

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT 2007

We must transform the gloomy countenance of our common life to one with a sunnier disposition.

Vaclav Havel's words came to mind when I was reading an article about educational life in America. In response to a number of school shootings in recent years, some schools have supplemented their fire drills with 'bullet drills' in which children duck and cover on command. The writer of the article asked: ***Will this save a single life? Probably not. Will it teach some six-year-olds that the world is a dark and terrible place where gnawing dread is a logical frame of mind? Probably.***

The writer went on to describe a catalogue for parents which is devoted to creating the perfectly safe home. It seems you can now buy a venetian blind cord shortener so that your child will not inadvertently hang himself, plastic safety film to put over broken windows - particularly useful in hurricanes, it seems, and 'Lid Loc' which presumably saves your child from drowning herself in the toilet.

The catalogue also offers you the 'Tub Rug', an in-the-bath mat upon which the words "TOO HOT" appear if the water reaches a certain temperature... I feel almost embarrassed to admit that I used to use that old 19th century technique to test the water - I put my elbow in and if it seemed too hot I said to myself, "*This is too hot*" and added a bit of cold... My daughter, who has a new baby, responded to that little 'blast from the past' with absolute disdain!

In another effort to protect children, a police department in Alabama has distributed a colouring book for children warning them that they cannot tell whether a stranger is a threat to them or not, just by the way they look. Nice, kindly looking people, suggests the text, may well be very dangerous. The drawing the children are to colour-in is of four neighbourly looking people, one of whom is a well-dressed elderly woman.

I think we would all agree, and statistics undoubtedly verify, ***a young child's chances of being abducted by a well-dressed elderly woman are about the same as those of being snatched by a low-flying eagle!*** Indeed, if you leave aside custody disputes and other such family feuds, the chances of your child ever being abducted are extremely low.

Not that we should ignore the basic safety rules and precautions that common sense and experience would suggest to us are important for our children's safety. The overwhelming majority of parents and schools have always taken that duty seriously and responsibly.

But the issue is tending to become one of the dilemmas of modern life, particularly for Christian parents. How do we behave responsibly, with due regard for our children's safety, while at the same time encouraging in them a love of life, a trust in the goodness of the God who gave and sustains it, and a sense of positiveness, confidence and hope for the future?

Even though the media focus might be a problem for us, it is enormously important that we encourage that attitude in our children. God has created a world that is full of examples of goodness and beauty; and despite their flaws and failings, people too, give demonstration time and again of love and care and encouragement. Our children need to know that people are worth trusting, that life is worth living and that most of all, even when things are bleak and lonely and sad, they can rely on God's promise, as recorded in Deuteronomy:

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you... Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

This poem by Pat Corrick, which I have used before, bears repeating:

THE HEALING POWER OF KIDS

*We believe in young people:
There is faith in their eyes,
Love in their touch,
Hope in their attitude.
We thrill with them at life's joys,
Bow with them in worship,
And hold them close in tragedy.*

*We believe in young people:
The fragile dreams of yesterday,
Life's radiant reality today,
And the vibrant substance of tomorrow.*

*We believe in young people:
For wherever we go we find yesterday's children
Who were nurtured in love, truth and beauty
At work, trying to make this world a better place for everyone*

