great things come from a small package
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The origami crane is a work of art. It is a beautiful, individual and creative transformation and also an enduring symbol of hope and goodwill. From a piece of crisp, colourful paper, the crane takes shape through artful and skilled folding. With painstaking attention, care and diligence, the paper takes on a new form, a new life. The origami crane remains a strong symbol of success and endeavour at Fintona.

Just like the crane, over time, our girls experience an assured and positive transformation as their individuality unfolds. In an intimate, small school environment, our girls work hard to achieve their goals. They are flexible, yet strong. They have the confidence to soar.

Every year, our VCE students enter their final exam rooms to discover 1000 origami cranes suspended from the ceiling.

These gifts, hand-made by our younger girls, are a wish for success and happiness. It is a simple gesture that has become a popular tradition reflecting how much we, as a school community, care for each other…….. a small package that represents the promise of future possibilities.
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'Miss Cunningham (former Principal from 1936 to 1962) limited the number of girls in the school so she could know everyone of them personally.

Now, at Fintona, we still pride ourselves on being a small school and knowing each fellow student as an individual.'

SHARYN LEE [SENIOR CONSUL 2011]

ZOE [YEAR 8]

MS BALES, JUNIOR SCHOOL ART TEACHER

REBECCA [YEAR 11]

NICOLE, BALLET DANCER, CLASS OF 1991

EFFIE, MUM OF ANGELINA [YEAR 2]

MARGARET CUNNINGHAM, FORMER PRINCIPAL
‘Miss Cunningham (former Principal from 1936 to 1962) limited the number of girls in the school so she could know everyone of them personally. Now, at Fintona, we still pride ourselves on being a small school and knowing each fellow student as an individual.’

SHARYN LEE [SENIOR CONSUL 2011]
FOLLOWING IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS

With a rich history dating back to 1896, we are always mindful of the contribution of those who have gone before us. Miss Annie Hughston, our founding Principal, and Miss Margaret Cunningham, our second Principal, more than anyone else, positioned Fintona for the modern era.

These remarkable women left a legacy that still endures – the unwavering commitment to outstanding education for girls in a small school environment. Today, we honour the commitment and passion of all who have helped shape Fintona. We still pride ourselves on being a small school. We continue to understand and nurture every girl so that her talents may flourish.

Our school motto maintains its driving force today:
*Age Quod Agis* – Do what you do well.
'My attitude to education is the same whether it be for a five year old or a fifteen year old – only the best is good enough.'

Margaret Cunningham [Fintona Principal 1936 – 1962]
‘Young women need to be educated to be creative and critical thinkers to face the challenges of the future and to be tolerant world citizens. Fintona has always been committed to providing an environment that ensures girls have the confidence to soar and achieve their greatest potential.’

SUZY CHANDLER [CURRENT PRINCIPAL]
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‘At the conclusion of their studies, our Year 12 students achieve successful entry into the university and course of their choice.’ [FINTONA’S CAREER CO-ORDINATOR]
We might be small, but our curriculum is diverse and challenging. At each developmental age and stage of learning, we encourage critical thinking, exploration and the celebration of discovery.

Whether it is learning about the powers of persuasive language, planting vegetables in the garden or exploring Australian Aboriginal cultural heritage in Central Australia, a Fintona girl is stimulated by the variety of learning experiences. She is excited by opportunities to see the wider world and celebrate its diversity through the leadership program, overseas trips and exchanges as well as rich programs of social justice and cultural celebrations. In conjunction with on-going House activities, these programs promote self-esteem, responsibility and good team-work.

To facilitate an optimal educational setting for our students, Fintona is divided into four smaller ‘schools’.

1. In our Early Learning Centre (ELC), three and four year old children are immersed in kindergarten programs based on the world renowned Reggio Emilia philosophy.

2. In Junior School (Prep to Year 4), the Primary Years Program (PYP), part of the International Baccalaureate, frames the learning for students based on an in-depth, inquiry based approach.

3. In Middle School (Years 5 to 8), our teaching gives priority to developing skills such as analytical thinking, problem solving and establishing good study and research habits.

