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Our outstanding VCE and NAPLAN results affirm our position as one of the best performing schools in Australia

Throughout its history, Fintona Girls’ School has always demonstrated an unwavering commitment to outstanding education for girls in a small school environment.

We are renowned for consistently achieving excellent VCE results, placing Fintona among the top girls’ schools in the State. The VCE results from the Class of 2011 once again affirm this position.

Since the introduction of NAPLAN, Fintona has also done well in this domain and now has the honour of being ranked as the number one non-selective school in Australia based on the 2011 NAPLAN results. The Weekend Australian newspaper recently featured a story about us in the ‘Top 100 Schools’ feature, published on Saturday 7 April. The newspaper article and tables can be found on our website.

2011 VCE highlights at a glance

- median ATAR score of 94.15
- 67% of students achieved an ATAR of 90+ placing them in the top 10% of the State
- 38% of students achieved an ATAR of 95+ placing them in the top 5% of the State
- 4% of students achieved an ATAR of 99+ placing them in the top 1% of the State
- Six year median ATAR score of 93.9
- Median VCE study score is 36

We congratulate most especially Amanda Atkins, Dux of 2011, for achieving an ATAR score of 99.15

Our Principal, Mrs Chandler said: ‘We are very proud of the Class of 2011 and know that they go off to the next stage of their lives with an outstanding education and a set of values that we hope will carry them through life. We hope that they will maintain their links with the School and also the staff whose dedication and care has fostered these remarkable achievements.’

We wish all our girls the best of luck and we hope they enjoy their new endeavours!

2011 Tertiary Courses and Destinations

- 100% of our students received a VTAC first round offer
- 96% of our VCE students received a university offer in their first round and these offers show the diversity of interest among our students from Commerce to Fashion to Pharmacy

* Based on 2011 comprehensive NAPLAN scores for Years 5, 7, 9 & 11 as analysed by The Weekend Australian newspaper.
Number One in Australia for NAPLAN

Congratulations to all our Staff, Parents and Students on the wonderful 2011 NAPLAN results

According to analysis conducted by The Weekend Australian of all schools in Australia, Fintona Girls’ School is Australia’s highest-scoring non-selective primary and secondary school for NAPLAN results.

When The Australian came to interview me about this, I knew they were going to ask me for the reasons why I thought we were at the top of the list. That might sound easy; small school, great students, fantastic staff, long history of academic success, etc, etc, etc. But it’s not enough because whilst we are probably one of the smallest schools, there are many small schools with great students, great staff and probably long histories of achievement.

I do think our size and the fact we are a single sex school has got a lot to do with our success, but I also think we are an imaginative, innovative school. I think our staff and students very much reflect that in their interest in whatever we do, in our desire to do things in ways we see as appropriate rather than just following what everyone else does. I would also like to think that rather than just being an academic school, we aspire to be an intellectual school – one that engages the intellect across all the school’s activities – rather than separating academic subjects. To paint and draw, to dance and sing, to do complex mathematical problems, to go camping and hiking, to write a story all should engage the intellect and be a reflection of a thoughtful process.

I also mentioned that if you have a smaller class, you’re having an educational conversation, you’re not just dishing it out. In a bigger class, I think a lot of it has to do with crowd control and crowd management. Having taught in both single sex and co-ed schools, I do think it is a big factor. Perhaps being girls, they’re that little bit more mature.

Scoring highly in NAPLAN tests is not a goal for the School; rather we are focused on providing a broad education.

Our outstanding NAPLAN and VCE results cement our reputation as one of the highest performing girls’ school in Victoria as well as Australia. These results are a testament to our philosophy of providing an excellent education in a small school environment where our girls can achieve not only outstanding academic success but also personal growth and development.

I would like to thank everyone associated with the School for their hard work and commitment to ensuring that our students not only enjoy their education but are able to fulfil their potential.

The Chair of Fintona’s Board, Mrs Amanda McMahon, wrote to me by way of thanking us for our hard work. Here is what she wrote:

Dear Suzy

The Board and I would like to thank you and all the staff at Fintona for the excellent NAPLAN results which received such favourable publicity for the School in ‘The Australian’.

While these results only serve the purpose of publicising what we have all known for a long time – that the Fintona community supports and encourages our students to attain their best level of achievement, it’s very rewarding to have our successes acknowledged so publicly.

The Board would particularly like to commend all staff as our success is as a result of a collaborative effort starting with your leadership and the leadership of the Heads of School, Faculties and Administration as well as those in the classroom and all the support staff. Together you all create the environment for great achievement.

For all of this hard work and dedication we thank you.

Well done everyone and congratulations.

Kind regards

Amanda

To read The Weekend Australian article in full and view the tables of the Top 50 non-selective schools, please visit our website at www.fintona.vic.edu.au
The Spiral for Disguise
A Place to Transform

In late February, a large wooden structure, designed by Mary Featherston, was placed in the ELC Piazza. Its arrival was met with curiosity and was the catalyst for a K4 group exploration.

The Jacaranda Possum’s, Wattle and Banksia Room children held meetings together to discuss what the structure might be and why it was there. The initial investigation stage provided opportunity to walk around and through the structure, with the children being encouraged to explore it using all of their senses. Group conversations gave light to the children’s thinking with many noting the roundness of the structure’s shape and the way it curled and twisted.

After noticing the mirror and hooks attached to the inside of the structure the children decided that it would be a wonderful place to house costumes. The complex concept of ‘transformation’ quickly became a part of the children’s discussions and they were excited at the thought of entering the spiral as themselves and re-appearing as someone or something else.

This investigation provided the K4 groups with important opportunities to work together as a team. They practised the skills of listening, negotiation and decision making, all the while having to be respectful of multiple perspectives and alternate views and opinions.

