offered tertiary study via direct entry.

## ***Satisfaction Surveys***

We desire for MDCS to be a healthy school where feedback is given by both individuals and groups to assist the school as a whole to fulfill its vision and mission. Student learning is enhanced by a strong connection between home and school and a safe and supportive school environment. Each year we survey members of the school community and groups in order to look to improve facets of our operation.

In 2015, respondents to parent and student feedback were overwhelmingly positive to the school. However, it was noted that it would be beneficial to have a greater level of careers advice given and it would be beneficial to have more regular communication regarding the progress of children to parents or guardians.

Staff were surveyed, amongst other things, on the development of Individual Learning Plans (ILP's) to help students that have difficulty accessing the curriculum at their age level. They reported that more training is required to do

this effectively, including assistance when developing desired outcomes. The teaching staff also reported that these were much more effective when parents were able to regularly attend the scheduled meetings.

Another common response that was low was in regard the appearance of the grounds. It is pleasing to mention that refreshment of the multipurpose room and, more recently, the library have seen an improvement in this area.

It was wonderful to note that there continues to be an overwhelmingly positive response to the feedback given by staff regarding the welcoming and supportive staff culture.





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