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The Students

We hear a great deal of talk these days about educational outcomes. Ours is really quite singular and simple - that **students grow in their understanding of God's world and in their commitment to serving Christ in all areas of life**. Opportunities for service to others, then, are fundamental to what we do at DCC. As a consequence, students and staff are regularly involved in activities which benefit those in need in the wider community. Our annual fundraising for the Gram Vikas Schools in India continued as did the raising of funds for the indigenous school we support on Elcho Island in the Northern Territory, Gawa Christian School, and for our new school connection in Port Vila, Vanuatu. TEAR Fund, Christian Surfers, Operation Christmas Child and the Heartwell Foundation benefited from money-raising activities and Damien Richards' world record breaking attempt to cycle from Perth to Sydney in fewer than eight days, to raise funds for orphans and widows in Africa, also attracted student support. Year 9 students were involved in visits to Aged Care Homes and music groups visited the Maroondah Hospital and Aged Care Homes, including a visit to our new neighbour, the On-Luck Nursing Home. Toys were collected for the Toy Library in Donald, to benefit rural children in Victoria who have been severely affected by the drought. Year 11 students, **Mitchell Kay** and **Joel Taylor**, were selected by the Oaktree Foundation to be *Make Poverty History* Ambassadors on the *Zero Seven Road Trip*, which aims to encourage our Federal Government to commit 0.7% of Australia's Gross National Income to overseas aid. **Caitria Reid** (Year 8) was part of a similarly motivated group, *Voices for Justice*. **Mitchell Kay** and **Joel Taylor** were also very active in the organisation of *Imagine07*, a concert arranged entirely by school students to raise money for the education of underprivileged children in South Africa. **Sarah Rinaudo** (Year 11) has worked tirelessly for World Vision for a number of years and she again co-ordinated the 40 Hour Famine fund-raising in 2007.

Once more, we applaud the fine leadership of the student body this year. The College Captains, **Claire Hogan** and **Sven Bryant** and Vice-Captains **Julie Beattie** and **Scott Mealy** have been an excellent team over a range of significant tasks and responsibilities. Along with the House Captains, Sports Captains, Environment Captains and Arts Captains, these young leaders have served the school community with diligence, warmth, flair and good humour. The inaugural Primary School Captains, **Jessica White** and **Jake Mazzei**, and the Primary House, Sports, Environment and Arts Captains, have been very mature and responsible in carrying out their leadership duties. We thank them for their good example and the encouragement they have been to their teachers and to their peers.

There was a pleasing response once more from the community to 'See you at the Pole.' Led by our School Captains, a portion of the College community met one morning before school to pray for our school and for the wider community. Student prayer and discussion groups also have been meeting regularly throughout the year.

The weekly *Networks* records the many successes that individual students, small groups and various teams have achieved. As usual in this report, I mention only a sample of that impressive record.

The joint Dux (or more accurately, 'Duces') of the College for 2006 were **Lodewyk Du Plessis** and **Craig Beaman**, who both gained the outstanding ENTER score of **99.05**. They were closely followed by high scores from **Matthew Yeates**, **Chloe**

Hooke and **Sudesh Fernando**. We congratulate the whole class of 2006 who maintained DCC's overall excellent performance in the VCE. 30% of the class received an ENTER score over 90. 54% of the class was over 80 and 71% was over 70.

Our results in the State initiated AIM tests at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 continue to give us a great sense of gratitude for the excellent academic standards our students are maintaining. In July, we were delighted to congratulate Year 12 students **Sven Bryant** and **Nadia Frigo** who were selected for the inaugural *Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars Program* offered by the University of Melbourne.

Student academic performances in the various Australasian Competitions again were excellent this year. In the International Competitions and Assessment for Schools (ICAS) at Primary, High Distinctions in English were gained by **Emily Torney** (Year 3), **Jennifer Hung** (Year 4), **Laura Tepe** (Year 5), **Emma Blumer** (Year 6) and **Lauren Frisken** (Year 6). Distinctions were awarded to **Natalie Mazzei**, **Emily Wookey** (both in Year 3), **Shin Chen**, **Stephanie Mazzei**, **Sarah-Rose Novak**, **Rachel Scott**, **Daniel Templeton**, **Christopher Whyte** (all in Year 4), **Mati Krelle**, **Rafael Lee**, **Tim Scott**, **Darcy Sketcher**, **Kristi Van Der Zaag** (all in Year 5), **Cameron Young**, **Madeline Anderson**, **Mitchell Devenish**, **Irena Furness**, **Jade Hunt** and **Tom Scott** (all in Year 6).