The children of the Early Learning Centre welcome you warmly and invite you to transform yourself within ‘The Spiral for Disguise’.

Cara Mearns
Head of the ELC
CSIRO Visit Makes Learning Science Fun

In the Junior School, we aim to encourage our girls to enjoy the exploration of scientific issues. The girls engage in inquiries that allow them to see science in the world around them. Our Prep girls have been investigating the elements of Science that are seen through toys and how these have changed over time, whilst our Year 3 class has been learning about the attributes, functions and purposes of simple machines. The girls thoroughly enjoyed a visit from teachers from the CSIRO who assisted in these inquiries by sharing their knowledge and expertise and judging by the laughter, also made learning Science fun.

Sally Clayton
Head of Junior School

Year 2 Students Explore How Art Reflects Society

Exploring the world of art is a vital part of our Junior School program. Recently, our Year 2 girls investigated both 2D and 3D artworks at the National Gallery of Victoria. The Gallery organised a special workshop for our girls as they investigated their central idea - artists and art forms reflect the societies in which they are produced.

Here are some of the students’ reflections:

‘In my opinion, I love the dragon corridor. I think the dragons are perfect.’ Zoe Stefanatos

‘The most useful artwork was the furniture because you sit on it every day.’ Paris Bianco

‘The most interesting artwork was the mosaic. How can they get the right shape out of the rock or pebble?’ Paige Stanley

‘The most interesting artwork was the glowing ladder because it reflected in the mirror. It looked like it went on and on forever but it was amazing. I couldn’t believe my eyes!’ Ashley Clausen

‘The most mind boggling artwork was the stained glass ceiling in the Great Hall. I wonder how many colours are on that ceiling?’ Bethany Orme

Sally Clayton
Head of Junior School

Above: Aanya, Hera and Sienna Belle in Prep enjoy experimenting in Science

Left: Emma, Isabelle and Harriet in Year 3 explore the forces of Physics

Above Right: Maya and Zoe explore the modern artworks at the National Gallery
Middle School Playground Gets a Facelift

Thanks to Fintona’s wonderful Maintenance Team and funding from the proceeds of the 2010 Fintona Food and Wine Festival, the Middle School girls began their school year in 2012 with a new playground. Designed by our very own and talented gardener, Ms Helen Kinross and built by our skilful Maintenance Manager, Mr Joe Deidun, who was capably assisted by his staff Steve, Gordon and Jonathan, the playground has become a favourite recess and lunchtime destination.

Head of Middle School, Ms Julie Goldsworthy, says: ‘The girls and I love the new Middle School Playground. The water feature is very popular, as are the platforms for having lunch and catching up on the latest. The igloo was a firm favourite from day one and now the medieval castle is a hit. Thank you so much to Mrs Helen Kinross for designing a superb, innovative space for us in which to play.’

The Middle School playground was designed to create a natural, stimulating play area in what has become a central thoroughfare within the School, since the opening of the Margaret Ross Centre, new Tuckshop and Moss House. The old metal play equipment was removed and replaced with components encouraging more imaginative play, following the philosophy of Andrew Laidlaw who designed the Wirra Wirra playground area in the Junior School.

Set amongst predominantly native plants, the main features of the playground include a Castle (as we are incorporating the Year of the Dragon into this year’s Explorations program), a monkey bar and balance weaver to provide challenging exercise, and a bamboo grove for exploration.

The living green ‘dome’ and elevated platforms are very popular lunchtime meeting places and an amphitheatre enables classes and performances to be held outdoors on fine days. A distinctive Bottle Tree will become a feature in itself as it matures.

Several paths meet at a central water feature which the girls love to dabble their hands in, and in its setting beneath several beautiful mature trees, the whole area radiates a feeling of tranquility.

Helen Kinross
School Gardener

‘I like the new playground so much better than the old one because there is so much space for my friends and I to play. The castle and the birdcage are so much fun!’ Erin Kontaxis in Year 5

Clockwise: Imogen and Yasemin playing on the hopscotch lizard
Grace, Jessica, Hayley and Chee-Rae enjoying the ‘birdcage’
Sarina, Holly and Erin playing in the castle

The Maintenance Team who designed and built the new playground. Top Row L to R: Jonathan, Gordon; Front Row L to R: Steve, Joe and Helen
Fintona has always been strongly committed to the welfare of its students. Our pastoral care programs often focus on equipping our girls with the necessary life skills to help them at school and beyond the school gates. One important aspect in our students’ lives we know is usually associated with high emotion is transition.

Students make many transitions during their years of schooling: from home to school, Junior School to Middle School, Middle to Senior School, Year 10 to VCE and Senior School to University or work. These transitions are usually major events in the lives of students and parents. We understand the stresses created by these transitions can be minimised when the new environment is responsive to each particular age group. We also understand the important role parents play in their child’s life.

A Mother/Daughter Evening was organised on 19 April and run by Sonya Karras, an expert in celebrating safely. We were very pleased to see many girls from Year 11 and 12 come together with their mothers/special friends to hear about safe partying, coping with VCE stress, cyber bullying and also to enjoy some of the bonding activities. A highlight of the evening was the session after dinner where the girls and their mothers/special friends were asked to bring along and talk about an item that has some special memory.

Alex Mourelatos, in thanking Sonya for the mother/daughter part of the evening, commented that:

‘At a time in our year when we are so busy, it was lovely to take the time to reflect upon such an important relationship that is right in front of us all the time.’

This evening was a wonderful success and opportunity for Mothers/Friends to spend time with their daughters.

Katrina Brennan
Co-Head of Senior School

STOP PRESS
Fintona students excel in the VCAA Plain English Speaking Competition

Year 12 students, Sajini Perera and Amanda Ngo participated in the regional final of the VCAA Plain English Speaking competition for 2012. Sajini Perera won the final with her speech about Equal Marriage Rights for Homosexuals. Amanda was commended for her excellent impromptu speech. Sajini will be participating in the state semi-final at the end of June.

