

# Covenant College

CHRISTIAN LEARNING FOR LIFE

# Annual Report 2020



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“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

PROVERBS 22:6



## Message from the College Principal

**Term One:** We celebrated our 40th year in 2019 and what a contrast the last year was to the previous one. We started 2020 knowing that an outbreak of novel coronavirus occurred in China and were encouraged by the Department of Health and Human Services to remind students to cough into their elbow, sneeze into a tissue and wash their hands regularly (something we should always do). That was in January 2020 - how things escalated quickly from there. I remember talking to parents about the virus during the whole school BBQ on 11th March, when we had already sent out our first letter to let parents know what we were doing as a school. By the 18th of March we had moved to Phase 2 which included cancellation of excursions and onsite visitors and limited access to parents. One third of our students were already staying home. By the 23rd of March we had begun our first term holidays early to protect the health of our students and staff and allow time for staff to prepare for Term 2 offsite.

**Term Two:** We did not know then that we would not see the students again until the start of Week 7 of Term Two. When they did return, it was only for a day a week except for VCE students who came in for their classes. Internet access had been set up, offsite learning packs were being delivered fortnightly to most students, and staff were interacting via Zoom sessions. By this time the school was well equipped with hand sanitizer and drink bottle filler taps, playground equipment was being sanitized regularly each day, signage and instructions on social distancing was introduced, and drop off and pick up zones were established. By the 8th of June all students were back for three weeks before the holidays. During this time reports were modified to reflect remote learning, parent teacher interviews were conducted via phone, and the VCE students attended a virtual careers expo – there had been huge changes and challenges for all.

**Term Three:** Only a few weeks in and on July 28 we shut the school for deep cleaning for one day. The 3rd of August was the students' last day onsite until the 8th of October. Remote learning recommenced, and this time we were able to provide more learning options both remotely and onsite. Middle and Junior School staff had two days before remote learning started to work on timetables, lessons, learning packs and room changes, to upskill further in technology and prepare for students both onsite and at home; VCE had one day to prepare. "Zoom", "Teams" and "Seesaw" became the new way to connect with our students, and even our instrumental teachers were able to continue with lessons via Zoom. Face coverings became mandatory on the 3rd of August and the sport department conducted a 'Virtual Cross Country', which was won by Ten Boom Tigers.

**Term Four:** Students continued to access remote learning on the Tuesday and Wednesday of Week 1. Wednesday was an important day for the VCE students studying Unit 3 & 4 subjects with a 3-hour GAT exam – thankfully Marieta and her crew prepared breakfast for them prior to the exam. School recommenced onsite on Thursday and it was wonderful to see the students back. We had the pleasure of viewing the Virtual Art and Design Show; Year 6 band classes had to practice outside; photo day was called off, then back on, then changed again, and finally all students were photographed. Many camps had to be cancelled during the different restrictions, however the Year 9s did experience their Expeditions - two groups into the mountains and one group canoeing. Our Year 4s were able to go to Mill Valley Ranch



and we were able to conduct the Swimming Carnival. The Book Fair took place, with many books being purchased, and the Book Week dress-up was delightful. The Year 12s finished their classes with surfing lessons and delicious food at Ocean Grove. In Middle School and Junior School, the Life Education Van paid a visit with lots of activities, and the Year 5s went on two farm excursions. School life was gradually returning to normal.

Orientation Day looked very different - we sent video clips to the parents of new students commencing in 2021, hoping to help their children feel comfortable about coming to school for the short Orientation Hour. With restrictions still in place graduations also looked different from previous years. We decided to film them so that parents could still be part of the event and keep it as a memory of 2020, despite not being able to attend in person. The 4-year-old Kinder graduations, Junior and Middle School Celebration and Graduation clips were completed and the links sent out. We still wanted to celebrate our Year 12 Graduation, knowing that it would need to look very different due to Covid restrictions, so we conducted a 'Drive-In' Graduation. Our students had the opportunity of having their photos taken with their families before the Year 12s enjoyed a meal together. They then moved out to our oval which had been set up with an outdoor stage and huge screen, with families parked in their cars around the oval to watch their sons and daughters graduate on the big screen. Families also had the opportunity of being served a very delicious meal in their car. It was an amazing night which the 2020 Year 12s will never forget.

Staff training changed to fine-tuning online skills, being in front of a camera teaching classes, learning new systems and online professional development. Again this year, all new staff participated in a professional development evening at school, where they were privileged to have two of our school fathers lead them through the evening – Dr Murray Capill and Dr Phillip Scheepers. During the evening the staff were introduced to the importance of Christian Education and how it permeates all that we do at Covenant.

Our devotion time as a staff continued to focus on strengthening our Biblical understanding and how that impacts our teaching. Maintaining a Christian worldview is essential for our staff – devotions became 'Zoom Devotions' as we weren't all able to socially distance in the Staff room. All of our curriculum continues to be written through the Christian Education National-Biblical lens of Transformation By Design curriculum development documentation.

