Annual Report
2014

great things come from a small package
FINTONA
Girls' School
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

It gives me great pleasure to present the 2014 Annual Report of Fintona Girls’ School. Its primary purpose is to inform the School and the wider community of the School’s progress during the year, including outcomes and achievements. While the report mainly reflects the activities the School engaged in during 2014, it also contains information about further directions both in the immediate and more distant future.

The School has always striven to reflect its motto, **Age Quod Agis** and 2014 was no exception. The School produced outstanding results across a range of activities; academic, sporting, cultural, personal and professional. Our VCE and NAPLAN results once again put us in the top schools in Victoria. The students continued to maintain their cheerful and positive approach to everything they do and their enjoyment of the many opportunities they have for involvement both within and outside of the classroom.

The stability of our enrolments and staff and student retention rates reflect the broad satisfaction felt by the community towards the School and its ongoing provision of a creative, forward looking and engaging education for young people.

It is a source of great pride to be able to say I work at Fintona Girls’ School and it continues to be a great source of personal and professional pride for us all. The Annual Report provides us with the opportunity to contemplate our achievements and focus on the next stage of our progress.

Suzy Chandler
Principal
WHO WE ARE

“WITH THE EXTRA ATTENTION WE PROVIDE IN A SMALL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT, OUR GIRLS CONSISTENTLY ACHIEVE AMONG THE HIGHEST VCE AND NAPLAN RESULTS IN AUSTRALIA.”

Fintona is an independent, non-denominational day school for girls, which is renowned for high academic and personal achievement.

Situated in the inner eastern suburb of Balwyn, we cater for girls from Prep to Year 12 and offer a co-educational early learning program for girls and boys. The International Baccalaureate is taught from ELC to Year 6.

Fintona holds fast to its motto Age Quod Agis - Do what you do well. From its commencement in 1896, Fintona has espoused the view that ‘girls can do anything’ and has encouraged students to be critical, independent thinkers empowered to take their place as active, effective citizens and leaders.

With the extra attention we provide in a small school environment, our girls consistently achieve among the highest VCE and NAPLAN results in Australia.

Our friendly, supportive and caring environment, together with our broad-based education programs, provide our girls with many experiences to stretch themselves beyond expectation and to cope with life beyond school.

Inspired by exceptional teachers, a Fintona girl will find the confidence to soar and achieve her highest academic and personal aspirations.
OUR ETHOS

A Fintona student can be recognised as one who faces her life with the simple belief that to live is to learn. In every endeavour, she aspires to do the very best she can. She is able to learn and work independently, yet enjoys the opportunity for interdependent and collaborative work. She holds secure moral principles and beliefs, believes in a healthy body, whilst remaining attuned to the intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions of her being.

As a communicator she is poised and confident, is largely self-directed but will ask for help if needed. For her, the pursuit of excellence is assumed, not contrived, and she knows this innately. We hope that she accepts her limitations and believes that within those limits she can be inspired to make a difference. She nurtures a love of tradition and heritage whilst maintaining a positive vision for the future. She is protective and proud of the School’s reputation and her own and aspires to be truthful and kind in her interactions with others.

Her outlook is optimistic and global, essentially because she is tolerant and believes in the inherent decency of all people. She tries to look upon others as individuals rather than a crowd, and is respectful of difference. Like all people, we hope she understands that she has her faults, yet she also reflects on her own behaviour. In all aspects of her life, she eschews what is vulgar and mean-spirited, and directs herself to what is good and noble.

AGE QUOD AGIS - DO WHAT YOU DO WELL

Gardening Club

Led by our very own gardener Helen Kinross, the Gardening Club began in mid 2014 and is held every Thursday. Its purpose is to educate the girls on how easy it is to grow plants, fruit, vegetables and herbs, the importance of composting, the benefits of worm farms and about how to run a market stall.
Fintona achieved a median ATAR of 96, one of Fintona’s best ever on record.