We are extremely proud of both girls and we congratulate them on their fine efforts. They were definitely the best speakers on the day.

Suzan Davies
Humanities/Commerce teacher
Biology students receive High Distinctions

Among the 2,000 senior Biology students from around Australia sitting the National Qualifying Exam (NQE), were our very own students Georgia Macdonald and Candice Dao. While both students received High Distinctions for their efforts, Georgia ranked in the top 24 who was then invited to participate in the International Biology Olympiad summer school held in January this year at Monash University for two weeks.

In the labs at Monash, Georgia’s studies covered embryology, biochemistry, genetics, and immunology. In addition, Georgia and her fellow students participated in practical experiments. Georgia was thrilled with the experience and was especially excited about meeting a Scientist who had achieved a major breakthrough in immunology. She said: ‘The opportunity to extend my knowledge of biology and learn from highly passionate lecturers was inspiring.”

We congratulate both Georgia and Candice for their wonderful achievements in Biology.

Fintona girls shine in International Women’s Day debate at Federation Square Distinctions

Congratulations to three of our debaters in Year 12 who performed impressively in an event held at Federation Square’s BMW Edge on Thursday 8 March. As part of an International Women’s Day initiative organised by The Stella Prize (an organisation devoted to celebrating women’s literature), debating teams from Fintona Girls School and Camberwell Grammar School were invited to publicly debate the proposition: Women’s Writing is Different from Men’s. Muburaka Kaka, Akhila Seneviratne-Epa and Jessica Lew hotly contested the topic, in mixed teams with the Camberwell boys. In a vigorous and most entertaining discussion, the speakers explored aspects of gender difference, cultural conditioning, bias, and differences in writing style. Jessica Lew, as third speaker for the negative team, was thrilled to be named best speaker for the negative team, for her strong and persuasive style. Jessica Lew, as third speaker for the negative team, was thrilled to be named best speaker for the negative team, for her strong and persuasive style.

We thank English Co-ordinator Ms Jennifer Johnstone for assisting in coaching the students alongside Mr Andrew Beale of Camberwell Grammar School, and to Ms Kirstin Bourne for her support in attending and photographing the event. We also wish to express our thanks to Ms Cindy Bourne of Victoria.

Students heard a panel of experts discuss the advantages, disadvantages and issues raised by such a proposal and through working groups, delegates explored the principles that inform the division of powers between the respective levels of government in Australia.

Fintona student has her say on Australian Federalism

Year 11 student Abby Johnston, was one of 125 Year 11 and Year 12 students selected across Australia to investigate Australian Federalism: a question of balance, at the 17th National Schools’ Constitutional Convention, which was held at Old Parliament House in Canberra in March.

In becoming a national delegate, Abby was selected from around 4,000 students from government, independent and Catholic schools, most of whom took part in feeder conventions in their home State or Territory.

Abby together with other selected delegates explored whether there is a case to be made for the Commonwealth to assume full powers over health and water in Australia.

Students heard a panel of experts discuss the advantages, disadvantages and issues raised by such a proposal and through working groups, delegates explored the principles that inform the division of powers between the respective levels of government in Australia.

Abby said of her experience: ‘This is a fantastic opportunity to go to Canberra and debate constitutional reform issues that are so important in today’s society. I feel very honoured.’
Sajini Perera and Zoe Murray are Fintona’s School Consuls for 2012. In an interview with our official school leaders, we discover why they are two very worthy recipients.

Our Consuls in the Spotlight

How long have you been at Fintona?

Sajini: I came to Fintona in Year 9. I attended Balwyn High, following in my brother’s footsteps but as many people know, Balwyn High is very big and I felt that I was a little lost there. I was very shy and thought that I would be happier in a smaller, single sex environment. My instincts were definitely right.

Zoe: I started in Year 7, in 2007 after going to a co-ed primary school. My eldest sister Caitlin was also at Fintona and graduated in 2007, my first year at Fintona. She was House Captain and Captain of Boats which then encouraged me to become heavily involved in both areas.

What do you think a Fintona education has given you?

Sajini: When I moved to Fintona I admired our senior leaders, looked up to them and secretly aspired to being one myself but never thought it would ever be possible. However, with the encouragement of my teachers and the support of my friends, I have had many opportunities to get involved in a whole range of activities such as organising competitions, participating in community service and public speaking and I have even run a charity called Childwise.

Zoe: Fintona has given me an appreciation for more than just the academic side of schooling. I play the Trumpet in Fintona’s Stage Band and Symphonic Winds Ensemble and have gained musical skills. However, I think more importantly, I have been able to spend time with girls in different year levels, making friends with girls who I wouldn’t regularly spend time with. Sport has also been important to me. I have been a part of the rowing program since I first started at Fintona in Year 7. I find it is a challenging sport especially as one reaches the higher year levels, however, I have continued it as I enjoy being a part of a team and gaining so many close friends.

What does it mean to you to be a School Consul?

Sajini: It’s more than just something I can put on my CV. I am so happy to be given this opportunity so that I can help my friends. It’s a way I can show that I have achieved everything I wanted. I always dreamed about having the confidence to be a leader but never thought I could be that person.

Zoe: Being the School Consul is very important to me. It means I have an opportunity to lead and represent the students of Fintona. It means I have an opportunity to make a positive change within the School and amongst the students.

What are the best 3 things about Fintona?