High Distinctions in Mathematics were achieved by **Ben Gad** (Year 6) and **Nathan Strugnell** (Year 6). Distinctions were awarded to **Tess Conlon** (Year 3), **Shin Chen**, **Harrison Craig**, **David De Villiers**, **Jennifer Hung**, **Naomi Price**, **Maighdlin Reid** (all in Year 4), **Daniel Stanhope**, **Nicholas Glen**, **Mati Krelle**, **Rafael Lee**, **Ryan Smith**, **Jasmine Wells** (all in Year 5), **Mitchell Dawson**, **Adrian Do**, **Tom Scott** and **Cameron Young** (all in Year 6).

High Distinctions in Science were awarded to **Irena Furness** (Year 6) and **Tom Scott** (Year 6). Those who received a Distinction in Science were **Tess Conlon** (Year 3), **Shin Chen**, **Emma Screen** (both in Year 4), **Rebekah Jackson**, **Tim Scott**, **Laura Tepe** (all in Year 5), **Mitchell Devenish**, **Adrian Do**, **Rebecca Murray**, **Nathan Strugnell** and **Nicholas Wookey** (all in Year 6).

Jade Hunt (Year 6) received a High Distinction in Writing. Distinctions in Writing were achieved by **Megan Cheng, Gabrielle Harman, Tahlia Hunter, Amy Pereira, Kathryn Smith** (all in Year 3), **Benjamin Abadilla, Jennifer Hung, Elzette Kritzinger, Stephanie Mazzei, Geena Norman** (all in Year 4), **Hudson McClay, Darcy Sketcher** (both in Year 5), **Emma Blumer, Mitchell Dawson, Tom Scott** and **Jessica White** (all in Year 6).

At Secondary, **Callum Haughey** (Year 7) and **Duncan Kajewski** (Year 7) were in the top 1% in the State in the Mathematics competition. **Lloyd Smyth** (Year 11) was in the top 2%, while **Jessica Stanhope** (Year 8), **Brendan Waterhouse** (Year 9), **Natalie Ling** (Year 9) and **Lauren Devenish** (Year 10) were all in the top 3% in Mathematics in the State.

The following students were winners in their category for the Antarctica Photostory Competition: **Isaac Mercado** (Year 7), **Rebecca Nguyen** (Year 8), **Victor Mathews** (Year 8), **Duncan Kajewski** (Year 7), **Brittany Moss** (Year 7), **Aiden Bentley** (Year 8), **Caleb Kilmartin** (Year 7), **Meaghan Woodward** (Year 8), **Lachlan Magree** (Year 7) and **Emily Armour** (Year 8). **Sarah Hayman** (Year 11) gained a High Distinction in the Australian Science Olympiads, while **Marc Russouw** (Year 11) was awarded a Distinction in the same Competition and **Ilana de Villiers** (Year 11) a Credit.

In the Science Competition conducted by the University of NSW for students in Years 7 and 9, **Nathanael Hunt** (Year 9) achieved a High Distinction. **Callum Haughey, Chris Hepworth, Duncan Kajewski, Grace Novak, Andrew Potamitis, Michelle Stanhope, Daniel Woodward** (all in Year 7), **Bethany Campbell, Luke Frisken, Dorothy Lim, Zoe Willett** and **Jeremy Zhang** (all in Year 9) were awarded Distinctions.

At Secondary in the Computer Competition, **Chris Hepworth** (Year 7) gained a High Distinction and Distinctions were awarded to **Caleb Kilmartin, Michelle Stanhope, Aaron Down, Natalie Jeffreys, Kieran Johns, Daniel Jones, Duncan Kajewski, Daniel Reichelt, Daniel Woodward, Katelyn Horton, Andrew Potamitis, Laura Screen** (all in Year 7), **Conrad Chan** (Year 8) and **Aaron Loo** (Year 10).

Susan Cloete (Year 8), **Samuel Craig** (Year 8), **Holly Liroso** (Year 8), **Aaron Loo** (Year 10), **Rebecca Symons** (Year 9) and **William Costin** (Year 8) received High Distinctions in the National Geography Competition. Distinctions in Geography were awarded to **Jordan Venables** (Year 8), **Emily Harris-Westrup** (Year 9), **Rui Lee** (Year 9), **Evan Smyth** (Year 8), **Jessica Stanhope** (Year 8) and **Nathaniel Berends** (Year 8). As an extension program, a number of Year 9 students were involved in The Age Super Quiz, with **Zoe Willett, Tom Creedon** and **Peter Mulherin** achieving outstanding results.