Religious freedom and exemptions were still on the political agenda in 2020, although the Federal and State Governments were engaged in managing the virus which pushed this discussion back. We will continue to lend our voice and that of our parents to maintaining our ability to hold onto our freedom of speech, the freedom to teach from our Biblical Basis statement, and our ability to shape the educational practice of the school based on these core beliefs. The Victorian Government also introduced the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill 2020, a highly complex Bill that will require wisdom and understanding as we work through it in a school setting.

### Covenant College Board

*Covenant College is governed by the Geelong Christian Education Association which consists of both parent and non-parent members who are actively involved in a variety of Christian churches. During 2020 the Board met in person when they were able and via zoom when we needed to isolate. The Board continues to work to make Covenant College an authentic Biblically based Christ centred school. The Covenant Board consists of Gary Plumridge (Board Chairman), James Kingsland (Board Vice-Chairman), Reyson Royo (Treasurer), Andrew Thierry, Glen Munday, Sally Baird, Leanne Johnson, Jarrod Caimcross and Jose Rodriguez-Lopez.*



*We welcomed many new staff at the beginning of and during the year:*

- Ben Grueber (Accounts Payable Assistant)
- Deborah Langley (Education Support)
- Ben Parsons (Year 9 teacher)
- Jodie Ward (Education Support)
- Corinne Knol (Senior School teacher)
- Joanne Scott (Year 1 teacher)
- Sue Incoll (Education Support)
- Emily McDowell (VCE teacher)
- Bronwyn Combridge (Year 2 teacher)
- Jemma Gillie (Teacher and LSL covering)
- Kellyanne Cazeau and Kathy Hintum (Year 5 Team teachers)
- Anna Stringer (Administration)
- Meredith Cox (Administration)
- Rebecca Cairncross (Administration)

*We said farewell to some of our excellent staff:*

- Tina Maree moved to Sydney.
- Mitch Bradbury and his family moved back to WA.
- Amy Tse took up the role of full time mum.
- Georgia Pearson took up a full-time ministry role with One Hope Baptist Church.
- Hayley Smith went back to full time study through a Melbourne Bible College.
- Danielle Prollius decided to stay in Ballarat and has volunteered at a local school.
- Grace Newnham awaited the arrival of her first baby due at the end of January 2021.
- Lydia Whitehand completed her studies in nursing and took up a full time position in that field.



In 2019 we began work on two new Middle School classrooms, which were ready for occupation at the start of 2020. We also finalised the purchase of 8 acres on our western boundary which allowed us to move Transport and Maintenance into a new facility in the corner of this land.

*We welcomed our new student leadership team:*

**School Captains:**

Nathan Lazovic and Sarah Scattergood

**Senior School Vice Captains:**

Yahya Ibrahim and Gemma Pearce

**Senior School Student Leaders**

Rachel Cox, Ruth Navidinejad and Tom Morgan

**Middle School Captains:**

Kaylee Gillett and Leah DeBoer

**Junior School Captains:**

Savannah White, Amelia Brown, Ella Schlensog and Zack Beasley

**Middle School Class Captains:**

Noah Gall, Bryce Moorcroft, Brooklyn Simpson, Annabella Ward, Kirra Kemp, Matilda Varcoe, Elizmarie Pretorius, Gabi Romeyn, Jarmine Theron, Hudson Incoll and Jaidon Kucharski

**Middle and Senior School House Captains:**

Bella Kent, Piper Davenport, Luke Nemtsas, Kiara Mackenzie, Olivia Macchia, Silas Abou-Zeid, Ethan Middleton, Olive Murphy, Esther Harrison, Darcy Holman, Holly Theron and Jordy Edwards.



Our support for other schools continues with many of our staff and Junior School students supporting Joshua Primary School, part of Bushikori in Uganda. We also continue to have a wonderful relationship with Covenant Christian Academy (CCA) in Rizal, Philippines. Unfortunately, we were not able to visit CCA during the year due to COVID. However, we are able to continue to support the school through the sponsorship of students and staff. CCA found it very difficult due to COVID restrictions in the Philipines and going to remote learning, but they continued to reach out to their community offering Bible based education, love and care. Our Japanese connection was also discontinued this year, and we hope in the coming years to reconnect and have students visit our College in both short and long term cultural exchanges.



COVENANT COLLEGE CHRISTIAN LEARNING FOR LIFE

Our Trades Skills Centre (TSC) continued to grow in numbers, with full classes working on or completing Certificate II in Horticulture, Agriculture or Animal Studies. Practical skills are a main highlight of the TSC – grooming animals; caring for chickens, sheep and alpacas; driving the tractor; OHS; soil and garden establishment. The practicing of these skills together with excursions to farms, animal shelters, vet clinics, GAWS, ostrich farms, commercial horticulture facilities and other locations was hampered due to lockdowns. Our students did well, however, and completed the tasks set to obtain their Certificate II. Five students were awarded scholarships through the Geelong Community Foundation. These included The Tom Cleary Memorial Scholarship, Rural and Regional Scholarship Award, two Miles Family Scholarships and The Dorothy Jean Scholarship – all were monetary awards to assist students in their careers or studies.