Sajini: For me, it’s the small class sizes, the teachers and the opportunities we get that exceed the scope of the subjects we do in school. The small year levels mean we have the opportunity to get to know our classmates on a more personal level and we have become a sort of family. In class, the small number of students means we each get the extra attention we need which is a great advantage, especially at the VCE level. The teachers also have a huge bearing on the success of all the students. Their commitment and patience creates an environment where we feel comfortable to ask questions in class and extend our skills. Another aspect I really admire about Fintona is the opportunity we are given to try new things and the encouragement we receive from our teachers. This includes sports and music, as well as extra-curricular activities such as public speaking competitions. By involving myself in more than just the subjects I do in school, I have discovered skills I didn’t know I had and overall I have become a more well-rounded and confident person.

Zoe: There are many things I like about Fintona. One would definitely be the small year level sizes. We are lucky enough to have small class and year level sizes which not only give us more attention in class but more importantly allow us to become closer as a year level. Another thing I like about Fintona is the relationship between the staff and the students. We students are so lucky to have such kind staff that go out of their way not only in the teaching aspect of school but also to care for the students. Another part of the school which I like is the music and sport programs. I have always felt grateful for the attitude ‘that you can do anything’ within sport and music at Fintona. At my primary school I was too scared to join specific teams as I was not a part of out of school clubs and at the standard as everyone else but at Fintona I have never felt scared in joining an activity at school as each are open and welcoming to all.

There is a lot of pressure to perform in Year 12. What do you do to unwind?

Sajini: I think the best way to beat the pressure of Year 12 is to realise that it is not the ‘be all and end all’ of your life and you don’t need to be chained to your desk to succeed. So occasionally I take the night off to be with friends - keeping in mind that while study is important, it does not mean the end of your social life.

Zoe: There is definitely a lot of pressure to perform in Year 12, however, there are 50 of us doing it together. So to unwind, like many of the other girls completing Year 12, I usually involve myself in other activities such as music and sports to keep my mind off the pressure.

What are your aspirations for the future?

Sajini: While I’m still unsure of what I want to pursue in the future, I hope to leave university with a degree that will lead me to a career in which I can help others as well as see the world. Zoe: I don’t have any specific aspirations for the future other than a desire to be successful in my own way and leave a mark on the world.
Fintona’s New Staff in 2012

We welcome most warmly the following new staff to Fintona. Our staff are one of our great strengths and we are confident the new staff will be excellent additions. We wish them a long and happy association with our School.

Teaching Staff
Amy Miers, Year 5 Teacher
Barry Cockcroft, Saxophone Teacher
Brenda McCoy, ELC Co-Teacher
Elisabeth Goddard, ELC Co-Teacher
Felicity Fritsch, Year 3 Teacher
James Sherlock, Guitar Teacher
Jenny Thomas, Viola Teacher
Karoline Walter, Geography and Commerce
Kasey Stanaway, PE Co-ordinator
Katie Spain, ELC Co-Teacher
Kathryn Brennan, Co-Head of Senior School, English
Kirstin Bourne, Head of Curriculum, Assessment and Professional Learning/English
Kristene Devine, ELC Teacher
Laura Morris, Prep Teacher
Suzan Davies, History
Vanessa Stockley, Year 5 Teacher

Administration Staff
Belinda Lees, Laboratory Assistant
Karolina Wojtasik, Music Secretary
Noni Fitzmaurice, Alumni Co-ordinator
Robyn Nash, Accountant
Ross Worboys, Accountant

Staff moving to new positions
Cara Mearns, Head of ELC
Charmian Harris, ELC Teacher
Tania Jacobs, Junior School Librarian
Trish Woodward, VASS Co-ordinator

Kirstin is Fintona’s new Head of Curriculum, Assessment and Professional Learning who began her teaching career in London. Despite her English accent she was born in Melbourne to Australian parents who moved to England when she was six to live for a while. Kirstin grew up in the UK, went to Cambridge University to read English, did a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education at The Institute of Education at London University and then lived and taught in London and Cheltenham. She always wanted to come back to Australia and made the decision in 2005 to come back here for good. She is very glad she did return and so are we.

You previous teaching experience is very interesting, not to mention varied. Tell us more about that.

I began my teacher training in co-ed and girls’ inner-city London schools (and managed to survive!) and then worked for five and a half years at the Cheltenham Ladies’ College which is the oldest and biggest girls’ boarding school in the UK. Since moving to Australia, I have taught in girls’ schools (Melbourne Girls’ Grammar and Ivanhoe Girls) and a co-ed school. I have always been an English and Literature teacher and prior to my current appointment at Fintona, I was Head of English.

As a new teacher to Fintona, what was your very first impression of the School?

This is the friendliest place that I have ever worked. The staff here enjoy their jobs and are passionate about what they teach and the students genuinely want to learn. Fintona’s greatest strength is its size; there is a genuine sense of community and identity that comes from shared beliefs and goals.

What is the best thing about being the Head of Curriculum?

I get to see all of the wonderful things that go on across all of the subjects and areas of the School and I am able to see a “big picture” of the learning and teaching at Fintona.

You are the Head of Curriculum and you also teach English. What do you aim to instil in your students?

I believe that it is important to have a passion in life. I always hope that as a teacher, one of the things that I can do is to convey the passion that I have for what I teach and in turn inspire my students to see the importance of great writing.

You love to read. What are your top 3 books?

This is a very hard question to answer because my list of favourite books changes with the seasons. But the books I return to and re-read most frequently are:

The New York Trilogy by Paul Auster
Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte
Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit by Jeanette Winterson

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I love to travel both in Australia and abroad. I read voraciously (fiction and history mainly) and love jazz and opera, so try to get to see live music as often as possible. We also have two huge Labradors at home that we love to take for long walks and take away on weekends (this explains the fact that my clothes are always covered in dog hair!).

Kirstin Bourne

I have for what I teach and in turn inspire my students to see the importance of great writing.

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Vanessa Stockley and Amy Miers

‘Working in such an environment inevitably brings out the best in us as educators. It is great to be part of such a professionally dynamic team.’