Many of our students have been involved in a range of interesting extra-curricula activities. **Lauren Dodson** (Year 5) represented Victoria in the National Calisthenics Championships in Adelaide. She was in the Junior section which won the aggregate for 2007. **Ben Abadilla** (Year 4) performed with the National Boys Choir at the FINA Swimming Championships and toured the USA with the Choir in September. **Juana Andreou** (Year 8) competed in Victorian School Equestrian competitions, winning the Dressage and coming second overall. With her horse Alinta, Juana was selected for the National competitions in Queensland. **Kathryn Kerridge** (Year 11) competed in the Victorian Relay Championship, coming second in the 4 X 800 metres relay. **Mitchell Burden** (Year 7) was third in the Victorian Schools Cycling Championship. **James Peacock** (Year 10) was the winner of the Victorian Mountain Bike Championship.

Jesse Turland (Year 9) and **Rachael Guthrie** (Year 10) were involved in MUNA (Model United Nations Assembly) at State Parliament; **Luke Southey** (Year 12) continued to represent DCC at the Manningham Youth Forum.

Under the guidance of **Tim Hunter**, five students, **Matthew Yu** (Year 9), **Natalie Jeffreys** (Year 7), **Ryan Barton** (Year 7), **King-Wei Khoi** (Year 7) and **Caleb Cheung** (Year 7) competed in the Statewide Chess championships for students in Years 7-9, with **Matthew Yu** having the opportunity of playing a Grand Master.

Eight Secondary students represented Victoria in the National Christian Schools Basketball Tournament, held this year in Perth. They were **Luke Brewis** (Year 12), **Jesse Taylor** (Year 8), **Ben Taylor** (Year 8), **Sarah McLellan** (Year 8), **Katie Conlon** (Year 8), **Alexandra Fenwick** (Year 9), **Rachael Guthrie** (Year 10) and **Joel McLellan** (Year 11). The Victorian Under 16 Girls A team (coached by **Phil Brewis**) were Grand Final winners, as were the Under 14 Boys A team.

The DCC winning teams in the EISM Competition this year were the Senior Boys Hockey, the Senior Boys Football and the Year 8/9 Boys Football. Six other teams made their respective Grand Finals. At the EISM interschool swimming carnival, **Ryan Hooke** (Year 10) won his event and DCC was in overall first place in the Under 13 Girls and Under 15 Boys sections. In the EISM athletics carnival, **Kathryn Kerridge** (Year 11), **Milly Krelle** (Year 10) and **Dillon Joannidis** (Year 8) all won their races and DCC gained first place overall in the Under 15 Boys and the Under 16 Girls sections. In the EISM Cross-Country, **Charlotte Krelle** (Year 8), **Evan Smyth** (Year 8) and **Tim Beasley** (Year 12) were all medallists in their events.

In Primary, **Joshua Beasley** (Year 4), **Michael Apeness** (Year 6), **Ryan Smith** (Year 6), **Aleesha-Jane Todd** (Year 6), **Sam Lowson** (Year 6), **Miriah Coulthard** (Year 6), **Nathan Strugnell** (Year 6) and **Jarred McKenzie** (Year 4) all qualified for the Zone Athletics final. **Lauren Frisken** (Year 6), **Michael Apeness** (Year 6), **Simone Kruger** (Year 5), **Jarred McKenzie** (Year 4), **Ryan Smith** (Year 5), **Lara Blumer** (Year 4) and **Kiara Mack** (Year 4) represented the District in the Cross-Country Zone final. **Miriah Coulthard** (Year 6), **Rebecca Murray** (Year 6) and the **12 Year Old Boys Shuttle Relay Team** all broke records at the Christian Schools Athletics carnival.