We congratulated our 48 Year 12 VCE and VCAL students who completed their studies in 2020. 86% of those students seeking University placements received a Round 1 offer and 83% of these students are currently enrolled full time. The main institutions of choice have been: Deakin University, Federation University, Australian Catholic University, Charles Sturt, CollArts (Australian College of the Arts), Central Queensland University, Deakin College, La Trobe University, University of Melbourne, and Victorian University. Vast arrays of disciplines were chosen by students, reflecting the diversity in their passions, skills and God-given abilities. These included: Arts, Biomedical Science, Commerce/Law, Engineering – Civil, Exercise and Sports Science, Health and Physical Education, Health Sciences, International Business, Law/Global Studies, Music (Specialisation), Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Psychological Science, Science, Screen and Media, Teaching – Primary, and Veterinary and Wildlife Science. Twelve of our students also found employment in various occupations. *Our DUX for 2020 was Gemma Pearce with an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank of 94.55.*

I would again this year like to thank our dedicated staff of 2020 - Administration, IT, Bus Drivers, Grounds and Maintenance workers, Cleaners, Teachers, Community Development, Catering, Education Support, Leadership and Board Members - for their work and their passion for Christian Education, which is seen in whichever area they work. I thank our families for their support of the staff and the students, who make it a joy and a blessing as we journey together despite some tough weeks of lockdowns and remote learning.

**Ultimately, all thanks goes to God for His hand on Covenant College, with Him giving His love and protection, empowering, blessing and constantly challenging us to live according to His will.**







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and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

PROVERBS 22:6

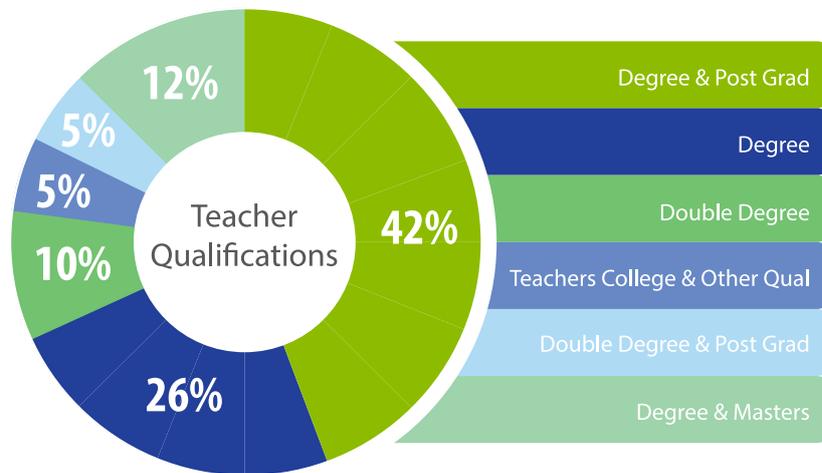
# Professional Engagement

## Staff Retention

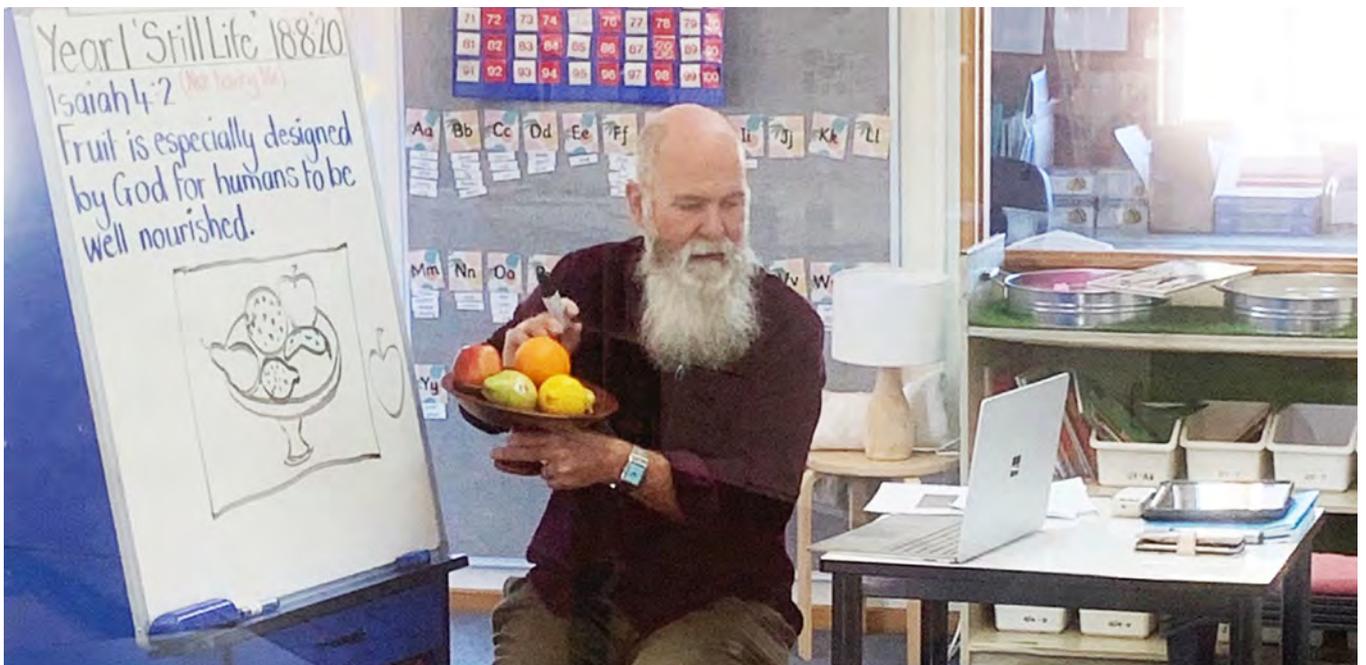
2020 saw the introduction of six new teachers to the Covenant College team, bringing the total number of full-time and part-time teaching staff to 78<sup>1</sup>. From these, 76 teachers chose to continue their employment at the conclusion of the year, representing a 97% staff retention rate.