Amy and Vanessa are our two, new Year 5 teachers who commenced teaching at Fintona in Term 1 this year. They come to us with an excellent background in teaching having both had opportunities to work in Australian schools as well as schools overseas. Amy attended Fintona from Year 2 all the way to Year 12 and is now delighted to reconnect with the Fintona community in a very different way. Amy and Vanessa’s overseas experiences, together with their strong interest in the Primary Years Program, make them wonderful additions to the Fintona staff. We find out more about what brought them to Fintona.

For both of you, your previous teaching experience has included working in schools overseas. Tell us about that.

Amy: I began my teaching career working in Catholic Education with large co-ed classes but after a while I wanted to challenge myself further so I decided to work overseas. I moved to Shanghai and taught in a brand new international school for two years where we were literally building the school from the ground up. It was a very exciting time.

Vanessa: I started my career in London teaching in White City and Islington. Both schools I taught in were state schools and they taught me a lot, especially about how the students’ home life can shape their ability, motivation and attitude towards learning. I then moved to Singapore to teach in a bi-lingual childcare centre in which I was teaching 3-6 year olds who were mainly Singaporean. I learnt a lot about the Singaporean culture and ‘some’ Mandarin…enough to get a student to tidy up and to have a drink of water. After moving back home to teach in Adelaide for a year, I secured a position at Brighton Primary in Melbourne where I taught the Primary Years Program, which I loved. My contract in Brighton was for 12 months and while looking for other positions I saw an advertisement for the Australian International School (AIS) in Singapore. I found myself back in Singapore and taught Year 4 at the AIS for 3 years. My classes had a high proportion of Australian students but there was a huge mix of other cultures. I learnt so much from the students about their countries. It was a great place to be.

As a new teacher to Fintona, what was your very first impression of the School?

Amy: I was quite surprised at how much has changed since I was a student. It really is a beautiful school. We’re also very lucky to have such a warm community. The staff and families at Fintona are very friendly and supportive. Working in such an environment inevitably brings out the best in us as educators. It is great to be part of such a professionally dynamic team.

Vanessa: I have taught boys and girls over my ten years experience and was not sure of the difference just teaching girls would be. I think I was half way into the term when I realised I had concerns over this as I had completely forgotten about them. I was impressed with the building of Tourmont, which I find absolutely beautiful and impressive. I was also amazed at the history of Fintona and I have a student who is a third generation student (her grandma’s blazer hangs in the classroom).

What is the best thing about being a Year 5 teacher?

Amy: The students! Year 5 is a wonderful age. I am still surprised at the enthusiasm, curiosity and knowledge of my students. I’m a very lucky teacher!

Vanessa: The best thing about Year 5 is seeing the students developing independence, their ability to take their learning in directions that interest them and their developing maturity. The conversations in the classroom astound me at times and the connections they make can give me goose bumps!

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Amy: Currently I’m completing my Masters degree so that takes up a fair amount of my time. I also enjoy running and train several times a week and complete a few fun runs each year. Fintona fostered in me a great love for music and I am quite active with the music in my Parish.

Vanessa: I love anything to do with rowing a boat. I have been a long time rower/dragonboater/outrigger. I used to go down the Yarra in an outrigger when I last lived here and it is such a wonderful experience to go through the city along the river (you don’t have to worry about hook turns!). Being still quite new to Melbourne I am really enjoying heading to different markets. My sister lives in Daylesford with my new nephew, so I head up that way every so often.
‘This year was an emotional Cabaret Night for me as I knew it would be my last, and it was so special to see the next generation of girls performing...’

CABARET NIGHT
WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD

The school calendar is filled to the brim with exciting events, but no event more exciting to me, than Cabaret Night. This event has been the highlight of my year since I was a Year 7 girl, and this year was no exception. I was so excited to finally be able to help the Friends of Music in organising such a great night. With an international theme as inspiration, the girls performed a variety of acts ranging from Sweden to India. They rehearsed with such dedication to perfect their performances, and this was reflected in the high standard of acts presented on stage for our family and friends. With a lot of hard work and help from all the music staff, in particular, our new Music Co-ordinator Ms Pip Robinson, and of course the hosts of the event, Fintona Friends of Music, this glorious night lived up to everyone’s expectations once again. This year was an emotional Cabaret Night for me as I knew it would be my last, and it was so special to see the next generation of girls performing in the Cabaret and creating their own traditions. I would like to thank everyone who came to celebrate our love for music and of course support all of our girls, and I would like to thank all of the girls for making this night so special.

Rawanne Auda
Year 12 Music Captain

Clockwise:
Our hilarious MC, Mr John Thompson, Drama Co-ordinator
Fintona’s Music Staff perform a medley of international music
Michelle Tan performing a Japanese song, World is Mine
Janelle Saarinen Vice President of Fintona Friends of Music with Rawanne Auda, Music Captain
Julia Lee performing in the French Ballet Comptine d’un Autre
Natalie Hawkins as the Finnish mountain king
Fintona’s Glee Club performing the African Song Waka Waka
Three Generations of Fintona Women

On Monday 20 February this year, I took my mum Elaine Brownbill (nee Burnham) back to Fintona to see her Granddaughter, (my daughter) Lily Stevens who started this year in Year 5.

It was a great thrill for mum to have the third generation starting at Fintona, a school which holds so many cherished memories for her.

I even managed to find her old school blazer which she proudly wore in the photo.

Elaine started at Fintona in 1936 as a 5 year old and continued her education all the way through to Leaving in 1947.

Miss Cunningham was the Head Mistress at the time and the girls both adored and admired her. If you ask mum, one of the things she remembers most about her, she would say, was her voice. It was booming yet warm and friendly.