Our NAPLAN results were also exceptional. The Reading, Writing and Numeracy results for Year 3 and Year 5 rank as the best performing non-selective primary school in Australia. Overall, Fintona was ranked in the top 11 best performing girls’ schools in Victoria for NAPLAN.

Shirley Tang (Year 11) and Anna Wotherspoon (Year 12) were recognised with Premier’s Awards:
- Shirley for Accounting and Anna for both English and Legal Studies.
- Amy Luo (Year 11) was selected to perform in Top Class in recognition of her exceptional talent as a clarinet player.
- Kelly Ang (Year 12) was selected to exhibit one of her VCE Art folio pieces at the Top Shot exhibition.

In the Science Talent Search competition, Fintona students received a total of 41 awards in both the Primary and Secondary Divisions. The projects of three of these students were selected for entry into the prestigious BHP Billiton Science and Engineering Awards.

Georgia Griffith (Year 12) became the fourth fastest 800m runner in the world after participating in the Junior World athletics Championships in Eugene, Oregon.

Jemimah Hamilton (Year 11) became a semi-finalist in the 2014 Rostrum Competition with her speech on cultural diversity.

Adél Móra Borbély’s (Year 10) first ever garment creations were featured in the Melbourne Spring Fashion Week.

Weiann Tan (Year 12, 2014) was a recipient of an Indonesian Independence Day Scholarship.

Smita Bhattacharjee (Year 11) won the 22nd Elizabeth M Butt Public Speaking Award. The great Balloon Debate was won by Year 9 student, Meredyth Lee and the Junior section was won by Year 7 student Aahana Dudani.

Old Fintonian, Louisa Rose, was voted the best winemaker in the country.

Claire Levi, an Old Fintonian, was commissioned to write the school history in preparation for our 120th year in 2016.

Fintona’s Early Learning Centre (ELC) had its 20 year anniversary and exceeded the National Quality Standard for Education and Care.

Construction of the Art Precinct project began.

The Art Precinct was officially launched by the Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, Mr Tony Ellwood.

Fintona purchased a school bus.
The inaugural McGrath Foundation Pink Stumps day was held to raise money for research and awareness of breast cancer.

A group of Year 10 and Year 12 students travelled to New York City for the inaugural Art Study Tour.

New playground equipment in the Middle School was installed.

The fifth Food & Wine Festival was held in November.

Our bi-annual Fintona File magazine received a new look and size.

A promotional film about life at Fintona was completed.

The Fintona Parents’ Association hosted its first High Tea attended by mothers, daughters and grandmothers.

The Fintona Parents’ Association also hosted the Dads’ Beef and Burgundy Night.

The VCE Unit 3&4 Drama class wrote and performed their own play called Surveillance.

Fintona hosted its biennial Writers’ Festival which featured an array of interesting guests including the actor and author William McInnes.

Students performed a wonderful interpretation of Shakespeare’s most popular comedy, A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

Fintona hosted a Parent Information Evening on Cyber Safety.

The VCE Art Show was held for the first time and artwork ranging from stencil cuts, watercolours, photography, portraiture and fashion were featured.

A laurel wreath sculpture designed by Emma Davies was affixed to the wall of the Margaret Cunningham Hall.

Latin was introduced to Fintona girls in Year 7.

The amazing talent, creativity and imagination of our students was showcased in our Annual Art Show.

The Music Faculty presented their Annual Music Concert which displayed the talents of girls from Year 3 to 12.

Fintona senior school students visited Madagascar as part of World Challenge.

Fintona was runner up in the Salvos’ School Challenge.

Fintona girls performed extremely well in the GSV Athletics Finals evening producing some excellent results and personal bests.

Fintona achieved a median ATAR of 96, one of Fintona’s best ever on record.
VCE SUCCESS

Fintona Girls’ School is renowned for consistently achieving outstanding VCE results, placing Fintona among the highest performing schools in Victoria as well as in the country. The VCE results from the Class of 2014 once again affirm our strong position.