One of our Year 5/6 Netball teams, coached by **Leeann Purcell**, won the Premiership in June and will play in another Grand Final on 10th December. The Primary School Football team, coached by **Bill Cook** and **Chad Smit**, also excelled, winning the District Championship.

The Donvale Dunkers Basketball Club continues to provide great sporting opportunities for our students with **over 180 member families involved in the club**. In the winter season, eight teams made their Grand Final with the Under 18 Boys winning the title. The Under 23 Boys, many of whom are former students of DCC and still playing for Dunkers, played off in the "A" Grade final. Three teams participated in the prestigious Eltham Basketball tournament with the Under 14 Boys DD1 team winning their Grand Final. The Under 16 Girls DD1 team made the semi-finals. The club and the College are indebted to the club co-ordinator, **Geoff Griffin**, the hard working-parent committee and the parent and student coaches and managers.

It was another stimulating year for the creative arts, with the musical, dramatic, dancing and artistic talents of students being demonstrated on many occasions. The Secondary musical "The Boyfriend" was a tremendous success and such great fun!

Our grateful thanks not only to the wonderful student performers and helpers, but also to **Allie Baker, Lesley White, Krystal Vassiliou** and many other members of staff, without whose creative talent and sheer hard work, such highlights could not emerge for us to enjoy and celebrate. The musical was complemented by a number of outstanding music and drama performances from groups and ensembles throughout the year, not the least being the first performance of our DCC Community Orchestra at the Thanksgiving Service, under the baton of **Julie Wells**.

In Primary, the musical "The Special Gift" was a special triumph! The story is based on the musical "Toolbox" by the New Zealand composer, Wayne Wright, and was adapted for our Primary school by **Rebecca McClay, Lachlan Taylor** and **Bill Cook**. Former students **Lyndsey** and **Meaghan Cook** played a major role in the choreography of the production. We salute the talented and creative leadership team of **Bill Cook, Rebecca McClay, Lachlan Taylor, David Bonfa** and **Stephanie Allott**.

Creative Arts Week in Secondary, which includes House Dramas, Human Sculptures and a Talent Quest, encouraged expressions of talent that are often unrecognised in the daily classroom activities. The following students received special recognition: **Sam Ramsden** (Year 11) – Best Script; **Lloyd Smyth** (Year 11) – Best Direction; **Victor Mathews** (Year 8) – Best Male Junior Performer; **Kathryn Hagger** (Year 8) and **Charlotte Krelle** (Year 8) – Equal Best Female Junior Performer; **Mark Yeates** (Year 10) – Best Male Senior Performer; and **Claire Hogan** (Year 12) – Best Female Senior Performer.

The senior division of the Talent Quest was won by **Daniel Hunt** (Year 10) followed by **Anne-Lee Ng** (Year 12) with **Louise Wilton** (Year 12); the junior section was won by **Jesse Mack** (Year 7) followed by **Nicole Coombs** (Year 7) and **Jessica Stanhope** (Year 8). Our grateful thanks is expressed to **Allie Baker** who co-ordinated the Creative Arts Week program.

There was success again with the chooks at the Royal Melbourne Show! **David Beasley** (Year 10) was awarded first prize for Best Polish large with a White crested black Polish hen. **Peter Jones** gained the Grand Champion Crested Bird prize with a White crested blue Polish bantam pullet Champion Houdan. Both of these prizes were awarded by the Rare Breed Poultry Society.

A sample of the great range of curriculum offerings this year included the Year 8 Night of the Notables, the Primary and Secondary Gifted Education Groups, the Primary Science program, the LEM Phonics program at Primary, literacy and numeracy support groups at Secondary and Primary, Book Week, Year 7 Health Education Days, the Year 10 Careers program, the Year 11 Justice and Service camp with Wycliffe Bible Translators and a new Urban Mission course at Year 11.

The Parents

I want to acknowledge the fine direction the school receives from its Board of Directors. Their experience, patience and wisdom have been invaluable during this year when a number of important decisions have needed to be made. Our Board members commit a great deal of time, energy and talent to their Board roles and the community is immensely indebted to them.