Mum’s friendships and love of sport stayed with her throughout school and beyond and today at 81 years old, she still enjoys warm friendships with the girls she started life out with all those years before.

The Fintona ‘family’ has always been a large part of mum’s life as it was for me.

I began in 1972 in the Junior School under Miss Henty-Wilson and continued through to the senior school under Miss Butt. I think these days you would have called me a ‘spirited girl’ but back then I was always up to some mischief.

However, I do look back on those years at Fintona with warmth and a great sense of nostalgia.

Like mum, girls I met at 5 years of age are my dearest friends and still a big part of my life. We have all lived all over the world and gone into various fields of work, but we have always remained in contact and been there for each other over the 40 years.

The one thing I gained from Fintona was that I could achieve anything I set my mind to. This has always been with me where ever I have travelled and worked in the world.

I studied a BA degree in Photography at RMIT and then went on to travel and work abroad in Theatre and TV. On arriving back in Australia many years later I took up photography again and combined working in industry with lecturing at RMIT in the BA Photography Course. These days I guest lecture at a variety of colleges and run my own business where I advise, manage and design portfolios, edit websites and exhibitions for local and international photographers, serve on many photographic bodies, as well as being a mum to Lily.

Lily first asked if she could go to Fintona after mum’s 80th birthday last year in 2011.

We had an afternoon tea where many Old Fintonians came, both from mum’s year and mine. At the end Lily said, ‘I really want what you and Nana have, all these friends you have had for years and all those funny stories.’

It truly has been the perfect choice for Lil and it is deeply emotional for both mum and I to see her here at Fintona.

It was a great thrill to have our photo taken along with Ann Hawker who was my English teacher and is still there teaching to this day.

P.S. She still looks the same!

Sally Brownbill

‘Miss Cunningham was the Head Mistress at the time and the girls both adored and admired her. If you ask mum, one of the things she remembers most about her, she would say, was her voice. It was booming yet warm and friendly.’
Reunions

Queensland

The Queensland Fintona Old Girls met again last year on 22 October at our favourite restaurant. Seventeen Old Girls attended ranging in age from 32 to 98. We also had three honorary Fintonians with Natasha Anich bringing her mum, Iva. Although not a Fintonian, Iva was a Fintonian mum for ten years or so, she felt quite at home with all the school talk. Betty Pendergast came with her daughter Christine and her granddaughter Lorraine. Betty had a fall last year and broke her hip so we were delighted that she could make it with the assistance of Christine and Lorraine who hopefully will bring Betty again this year. We were also thrilled to meet Barbara Gunn’s mum – Jean – who left school in 1931. Jean has recently moved up to Brisbane to live with Barb so we felt very privileged to have her with us. Another newcomer was Elizabeth Eardley. Elizabeth left school in 1947 and came to the lunch with classmates Moira Jane and Ann Street – three from one year – lucky girls!

Once again Suzy Chandler graced us with her presence and we were so happy to see her again and get an update on all Fintona’s renovations and constructions. So thank you again Suzy – we always love to have you join us.

Our thanks to Helen Jane for taking great photos again - a lovely memento for us.

Finally a big thank you to Karen Brown, Fintona’s most efficient Development/Alumni Officer for her hard work with updating the Queensland list of Old Fintonians and for sending out our invites.

We received apologies from a dozen or more other Queensland Fintonians – all hoping to make it to this year’s lunch so it is very exciting to see our numbers increasing.

A note for the diary – our next lunch will take place on 20 October 2012.

South Australia

We really enjoyed having the annual reunion of Old Fintonians at our place in Adelaide on Sunday 30 October 2011.

Diana & Graham Pinkney, Kiri & Peter Radcliffe, Prue & Sandy Jay, and Jean Rye were here, and it was a first for Nancy & Jim Sinclair and their granddaughters McKenzie & Dezarae (who were so helpful).

A last minute apology from Suzy Chandler (due to a Qantas strike) was accepted with equanimity!

The conversation was lively and wide ranging as usual, although we did miss input from our absent regulars Joey Duncan, Louisa Rose and Liz Vines. We do look forward to seeing Susan Perkins, Diana Hodge, Ann Watkins and Mavis Tottenham, who are on a promise to be with us this year. Mavis would usurp Jean Rye as our oldest participant as she left Fintona in 1938. Jean’s final year was 1942.

Prue Jay’s (mother’s) collection of ‘The Fintonian’ magazine was again of interest to us all, the earliest issue being from 1933.

Kiri & Peter Radcliffe live nearby, and have offered to host our reunion this year, the proposed date being the last Sunday in October again.

Sue & Peter Vandeleur

Benalla

Sixteen North East Victoria Old Fintonians, once again, had a wonderful lunch at the Benalla Gallery for our biannual reunion in April. The weather was perfect and we sat out on the balcony overlooking the lake.

We were delighted to welcome three new girls - Emily McCormack, Georgie Wilson and Caitlin Purcell. They are friends who left Fintona in 1994 and are now living in the North East. Age makes no difference where old Fintonians are concerned and there was much reminiscing, laughter and stories covering a vast number of years.

Our next reunion will be on Wednesday October 10 at 12 midday at the Benalla Art Gallery. Please contact Jane Derrick (nee Hurst) at janederrick1@bigpond.com or phone 03 5765 2351 or 0439 202 037.

Once again Suzy Chandler graced us with her presence and we were so happy to see her again and get an update on all Fintona’s renovations and constructions. So thank you again Suzy – we always love to have you join us.

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Class 1961 - 50 Year Reunion

The Class of 1961 celebrated their 50 year reunion with a lunch in November 2011 at Fintona in Cherry Road House, followed by a tour of the School. Thank you to Margaret Chipperfield (Crow) and Mary O’Brien (Gilbert) who began work in the February before the reunion to track down as many addresses as possible. Alison Morgan (Ferris) brought along a range of photographs to the reunion dating back to Grade One, which everyone enjoyed. Many thanks also, to Miss Butt for attending the reunion, and sharing her memories of the School.