Staff departures were due to relocation interstate, ministry, motherhood and new careers. We would like to take this opportunity to again thank our staff for their commitment to Christian Education, their students and Covenant College.

## Staff Qualifications



<sup>1</sup>This figure reflects both current teaching staff and those on personal and long service leave



## Professional Development and Staff Appraisals

Despite restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, staff continued to participate in a varied program of professional development throughout the year. To accommodate restrictions, the mode of delivery for many programs shifted from hands-on, in-person sessions to online participation.

In addition to professional development, staff at Covenant College are required to complete regular training and refresher courses in the following areas:

- First Aid and CPR
- Anaphylaxis and Allergy Management
- Asthma Management
- Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting

New staff are required to complete an induction and training program that covers such topics as occupational health and safety, privacy, student duty of care, administrative functions, child safety and school policies.

Throughout the year, all staff undergo annual appraisals. These are conducted both formally and informally with a view to encouraging staff in their work and developing ongoing goals.



# Student Outcomes

Student Attendance 90.7%

Student Retention 64%

## Student Attendance

In 2020, students from Prep to Year 11 were in attendance<sup>2</sup> at school nearly **90.7%** of the time. Below is the breakdown of student attendance by year level.

### Average Student Attendance by Year Level

| Year                                  | %           |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Foundation                            | 91.7        |
| Year 1                                | 90          |
| Year 2                                | 93          |
| Year 3                                | 91.4        |
| Year 4                                | 93.6        |
| Year 5                                | 89.7        |
| Year 6                                | 92.4        |
| Year 7                                | 91.4        |
| Year 8                                | 90.2        |
| Year 9                                | 86.4        |
| Year 10                               | 88.9        |
| Year 11                               | 89.3        |
| <b>Average Across All Year Levels</b> | <b>90.7</b> |

<sup>2</sup>Student absenteeism is defined as 'students not attending school at all or students who arrive late or depart early'.

Student attendance is recorded in line with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) minimum standards. In the event that a child will be absent from school, an explanation is required from the parent/guardian along with information regarding the nature and duration of the absence. This is preferably done prior to commencement of the school day via one of the following methods:

- Parent Portal app
- RollCall app (for bus travellers)
- SMS or phone call
- Email to Student Reception
- Note in the school diary

## Management of student non-attendance

If a student is marked with an unexplained absence at roll call, an SMS is sent to the parent/guardian to inform them their child has not arrived at school and ask them to contact the school. In the event of long term, unexplained absences, the Head of School will follow up directly with the family.

## Student Retention Rate

Student retention is calculated on the number of Year 9 students who continue onto Year 12 at the school. Of the 66 students who formed the Year 9 cohort in 2017, 42 of these went on to graduate from Covenant College in 2020. This represents a retention rate of **64%**.

# National Benchmarks

Each year, students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 participate in the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), administered by the Victorian Curriculum & Assessment Authority (VCAA). These tests provide an indication of how well students are developing in the areas of Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation and Numeracy, relative to the national minimum standards. While the results give a broad picture of overall aptitude, the data is impacted by factors such as class size, changes in class cohorts from year to year, and any students exempt from testing (as these students are required to be included in the data as not meeting the benchmarks).

In 2020, the decision was made by Education Ministers to cancel NAPLAN testing due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the table below reflects our 2017 - 2019 NAPLAN results only.