In May, **John Dickenson** stood down from the Board at the end of his three year term. We thank John for his valuable service to the community over that time. **Andrew McPherson** was elected to the Board with **Bev Lang** and **Helen Hinz** re-

elected for another term. The Treasurer, **John Jeffreys**, resigned from the Board later in the year and we express to him also our deep appreciation for his wisdom and service. **Rick Porter** continues as Chairman of the DCC Board, with **Lois Craig** as Deputy Chair and **Helen Hinz** as Secretary. Our other Board members are **Steve Natsis**, **Bill Vassiliou** and **Andrew Conlon**. **Cliff Dawson** has resumed the Chairmanship of the Finance Committee in place of John Jeffreys.

Rick Porter continued to serve on the National Board of CPCS (Christian Parent Controlled Schools), the Australia-wide organisation to which DCC belongs. **Yvonne Bradley** continued on the Board of AACCS (Association of Australian Christian Schools), a body established to liaise with Federal and State Governments on behalf of Christian Schools in respect of educational and funding issues.

At the invitation of the Board, a number of our parents attended a CPCS Parent Partnership Conference this year, representing the DCC community. The theme of the conference was *"How to become passionate partners in Christian Education."* By all accounts, it was a very stimulating symposium and we hope to be able to present similar conferences for our parents on an annual basis.

Once again we gratefully acknowledge the many committed and hard-working parents who are actively involved in the life of the school in a broad range of activities. We particularly express our thanks to those involved in the Finance Committee, Friends of Donvale (FOD), Prayer Groups, Parent Class-Representatives, Students with Disabilities Support Network, Canteen, VTAs, Uniform Shop, Working Bees, Book Club, Second Hand Books, Fundraisers, Donvale Dunkers, and so on. We owe a great deal to all these capable people who give so generously of their time.

We also want to acknowledge that 2007 has been a very difficult year for some in our DCC community. We remember the sorrow of families who lost loved ones this year - in particular we express our sympathy to the **Westwood** family on the death of **Elizabeth**, the **Jordan** family on the death of **Frank** and to the **Dulke** family on the death of **Hans**. We continue to remember them in our thoughts and prayers.

We were saddened, too, to hear of the passing of two men who were instrumental in the foundations of the College and in its formative years – **Chris Suk** and **Ray Meers** – and acknowledge with gratitude their contribution to Donvale Christian College. Chris was one of our founding members and for many years continued to attend our Founders Day celebrations with his wife, Anne. **Ray Meers** was Principal of Donvale Christian School (as it was then) from 1985 to 1990. He was also the founding Principal of Plenty Valley Christian School. Ray is warmly remembered as a fine Christian man and acknowledged for his significant contribution to this College and to Christian Education more generally in those earlier years, both as a Principal and as a teacher. We continue to remember in our thoughts and prayers his wife, **Phyllis**, who was a teacher at DCC, and his two sons who attended DCC in those early years, Simon and Shane.

The Staff

The College became formally responsible this year for the delivery of the VCE to students of NTCU, a Christian school in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The licensing process was long and detailed and we are particularly indebted to **Phil Turland** for his outstanding work in getting this project completed. Our licence from the State Government is the first of its kind in Victoria, providing off-shore education to VCE level for students with very limited resources in a third-world country. We have already sent teachers to assist with developing education in the school and this will be an on-going project for us. We have also had the pleasure of having two of the Ni-Van (Nationals of Vanuatu) teachers spend two weeks with us at DCC – **Elizabeth Yamaimai** in the Primary school and **Ronly Ala** in the Secondary school. This to be an on-going and valuable exchange for both schools in the years to come. In the longer term, we hope to send groups of students to assist at NTCU for short periods of time.