Class 1972 – 30 Year Reunion

The Class of 1972 celebrated their 30 year reunion with drinks on Friday 16 March in the recently opened Middle School House. Julie Goldsworthy, the Year Secretary for the Class of 1972, and also current Head of Middle School at Fintona, proudly showed the new facility to her classmates. Miss Butt attended, captivating everyone with her speech. Many thanks to Julie for her work in tracking missing addresses and also keeping those who couldn’t attend updated with Fintona news.

2012 UPCOMING REUNIONS

2007
5 Year Reunion, Friday 14 September 6.30pm- 8.30 pm, Amora Hotel Riverwalk, Richmond

2002
10 Year Reunion Saturday 28 July 6.30 - 8.30pm 17 Cherry Road, Fintona

1982
30 Year Reunion, Friday 31 August, 6.30-8.30pm at 17 Cherry Road, Fintona

1960s decade Friday 19 October, 6.30pm-8.30pm in Margaret Cunningham Hall

1961 and below Art Show followed by Afternoon Tea, Friday 19 October

1962
50 year Reunion, Sunday 18 November, Lunch at ‘Greystones’ (Di Gibson’s property at Bacchus Marsh)

INTERSTATE/COUNTRY

Benalla
Wednesday 10 October, Benalla Art Gallery

NSW/ACT
Thursday 13 September

QLD
Saturday 20 October

SA
Sunday 28 October

For more information, visit our website at www.fintona.vic.edu.au/our community/alumni/2012 Reunions
Births

Dr Bronwyn King (‘92) and her husband Dr Mark Shaw are delighted to announce the arrival of their beautiful baby boy Oliver, born on 7 November 2011.

Deaths

Winsome Keritz (Semple) ‘37, October 2011
Inez Coote (Sheehan) ‘31, November 2011
Ina Meek (Browne) ‘36, November 2011
Helen Pavlin (Friday) ‘56, November 2011
Jean Gunn (Rose) ‘31, December 2011
Margaret Kemp (Gullick) ‘42, January 2012
Barbara McDonough ‘48, February 2012

Obituaries

Jean Gunn (Rose) ‘31
16/1/1913 – 8/12/2011
Jean was a very valuable member of the OFA Red Cross, raising more money on her own than the rest of the group put together. Jean raised over $12,000 for the Bushfire Appeal. Jean would often say, ‘I have two loves in life, my family and the Red Cross’. The Red Cross work that Jean did is to be commended. Jean was an amazing lady and will be greatly missed.

Andree Peter (Joubert) ‘52

Barbara Mary McDonough ‘48
26/11/1931 – 14/02/2012
Starting at the Junior School in 1940, Barb became part of a sizeable group of girls who have maintained their friendship for over 70 years.

Having achieved her Bachelor of Arts Degree, Barb worked for twenty years for the Department of Defence Library Service in Canberra and was awarded the Member of the Order of Australia for her endeavours.

I now quote a Tribute from one of Barb’s English friends: “Barbara was in many respects, unsurprisingly, very ‘Australian’. She eschewed sentimentality, preferring dry wit. Often outspoken, she didn’t suffer fools gladly, yet if anyone managed to pierce the brusque exterior they would come to know a kind, funny person with a generousity of spirit and keen sense of loyalty and friendship. Although a born leader and organiser she was quietly kind, caring and thoughtful. She will be sorely missed – a friend many felt they could not do without but alas they must.”

I think we are all grateful that our time together at Fintona was largely responsible for the great friendship we all shared.

Noel Moore (Thomas) ‘49

Andree Peter (Joubert) ‘52

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Noel Moore (Thomas) ‘49

News of Old Fintonians

Two students from last year’s VCE Class of 2011, Grace Dong and Amanda Atkins, received a Premier’s Prize: Grace for Indonesian and Amanda for English. Amanda was also Dux in 2011. Congratulations to both Grace and Amanda. In other news about Grace, she won the Indonesian Speech Competition held in Perth in March this year. Grace won many prizes for her efforts but she was most excited about a return ticket to Indonesia. We congratulate Grace for her outstanding achievement and wish her all the best for her university studies. Grace also, became an ESL volunteer in Bali for one month in January this year. She is very interested in the Indonesian language and was very keen to improve her hands-on experience after completing her VCE in 2011. While in Bali, a special orientation program was organised to equip Grace with basic ESL pedagogical skills so that her teaching could be meaningful and engaging. Grace thoroughly enjoyed her experience and is looking forward to returning to Indonesia.

In March 2012, Sarah Spottiswood (‘06) received a Young Achievers award from the Rotary Club of Melbourne. The award recognises excellence in education, training and vocational contributions to the community. Sarah is completing a Bachelor of Law/Bachelor of Arts degree at Monash University. She has been an exchange student at Berkeley and at the University of Hong Kong providing her with a valuable understanding of international difference and cross cultural issues.

Laresa Kosloff (‘91) was recently featured in The Saturday Age after returning from the Venice Biennale, where she was on a mission to create a work of art in the fever and frenzy of the Biennale. In
December last year, Laresa was also awarded the Jane Scally Developing Artist Award. The award was established by ACCA (Australian Centre Contemporary Art) board member Peter Jopling, QC to honour his late wife. Laresa plans to travel to Siberia with the award money on another project.

Olivia Cranwell ('05) was one of six finalist in the Herald Sun Aria at the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall in the Melbourne Recital Centre in October 2011. Olivia joined the Victorian Youth Opera shortly after finishing school, where she was cast as God in Noye's Fludde, in their very first performance. Olivia was also one of six principal singers in Assembly, a joint production between the Victorian Opera and dance company Chunky Move at the Melbourne Festival in October 2011.