## NAPLAN Results

Percentage (%) of students achieving at or above minimum standards:

|               |                       | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---------------|-----------------------|------|------|------|
| <b>Year 3</b> | Reading               | 100  | 95   | 98   |
|               | Writing               | 100  | 100  | 100  |
|               | Spelling              | 97   | 95   | 93   |
|               | Grammar & Punctuation | 100  | 97   | 98   |
|               | Numeracy              | 93   | 100  | 97   |
| <b>Year 5</b> | Reading               | 100  | 98   | 100  |
|               | Writing               | 98   | 95   | 97   |
|               | Spelling              | 96   | 100  | 95   |
|               | Grammar & Punctuation | 100  | 93   | 95   |
|               | Numeracy              | 100  | 100  | 100  |
| <b>Year 7</b> | Reading               | 100  | 97   | 100  |
|               | Writing               | 98   | 95   | 99   |
|               | Spelling              | 100  | 96   | 98   |
|               | Grammar & Punctuation | 98   | 99   | 94   |
|               | Numeracy              | 100  | 95   | 98   |
| <b>Year 9</b> | Reading               | 99   | 97   | 97   |
|               | Writing               | 89   | 85   | 91   |
|               | Spelling              | 98   | 93   | 96   |
|               | Grammar & Punctuation | 98   | 93   | 91   |
|               | Numeracy              | 100  | 100  | 100  |

# Senior Secondary Outcomes

## VCE Achievements

- 48 students completed their VCE and VCAL in 2020
- Our median ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranking) score was **63.7**, with our Dux achieving an ATAR score of **94.55**
- 17.64% of students achieved an ATAR score above 90
- 26.47% of students achieved an ATAR score above 80
- 35.29% of students achieved an ATAR score above 70
- 55.88% of students achieved an ATAR score above 60
- Seven students (14.3%) achieved a study score of 40 or higher
- An additional three students from Year 11 also achieved a study score of 40 or higher for VCE subjects completed in 2020
- 29 students applied for a tertiary course through the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC)
- **86%** (25) of these students received a Round 1 offer
- **83%** (24) of these students are currently enrolled full time

## Where did our 2020 Year 12 students go?

| Tertiary Institutions                     | #         | %           |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Deakin University                         | 12        | 50          |
| Federation University                     | 3         | 12.5        |
| Australian Catholic University            | 2         | 8.33        |
| Charles Sturt University                  | 1         | 4.17        |
| CollArts (Australian College of the Arts) | 1         | 4.17        |
| Central Queensland University             | 1         | 4.17        |
| Deakin College                            | 1         | 4.17        |
| La Trobe University                       | 1         | 4.17        |
| University of Melbourne                   | 1         | 4.17        |
| Victoria University                       | 1         | 4.17        |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>24</b> | <b>100%</b> |

| Career Pathways       | #         | %           |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| University            | 22        | 46          |
| Tafe/vocational study | 9         | 19          |
| Employment            | 12        | 25          |
| Other                 | 5         | 10          |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>48</b> | <b>100%</b> |

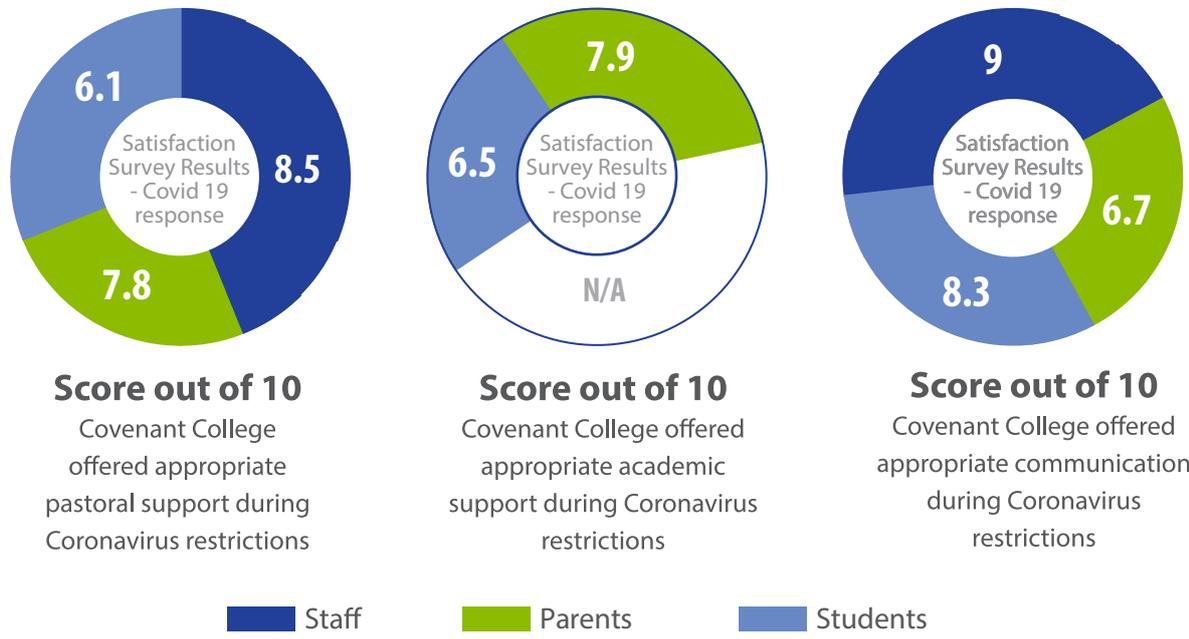
Some of the university courses that our Year 12 students are enrolled in include:

- Arts
- Engineering – Civil
- Health and Physical Education
- Music (Specialisation)
- Psychological Science
- Teaching – Primary
- Biomedical Science
- Exercise and Sports Science
- International Business
- Nursing
- Science
- Veterinary and Wildlife Science
- Commerce/Law
- Health Sciences
- Laws/Global Studies
- Occupational Therapy
- Screen and Media

# Satisfaction Survey Results

Staff, parents and students are invited to provide regular feedback regarding the school by participating in yearly satisfaction surveys. This is done through participation in the Independent Schools of Victoria (ISV) LEAD School Effectiveness Surveys every second year, and via in-house surveys on alternating years. Information obtained from the surveys gives valuable insight into overall perceptions of the school, providing opportunities to celebrate strengths and work on areas for improvement.

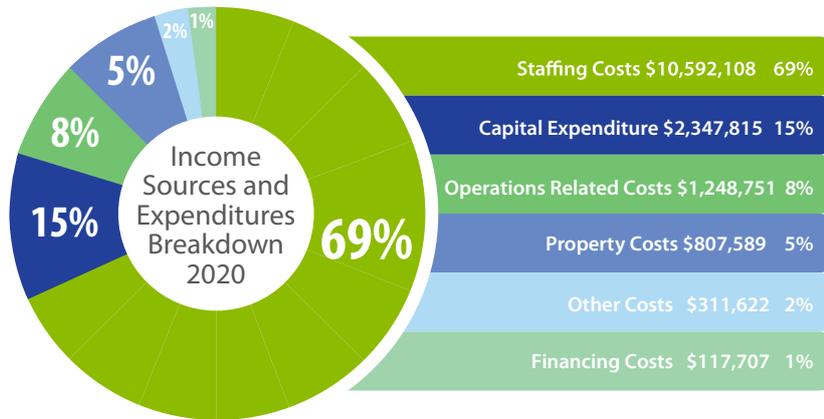
In 2020, additional survey questions were included to capture feedback regarding the school’s response during the periods of remote learning due to Covid-19. The table below shows the average score out of 10 given by staff, parents and students for three questions related to the Coronavirus restrictions.



Parents and students were also asked to provide general feedback regarding the school’s Covid-19 response. Despite the many challenges posed by remote learning, overall responses from both parents and students were positive. In particular, praise was given for the ways in which the remote learning process was refined and improved upon between the two lockdown periods. Lockdown number two saw the introduction of online Zoom teaching sessions, which received contrasting feedback from parents and students.

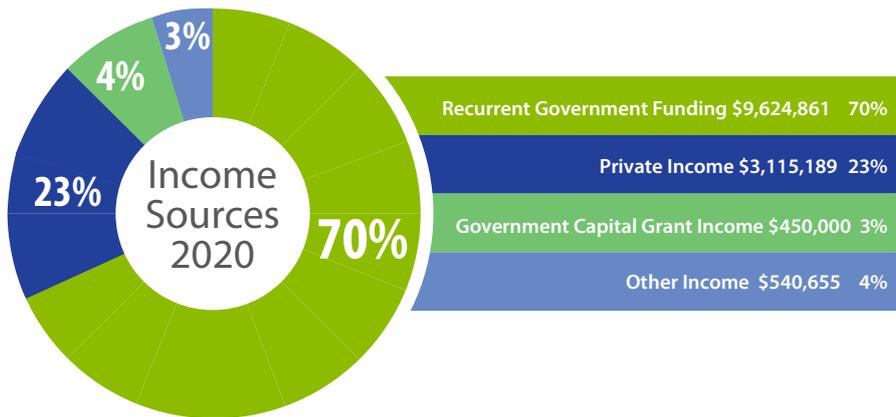
While most parents felt the introduction of Zoom lessons brought significant improvements, this sentiment wasn’t necessarily shared by students. Common reflections from students were that it was hard to sustain focus and contributed to overall feelings of stress, although other students pointed out that it had a positive effect in helping them to feel more connected to their peers and teachers. Students gave honest insights into the challenging nature of remote learning and the impact it had on mental health but were positive in their appraisal of the school’s response during lockdowns, as were parents.