4. In Senior School (Years 9 to 12), our teachers prepare each girl for VCE success. At each year level, including VCE, students select from a broad range of subjects based on their personal interests.
‘We love how the girls can get their hands dirty out in the veggie patch and learn about how plants grow. When the girls harvested their produce, they made a lovely lunch which my daughter especially enjoyed.’

EFFIE, ANGELINA’S MUM [YEAR 2]
Because we are a small school

GIRLS DO NOT GET LOST

Your daughter will quickly feel at home at Fintona. With an average class size of 17, the girls feel welcome, secure, safe and confident.

It is a bit like being among extended family. The girls enjoy close-knit relationships and the social environment is supportive, respectful and caring. Bullying is rarely encountered and most definitely not tolerated.

Each year our survey of students confirms the harmony and productivity within our classrooms. The girls say they feel valued, that their opinion counts and they feel very happy coming to school.

This is because the wellbeing of each of our students is always at the forefront of our thinking. A Fintona girl is not just another face but an individual with a unique personality.

Our pastoral care program pervades every aspect of our curriculum and is delivered by Tutors, House Teachers, Heads of School and the School Counsellor. Formal aspects of the program include:

- Acceleration and support programs that recognise the different learning needs of our students

- Monitoring of social and emotional development

- A Study Skills program, taught from Year 7 to Year 12, which teaches girls the importance of good work habits

- A Life Skills program that begins in the Junior School and is taught through to Year 12, covering issues such as health, safety, physical fitness, nutrition, social interaction, cyber issues, drugs, safe parties and transition from school to university

- Transition programs at key levels to help new girls integrate quickly and existing students to make a smooth transition between the sub-schools.
Our commitment to the health and wellbeing of our students is another ‘size’ factor that sets Fintona apart from other schools – a factor that is a powerful element in successful learning.
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Because we are a small school

EACH GIRL CAN HAVE A GO

Some of the best lessons are learned outside the classroom. We like our girls to get out and about, to find their strengths, to grapple with new challenges and enjoy the exhilaration of achievement!

Co-curricular opportunities at Fintona are vast. All of our girls are encouraged to have a go and have fun.

If a girl wants to tread the boards, play in a team, or join an ensemble, she’ll have the chance at Fintona. Whether she’s a beginner or accomplished, there’s always room for her to have a go and make her mark. A Fintona girl will seize whatever opportunity comes her way with enthusiasm. So often, it is these types of experiences that foster in our students a lifelong interest.

Our House system provides another exciting avenue for co-curricular involvement. The House program promotes healthy competition and strong connections between girls of different year levels. The physical and intellectual aspects of the program are rewarding and complementary to the academic program.
‘I enjoy many interests, especially running, reading, playing the French Horn and even Maths is pretty cool. Along the way, my friends and teachers have been very encouraging and always show interest in my achievements.’

ZOE [YEAR 8]
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Because we are a small school

OUR TEACHERS ARE ONE OF OUR GREATEST ASSETS

Fintona’s teachers are motivated and enthusiastic, model respect and work tirelessly to produce outstanding outcomes for their students.

It is important to remember that Fintona is not a select-entry school. We don’t pick and choose students on their academic ability. This highlights the significance of our record of achievement. Year after year, our NAPLAN test results for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are outstanding and our Year 12 results consistently rank among the highest in Victoria as well as Australia. In fact, Fintona is recognised as one of the top performing schools in Australia.

How do we achieve this?

We ensure our teaching team is committed to nurturing the individual. With encouragement and dedication, our teachers will support your daughter on her educational journey. Our teachers model the behaviour, respect and tolerance they instil in the girls. They create a non-threatening, inclusive environment where every girl has a voice and the opportunity to participate.

They foster curiosity and inquiry and they develop self-esteem and confidence so the girls can set high expectations for themselves.

How do we do it?

We remain true to our small school philosophy and believe that with the right support and inspiration, our girls can do anything.
Because we are a small school

YOU CAN BE A LEADER IN SOME WAY

‘I am really excited about being a leader in the Junior School. You do feel important and it helps you to get ready for Middle School. Everyone gets to be a leader, but I would like to be a House Captain or an Aerobics Captain or really any captain would be good.’