WITH A MEDIAN ATAR OF 96, TWO THIRDS OF THE CLASS OF 2014 ACHIEVED AN ATAR OF 90+ AND 54% OF THE STUDENTS ACHIEVED AN ATAR OF 95+.

2014 VCE HIGHLIGHTS AT A GLANCE

66% of students achieved an ATAR of 90+ placing them in the top 10% of the State

54% of students achieved an ATAR of 95+ placing them in the top 5% of the State

35% of students achieved an ATAR of 98+ placing them in the top 2% of the State

18% of students achieved an ATAR of 99+ placing them in the top 1% of the State

Our 5 year median ATAR is 95.1

There were 5 perfect study scores of 50

Median VCE Study score is 37 and 37.2% achieved a study score of 40+

The School Dux was Stella Que, achieving an ATAR of 99.80.
TERTIARY COURSES AND DESTINATIONS FOR THE CLASS OF 2014

98% of our students received a first round university offer and these offers show the diversity of interest among our students from Medicine to Commerce to Fashion.

2014 ATAR COMPARISON CHART

The following table is a comparison between Fintona’s 2014 ATARs and those of Victoria as a whole.
The 2014 NAPLAN results, released on the MySchool website, place Fintona among the best performing independent girls’ schools in Australia. Our Reading, Writing and Numeracy results for Years 3 and 5, rank us as the best performing non-selective primary school in Australia. Overall, we were placed in the top 11 best performing girls’ schools in Victoria. These excellent results are a reflection of the extra attention we provide in a small school environment as well as the dedication and commitment of our amazing staff.

The following table provides the percentage of Fintona students performing ABOVE the national minimum standard in Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation and Numeracy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: NAPLAN DATA SERVICE, 2014
## 2014 NAPLAN RESULTS FOR YEARS 3, 5, 7 AND 9

The following table shows Fintona’s results compared to the Australian schools’ average for each NAPLAN category. The performance of our students was substantially above the Australian schools’ average for each category and at every year level tested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fintona</td>
<td>All Schools</td>
<td>Fintona</td>
<td>All Schools</td>
<td>Fintona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- SUBSTANTIALLY ABOVE THE AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS’ AVERAGE

SOURCE: MYSCHOOL WEBSITE WWW.MYSCHOOL.EDU.AU
OUR STUDENTS

With around 600 students (including ELC), Fintona is a welcoming and safe environment where a sense of belonging and connectedness is experienced.

RETENTION RATE

Our student retention rate across the School is 96.8%.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATES 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>93.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At Fintona, we believe that our teachers are one of our greatest assets. We are very proud of our staff and recognise that they work enthusiastically to produce outstanding outcomes for their students. In 2014, the average staff attendance was 96.7% while the retention rate was 97.7%.

The Professional Learning attended by staff was part of the School’s Professional Learning Plan which aims to provide staff with the opportunities to strengthen their academic knowledge and teaching skills whilst at the same time encouraging participation in broader areas of interest.

Staff attended Professional Learning sessions outside the School on 110 days during the year. As well as this, all staff attended Professional Learning sessions provided by experts in various fields, brought into the School for Staff Days at the start of each term and on other occasions during the year. Throughout 2015, Dr Craig Hassed, provided mindfulness sessions with staff to assist with the integration of mindfulness into the classroom.

Staff also attended a wide variety of conferences and seminars many of which were subject and VCE related but others dealt with such topics as Leadership, Anxiety, First Aid, Asthma Awareness, Anaphylaxis, Risk Management, Conducting Appraisals and Drafting Contracts.

The average expenditure per staff member was approximately $620.

Our staff are highly qualified and enjoy working in a close and supportive community. There were a total of 72 academic staff and 38 support staff employed in 2014. The following chart provides an analysis of our teachers’ highest qualifications and shows that 98.6% of our teaching staff have a Bachelor Degree or higher qualification.
WE ARE VERY PROUD OF OUR STAFF AND RECOGNISE THAT THEY WORK ENTHUSIASTICALLY TO PRODUCE OUTSTANDING OUTCOMES FOR THEIR STUDENTS.