# Income Source and Expenditures Breakdown



|      | Staffing Costs | Capital Expenditure | Operational Related Costs | Property Costs | Financing Costs | Other Costs |
|------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 2016 | \$6,806,425    | \$300,904           | \$1,090,515               | \$355,237      |                 | \$203,557   |
| 2017 | \$7,664,964    | \$93,556            | \$715,703                 | \$426,866      | \$155,259       | \$294,389   |
| 2018 | \$8,747,600    | \$723,234           | \$1,139,390               | \$566,416      | \$154,194       | \$341,356   |
| 2019 | \$9,796,999    | \$1,003,492         | \$1,513,478               | \$695,794      | \$170,177       | \$378,183   |
| 2020 | \$10,592,108   | \$2,347,815         | \$1,248,751               | \$807,589      | \$117,707       | \$311,622   |

# Expenditures



|      | Recurrent Government Funding | Private Income | Government Capital Grant Income | Other Income |
|------|------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 2016 | \$6,548,756                  | \$2,249,501    | \$3,354                         | \$211,325    |
| 2017 | \$7,355,431                  | \$2,866,011    |                                 | \$489,925    |
| 2018 | \$8,166,717                  | \$3,095,832    |                                 | \$559,251    |
| 2019 | \$9,075,329                  | \$3,388,530    |                                 | \$673,840    |
| 2020 | \$9,624,861                  | \$3,115,189    | \$450,000                       | \$540,655    |

# Our past students – where are they now?



## Daniel (Dan) Kroon

By Laura-Beth Filipovski

“I went all the way through school with Dan. He was always serious about asking big questions and looking to the Bible for answers, even if this meant challenging the assumptions of both himself and others. Also, he always showed a care for those around him. With that in mind, it’s no surprise that he has felt called to the ministry”.

Classmate Jonathan Feldman

The phone interview started off with some of the hardest life questions Daniel (Dan) Kroon had possibly ever faced: ‘What is your favourite book?’ and ‘What is your favourite Sci-Fi film?’. He replied in anguish, “What do you mean? What genre? Fiction? Non-fiction?”. An avid fan of pop culture and filtering it through a **Christian world view**, Dan has a lot of favourites. At first he protests - he can’t choose. Without mercy he is pushed into a corner - “Well, if I have to choose a book... ‘Gone with the Wind’ is a classic”. As for a film, Dan can’t go past the golden ‘80s and the most quintessential sci-fi film of all – ‘Back to the Future’, which according to him is “the ultimate schooling in time travel”.

Choosing favourite school memories for Dan is just as hard. Whether it was sneaking over the infamous back fence, chasing sheep around Dog Rocks with his mates or leaving school with the same accomplices in their new cars at lunch to bring back a BBQ, Dan had his fair share of fun – and sausages! His journey at Covenant College, then a small country school, started in 1991. His school photos show a friendly, open face with understanding eyes. He looks content in all of them and it is no surprise that his account of his time at school is

gracious and kind. Teacher’s triumphs are remembered as inspirational and their failings as endearing anecdotes. Vince King (even though he frequently gave out copious lines as punishment to Dan), Mr. Schulz, Pieter Stok, Cameron Hall and Wendy Warren were all teachers Dan remembers as “making a positive impression”. “Poor Mr. Schulz,” says Dan, sounding as though he is smiling over the phone as he recalls the humble Maths teacher on whom they inflicted great mischievousness. Mr. Schulz’s gentle ways may have resulted in some intermittent mayhem but his methods can’t be criticised - 19 years on and

Dan still loves Maths... and Mr. Schulz! Despite his general cheekiness, giving Mr. Schulz a headache and warranting the copious lines he was dealt out, Dan also made a positive impression on his teachers.

When asked about Dan, Wendy Warren, his Literature teacher at the time, recalls him as a “cheerful, energetic and hardworking” young man. “I remember him well. My strongest memories of Dan are within his Year 9 English class and the **extraordinary experiences** they had together. This group of students was highly competitive, incredibly



talkative and very keen to rise to a challenge. These capable students wrote and performed their own spellbinding character monologues based on a novel, they also turned small group Shakespeare performances into a 'theatre' sleepover and presented a complete production of the play "Away", off campus. Because this was earlier days [of Covenant College] with few resources, we taught each other so much and I know that Dan has gone on to use and refine those school English skills and experiences in his work as an experienced pastor in church ministry."

Church ministry suits this intelligent, well-spoken man who never 'ums' and 'errs' while talking over the phone about his faith and passion for the church – though ministry wasn't his first choice straight out of school. After graduating in 2001 he floated for a bit, deciding what to do. "A year of an Arts degree (with the intent to teach Maths and History), plus some Science subjects, didn't refine my direction – and uni was never as enjoyable as school [was] for me either." It was here though that Dan began to explore church ministry. "I started a Bachelor of Theology in 2004... I also did a ministry internship followed by a vicariate (the official year of full time training in the Christian Reformed

Churches of Australia)." During these years he moved from Victoria to Brisbane. After marrying his wife Cath in 2008, Dan became a pastor in Perth, WA. Dan is still pastoring and living in WA with his wife, accompanied by the sound of small pattering feet. Dan talks about his daughter Evelyn in a tone that suggests she is a constant joy - his "happy, cruisy 3-year-old". Cath continues to be "a great support" and judging by the many ways she supports Dan, it is evident she is an intentional, effective, loving and gentle wife. Dan's house is full.