Mary George (Nanos '79)
I’ve walked a long, eventful and happy road since my days as a Fintona girl, but I am always proud to tell anyone that listens where I received my adolescent education. My memories of my days at Fintona always bring a smile to my face and I’ve taken opportunities to wander about the school on Open days with my children and show them the beautiful grounds. My 50th birthday celebrations were spent with close family and I had a lovely evening. I was so very happy to get a private message from Miss Butt for the keepsake photo album my daughter Rosemarie organised. It was so very nice to be remembered by my headmistress but to also know that she is well and apparently has a great memory. Thank you for your kind words and most importantly for the wonderful memories and the education that has held me in good stead.

Margaret Hatty-Smith ’58
I am really enjoying Darwin and our tropical garden. I am currently volunteering at Darwin Botanic Gardens and at the Adult Migrant English Program at Charles Darwin University. Visitors welcome from school days, email linden312@bigpond.com

Goodbye Karen and Welcome Noni

After just over two and a half years, Karen Brown has decided to accept a position at Deakin University with more hours. In her position as the Alumni and Development Co-ordinator, Karen endeared herself to many of the Old Girls for her efficient organisation of Reunions and all matters pertaining to Alumni. We wish Karen all the very best in her future and welcome Noni Fitzmaurice (Tudor) as our new Alumni Co-ordinator. Noni may already be familiar to you as she is an Old Girl from the Class of 1969. Additionally, Noni’s mother, Dorothy Tudor (Pettigrew ’40) may also be remembered by many Old Fintonians. We wish Noni every success in her new role and trust that she enjoys her time at Fintona.
OFA for Charities

After a long association with the Red Cross, the OFA Red Cross ladies have changed their name to OFA for Charities, and will now be raising money for a number of charities. They have selected the Mirabel Foundation as their first recipient. The Mirabel Foundation assists children who have been orphaned or abandoned due to parental illicit drug use and are now in the care of extended family.

On Wednesday 4 April, the OFA for Charities held a Card Party in the Reid Studio at Fintona, raising just over $1500. If you would like to join the group, new members are always welcome. Please contact the Alumni Office on 9830 1388 for more information.

OFA 50th Anniversary Golf Day

Monday 21 November 2011 was the 50th Anniversary of the OFA Annual Golf Day. The event was to be held at the Kew Golf Club, however the club’s major course renovations had been delayed, so with new grass along many of the fairways, some temporary greens and general mayhem, the venue was not suitable. Thankfully Commonwealth Golf Club was able to slot us in with very short notice.

We had 32 players turn out on a beautiful day. This is nearly twice as many as we’ve had in recent years and a very good sign for the future of this event. Six new women were welcomed to their first time playing, and one other joined us for lunch along with Fintona’s Development/alumni officer, Karen Brown, who helped organise the day.

Special mention was made of Freda Neville-Smith (Norman ’22) who, 50 years ago, donated the beautiful silver tray trophy presented each year. Her 3 daughters, Kaye, Anne and Merri, are regular players and have each had the thrill of winning the event.

The winner on the day was Lisa Renton, with Sally Syme, Liz Cramer and Wendy Hall making up the top 4 places. These 4 competed in April, at Peninsula, at the annual Inter-School Golf Challenge Cup (formerly the Sun Cup), which was won by St Margaret’s for the first time.

Fintona very generously supplied some umbrellas for prizes.

Below: Winners on the Day Libby Day ’71 (longest drive & nearest the pin), 4th place Wendy Hall ’73, 3rd place Liz Cramer (Howell ’70) and 2nd place Sally Syme (Shaw ’74). The winner, Lisa Renton (Rankin ’74) couldn’t stay for lunch and presentations.

Bottom: Merri Harkness (Neville-Smith ’64), Kay Joubert (Neville-Smith ’49) and Anne Breadmore (Neville-Smith ’57)
Where Is She Now?

Jeannie Roberts (’72), a Nyikina Mangala woman

Jeannie was born on a remote sheep station in the Northern Territory. However Jeannie’s mother died when she was five and she was removed under the government’s assimilation policy.

Lay missionary, Betty Roberts, brought Jeannie home to Melbourne to prevent her from becoming part of the ‘stolen generation’.

Margaret Cunningham, then Principal of Fintona, offered Jeannie a place at the School and also chose to share her birthday with Jeannie. The two remained close and as Jeannie says, ‘I loved her to bits’.

Jeannie started at Fintona in 1962 living in a prosperous all-white area with a new family and no English. Jeannie loved school but it wasn’t until she became a teacher herself that she realised how progressive Fintona had been; for example setting minimal homework and not streaming classes, something she feels is still limiting the opportunities of students.

After leaving school Jeannie travelled back to the Kimberley and was able to reconnect with her sister and later her brother and their large families. This feeling of belonging became increasingly important to Jeannie and she returned to work in Hall’s Creek after completing nursing and later teacher training in Melbourne.

Initially shocked at the issues facing Aboriginal people, Jeannie became aware that her education had given her the opportunity to help. She has worked all over Australia; on employment for Aboriginal men, with women prisoners, with students at Curtin University, and became the Director of their Indigenous Research Centre. At the time of the interview she was overseeing ten community health programs in Broome.

Do listen to the whole interview (36 minutes) and hear Jeannie’s warmth, humility and optimism. Conducted by Cathy Harper, this is the third interview released by the Fintona Oral History Group and can be found at www.fintonahistory.com.au.

Jenny Blüm (Slater) ’73
Classmate of Jeannie’s

Photograph taken by Cathy Harper
Based on 2011 comprehensive NAPLAN scores for Years 3, 5, 7 & 9 as analysed by The Weekend Australian newspaper.