With a continuing growth in student numbers, we welcomed a number of new appointments to the staff in 2007. At Secondary we were joined by **Narelle Sketcher, Tania Baillie, Vimala Nair, Karen O’Gorman, Melinda Sandefur, Lisa Barry, Tony Likousis, Lindsay Morton, Ros Butcher** and two former students of the College, **Ben Wilson** and **James Marsland**. Re-joining us after time away were **Jane Moyle** and **Simone Baker**, also former students of DCC and **Nicole Barton**. **Heidi Thyer**, a former student, joined us to take up the co-ordination of *Kidzone*. Through the year we welcomed **Natalie Peeler** and **Peter Evans** at Primary and **Donna Pasco** as College Counsellor. **Esmae Boutros, Leeann Purcell, Carol Devenish** and **Bev Bekker** joined the staff through the year in various administrative roles and **Andy McMahon** was appointed as our project manager for the Year 9 building development. Additions to our group of specialist instrumental teachers included **Tim Fisher** (Head of Brass) and **Russell Oxley** (Saxophone).

During the year we said goodbye to **Liz Guiver, Jayne Hogan, Kerry Jeffreys, Kathy Falla, Amanda Gargett, Jude Shields, Carol Spike** and **Catherine Cross** and were able to thank them at that time for their various and substantial contributions to the school community.

We reported in July that our General Manager: Finance and Operations, **Ross Henson**, had resigned his position to accept a new post with *Resolve Consulting*. Naturally, we were quick to re-engage Ross through *Resolve Consulting* to continue to provide us with the financial expertise and wise counsel to which we had become accustomed over the years. Nevertheless, we did not fail to celebrate the enormous contribution Ross has made to the College over the last 11 years, both in terms of his outstanding professionalism and his wonderful Christian example. At that time, we acknowledged with gratitude all that Ross had done and looked forward to his continued involvement, albeit in a different manifestation, as our Financial Controller. Ross is undertaking other consulting opportunities in Christian and educational organisations as well as overseeing the finances at DCC.

We want to acknowledge the outstanding work of **Anna Burley**, who leaves us at the end of 2007 after 15 years of highly significant service to the Primary School. Anna’s talent, dedication, strong sense of focus and hard work have been enormously influential in the development of the Primary School over these many years. We thank her most sincerely for the great contribution she has made to the students and, in particular, to the professional development of the Primary staff. Our blessings go with her as she takes on new challenges and new opportunities for service.

Sandra Coleman is retiring after 17 years of distinguished service in the Science Department as the Senior Laboratory Technician. It is hard to imagine the Science Department without Sandra, such has been her dedication to, and competence in, the subject area. Even more important have been her commitment and service to the staff and to the many students over the years. Her contribution has been exceptional and her warm, compassionate manner will be very much missed by everyone. We thank her for all she has done and wish her every happiness as she moves on to the challenges and opportunities of 'retirement.'

We say goodbye (for the second time!) to **Lindy Yeates** from the Primary Art teaching position which she has held with such creative distinction. We have greatly appreciated and admired Lindy's on-going contribution to our community and thank her most warmly for the wonderful example she has been. (We hope it won't too long before she joins the staff once more...)

Although only with us for one year contract positions in the Secondary school, **Jane Moyle** and **Lindsay Morton** have made very noteworthy contributions to our community (Jane for the second time!). They are both outstanding teachers and colleagues and we wish them every blessing in their new adventures. Our thanks, too, to Primary teacher, **Derynne Bullock**, who is moving to the other side of town to support her husband in his new ministry at Essendon Baptist Church. We have very much valued Derynne's excellent contribution in the junior Primary area. From the Primary staff, also, we say farewell to **Berris Clarke** who has served us for the last five years with great commitment and faithfulness in the areas of ESL and Special Needs in the Primary school. We thank Berris most sincerely for her fine contribution and wish her God's blessing for the future.

It was a great pleasure to celebrate with **Heidi Thyer** who was engaged in October and with **David Mitton**, a former student of DCC himself who announced his engagement to another former student, Kylie Hoffman. Indeed, David and Kylie were College Captains together in 1997!