The teachers' highest qualifications are as follows:

- **66.7%** Bachelor Degree
- **27.8%** Masters Degree
- **4.1%** Doctorate Degree
- **1.4%** Diploma

**Teachers' Highest Qualifications**
We did not undertake a formal set of surveys this year but instead used other avenues to ascertain parent and student satisfaction. Various focus groups throughout the year, confirmed that the School’s key aims and ethos are viewed positively by parents and students alike. These are:

- Small class sizes which deliver a focused, personal and differentiated education.
- A recognition of the individual as paramount to the School combined with encouraging a sense of community.
- Consistently outstanding results among a group of non-selected students.
- A real satisfaction with the breadth of the opportunities for students outside the classroom and a recognition that participation is the most important aspect.
- A recognition that staff are always willing to go the extra mile to support students in their endeavours.
- Acknowledgment that interpersonal relationships are of prime importance and that as a school we fare well in maintaining positive relationships and deal well with any issues.

As a school we are very aware of a need to avoid complacency, and we are constantly monitoring the responses we receive from our surveys to ensure that if there are areas to be noted for change, that we attend to them if required.
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Fintona continues to be committed to combining the best of traditional aspects of education and the personal development of young people. These include carefully selected areas of the many new and progressive ideas being proposed by academics both here and overseas and by both our State and Federal government.

2014 saw Fintona begin the process of developing the new Art Precinct after the completion of the refurbishment of the two existing art rooms in the Christmas 2013/2014 holiday. Our refurbishment and renovation program which is ongoing continued and included the further development of the Middle School playground as well as Middle and Senior School classrooms, all completed before the beginning of the new school year.

Work on the School history was initiated by Claire Levi, an Old Fintonian, from HistorySmiths which included a great deal of research of the early years and investigation of our founding principals, Annie Hughston and her brother William and Margaret Cunningham. We completed our Strategic Plan 2015 to 2019 and also the initial work for a School Improvement Plan which was flagged by the Federal Government as being relevant to future funding. Although as the year wore on, the mandated need to complete the Plan seemed in question, we continued with our research among the staff as it proved to be a valuable way to assess our current health and highlight areas of future focus.

Staff were encouraged to review their curriculum offerings and their resources and several Faculties offered new electives. We continued to focus on ensuring that our offerings are encouraging our students to develop independence, creativity and thoughtful reflection and be highly skilled practitioners across a range of subjects. The Masterplan has also inspired staff to reflect on how their subjects fit with the needs of future employment opportunities and several Faculties also planned some cross curricula units or events.

The School is thriving and prospering and has its sights firmly set on the future.
The Finance and Administration team is responsible for providing information and process systems to all layers of the School and continually strives for efficiencies to best utilise the resources available to the School whilst meeting all statutory and compliance needs.

Fintona recorded another positive financial result for 2014 underpinned by consistently high student numbers and the School’s financial discipline. Over the course of 2014, the School maintained student numbers around 600 with most year levels at or close to capacity.

The School has been in a strong financial position for many years and 2014 continues to build on this position.

The IT department continue to provide support and services in line with its operational plan. Work has commenced to upgrade the IT infrastructure around the School, including high speed internet utilising a fibre optic service, upgrading data back up and disaster recovery equipment and the systematic rollout of desktops and laptops around the School.

The Maintenance department completed a number of special projects and continues to ensure the grounds are presented neatly. Work commenced on the Art Precinct and Buick Hall, on the Junior School campus, was renovated over the Christmas holiday break.
FINTONA RECORDED ANOTHER POSITIVE FINANCIAL RESULT FOR 2014 UNDERPINNED BY CONSISTENTLY HIGH STUDENT NUMBERS AND THE SCHOOL’S FINANCIAL DISCIPLINE.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2014