With a **passion for learning** and a **desire to live according to God's Word**, Dan exhibits many of the characteristics Covenant College aspires to nurture in its students. Did Covenant College play a part in the person Dan is today? In terms of his faith and life choices, Covenant College was a space where he could "begin to question and cement my faith... a faith based community where common heritage and shared common Gospel pointed to what the church points to – God's community gathered around the Son". For Dan, Years 11 and 12 were a season to choose whether he would make his faith his own or abandon it. For Dan, he chose to make it his own. After graduating, that choice gave him direction through the "wilderness years

of uni" where "tension in the faith, the flexing of belief, pushing of boundaries finally gave way to the unavoidable truth that Christ is Christ and He has a purpose for his children" – and that included Dan. Through all of this Dan appreciated that education was important, Christian education even more so, but nothing compared to the importance of having a **relationship with Jesus**.



Did Covenant College  
play a part in the  
person Dan is today?



# Students Connecting Globally

## Bushikori Christian Centre – Loss and Legacy for Bushikori

“IN EVERY SOCIETY THERE ARE THOSE NOT SEEN AND WE NEED TO SPEAK ON THEIR BEHALF. THE MARGINALISED NEED TO KNOW GOD, TO HAVE THE LOVE OF JESUS; THAT IS WORTH STANDING FOR.”

- ANNE LEAH MUTONYI WANDENDEYA

**Covenant College has been a strong supporter of Bushikori for many years. Sadly in 2021, Anne Leah Mutonyi Wandendeya, the Bushikori Director passed away. We had the privilege of hosting Anne and her son David here at Covenant College to talk to our staff on a number of occasions. Her life was a full and interesting one, as captured by this excerpt from her memorial service by Pamela Ferrar.**

Anne's life began on 11 November 1968. She described her growing up in a village with her grandmother - her father had divorced her mother. They were poor, frequently there was no breakfast, she would run to school without shoes and remain there until 5pm. When she returned home there was no guarantee of food for her supper so they were often forced to forage.

As a young person, Anne felt unworthy, moving from family to family, and she had no sense of belonging or identity. She became a very reserved person who tolerated difficulties in life. At 12 years of age she was already skilled at house chores and caring for siblings. Thankfully as she grew into adulthood she was blessed with good nurturing

and mentoring. Then she met Sam Wandendeya and married him on the 20th December 1985. Their marriage lasted 13 years before Sam died in a vehicle accident. Those 13 years were a time of great blessing, with 5 children. Anne's past experiences were almost forgotten as her husband became a father to and great supporter of her entire family.

After Sam's life was spared from the murderous regime of Idi Amin, his calling was to care for widows and orphans, and their early married life was committed to this call. All their earnings were spent on feeding needy children, giving them a cup of porridge a day. In 1989 Anne shared their home with 12 orphans as well as their 3 children. Needy children would come and sleep under the tree outside, knowing that they would find food and support. Sam's taxi business paid the school fees of the orphans and over time they established the Bushikori Christian Centre. A midwife came to live at Bushikori to assist with medical help for the orphaned children. Anne states, "Then because the midwife was there, the expectant mothers of the area would come, and deliver under the mango tree and Anne would help". How amazing is

our Lord, when his plans come to fruition through his willing servants?

Anne studied nursing as well as secretarial work, planning, project management and development studies. This education was vital in the development of the Bushikori Christian Centre and what it has become today. In 1998 when her husband Sam died, Anne took on the directorship of Bushikori - she said it was as Elijah had left his mantle to Elisha. She was not sure she wished to take on this responsibility, but in her usual courageous and faithful way she did, successfully steering the NGO for 22 years as director, mother and mentor to countless Ugandans.

Her role could take her from organising grants from a town in Wales, United Kingdom, to hosting American Peace Corp volunteers in her own home, to giving tours to prominent Ugandan local and state politicians, to discussions with religious leaders and tribal elders over many issues. At the other end of the scale, Anne would hug a crying child to happiness, or answer her phone day and night to hear the woes of studying teenagers or pleading guardians.

**Anne obeyed Colossians 4:17 –**

*“See to it that you complete the - work you have received in the Lord”!*

*Easy to say, but not always easy to do! But then, Anne did have the determination to leave no child behind.*



SWITZERLAND



Whilst I usually love pats, and we keep our hands (and paws) everyone stays safe.  
Please do not pat or hug me during this session  
You can turn my frown upside down by giving me 'air hugs'. Your educator will show you how.  
life | Developing Life | with grace, truth, love, mercy, and kindness



My E