We were delighted to celebrate the respective marriages of **Lachlan Taylor**, **Rebecca Chan** (now Rebecca Ooi) and **Murray Patterson** and to honour the birth of five babies: **Doug** and **Emma Allison**, Ashley and **Kate Price** and Richard and **Jude Shields** all had sons while Ashley and **John Carr** and Ben and **Amanda Gargett** had daughters.

In August, we were pleased to announce that **Narelle Sketcher** had been appointed as the new Head of Year 9, commencing in 2008. Although the separate campus will not be available at the beginning of next year, Narelle will be leading the Year 9 community of students and staff within our existing facilities from February. We anticipate that they will be able to move to the completed facility on the new land sometime later in 2008.

A number of staff members are taking a year's leave in 2008 to engage in various exciting adventures. **Jodi Staff** will be on maternity leave and our blessings and good wishes go with her; **John Gardiner** and **Steve Venour** will be teaching at schools on the Gove Peninsula in the Northern Territory; **Allie Baker** is teaching in Japan; **Carmen Tong** is undertaking mission work in China with *Pioneers*; **Julie Wells** is undertaking various training sessions for *Caleb Ministries* which will take her

overseas on a number of occasions in 2008; **Graham Cheung** is travelling and working overseas. We wish them all a happy, successful year and look forward to their return in 2009.

There was another wonderful musical treat at the annual Friends of DCC Music evening in August. Our superbly talented music staff gave their usual outstanding presentations and confirmed the fact that this night is one of DCC's annual 'gems.' And, as she has done for so many years, **Carla Whiteley** organised everything with her usual aplomb.

It was a delight to note that one of our talented art teachers, **Lindy Yeates**, won first prize in a Religious Art competition this year and **Scott Rees** won Gold and Silver medals in Lawn Bowls at the Teachers Games! At the end of the year, too, we were very pleased to congratulate our senior librarian, **Lorraine Kay**, who completed her Masters Degree in Writing and Literature.

The Facilities

We received final approval to commence the Year 9 project after a long and arduous process involving the State Government and the Manningham Council. The College is now in a *Special Use Zone* which allows us to move forward with our Master Plan over the next 25 years. The new zoning secures not only the adjacent orchard property, but also the existing property for the advancement of Christian Education into the future. It was certainly a great pleasure to watch those big earth-movers finally roll through the gates to commence the building of the Year 9 Centre!

The Student Support Services area was refurbished this year, as was the Secondary Library. The Maintenance staff, under the fine direction of our Property Manager, **Murray Patterson**, moved their operations to the Cool-stores on the orchard land. The old maintenance shed has been refurbished to support our expanding Music program. These facilities will not be available to the music department, however, until the completion of the Year 9 building sometime during 2008. Some new toilets were established in the Secondary school, near the lower oval.

Under the guidance of our Environment Co-ordinator, **John Harris**, supported by the Environment Captains, we have continued to look for further ways in which the school community can embrace 'sustainable' ways of operating. A number of water tanks have been installed this year and the Year 9 building will have some appropriate ESD features. Next year, we will be looking for opportunities to install solar power cells on some of our buildings. This year, as in past years, many students have been involved in planting trees on the school property and in public areas within the city of Manningham. Groups of students and staff have also been involved in the development of a Recreational Plan with a consulting group engaged by the College. This plan will help us develop recreational spaces as best we can on a site that lacks flat, open areas.

Into the Future

In many ways this has been a year of contrasts. The wider world has been traumatic

and unsettling. Some in our community, too, have suffered personal tragedies this year which have made hope and trust hard to hold on to. We continue to hold them in our thoughts and prayers.

I would personally like to thank everyone in the DCC community. Your prayers and encouragement have been a great blessing to me during a time of illness in the latter part of 2007.

In the midst of such challenges our students continue to delight and inspire us and the community is now able to dream about what might be possible at DCC in the future because of the new zoning arrangements.

In both blessing and struggle, the importance of maintaining an attitude of hope and trust and thankfulness cannot be overestimated. As the book of Job reminds us,

***If... God will be your delight, and you lift your face to God...
If... you make your prayer to him,
he will hear you, and light will shine on your paths.***

**Yvonne Bradley
December 2007**