JACQUELINE [YEAR 4]

From the early years, we encourage our girls to take on positions of leadership. From our Very Important Person (VIP) initiative in Prep through to the School Senators and Consuls in Year 12, we teach our students about the qualities and characteristics of capable leaders. With a long and proud history of female leadership at Fintona, the girls are instilled with the confidence and skills to lead others.

Every girl has the opportunity to experience and enjoy a position of responsibility. Leaders in areas such as debating, public speaking, community service, the environment, art, music and House activities learn valuable life skills.

Our girls can organise community involvement, plan House activities, lead assemblies and organise special events. Leadership roles strengthen the girls’ relationships with their teachers and peers and provide a rewarding sense of contribution to school life.
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‘My World Challenge trip to Tanzania was an incredible experience that taught me so much about who I am, leadership, working as a team, the plight of others in poor countries and the importance of solid friendships. My friends and I will cherish these memories forever.’

REBECCA [YEAR 11]
‘I met Coco in Year 7 and we instantly became good friends. At the time we were both new and didn’t know anyone. In just a few years, we have had some great times together. Like when we went on camp talking all night until the wee hours of the morning. We love to go shopping together, to the movies and to the football even though I don’t agree on her choice of footy club!’  ISABELLA [YEAR 10]
Friendships at Fintona are very important to the girls. More than anything else, it is their happy and supportive friendships that make school life fun and enjoyable.

If one girl wins an award or gets special credit for something, her friends rally around her and delight in her success. Within the warm atmosphere of Fintona, the girls make friends easily. Their support for one another is demonstrated across all year levels. With our active House system, the buddy program and the Fintona culture of respect, girls have countless opportunities to develop strong bonds.

It is true that life-long friendships are formed at Fintona. The alumni who attend our reunions tell us they still maintain strong friendships with women whom they first met at school. Our welcoming environment at Fintona makes school a great place to be. Research shows that happy students make successful learners.
‘The Connections Program provided me with the opportunity to deepen my understanding of the wider community. My experience working for a charity opened my eyes to how much commitment and selfless work these types of organisations carry out for the benefit of others.’ ELLA [YEAR 9]
Because we are a small school

OUR ETHOS GUIDES US STRONGLY

At Fintona, we believe that making a difference begins with the individual. Fintona girls are educated in an environment of respect and tolerance. They are also keenly aware of their responsibility to help others and contribute to their community as well as their environment.

The girls participate in our Community Service program throughout their education. They choose their service depending on their interests and strengths. They might make regular visits to residents of local aged-care facilities, fundraise for a worthy charity, or get involved in environmental projects.

The older girls visit the Danila Dilba Indigenous Health Service in Darwin and assist the healthcare workers there and in remote Aboriginal communities. They also have the opportunity to join the World Challenge expedition and volunteer in a third-world country. We encourage the girls to develop a culture of community service that continues to guide them in later life.
‘Fintona gave me the skills to be anything I wanted and taught me to look further than the common stereotypes - to always explore all possibilities. My teachers gave me the inspiration and strength that prepared me not only for my education but also life in general; so much of which have become part of me in my career and day to day life.’

LOUISA ROSE ['87]
CHIEF WINEMAKER YALUMBA,
GOURMET TRAVELLER WINE MAGAZINE’S WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR IN 2008

‘Having had the opportunity to be involved in, and contribute to, all facets of the Fintona community including the honour of being elected School Captain (Consul) in my final year, Fintona has equipped me with the transferable skills, and confidence to navigate my own path through life. I largely attribute my broad interests & seeking diverse work experience to the invaluable education, and nurturing environment I was exposed to at Fintona – from the smaller class sizes and attention to individual learning, the breadth of subjects and quality of teaching to the range of extra-curricular activities offered.’

OLIVIA COLLINS ['01]
(NEE ANGELATOS)
MARKETING MANAGER,
FINANCE INDUSTRY
‘It’s now more than 20 years since I left Fintona and the lessons I learnt then are still amongst my most important. The small year groups and individual focus gave each of us an opportunity to shine and fostered a belief in our own potential that persists to this day. I’ve no doubt that the confidence instilled during those years has been fundamental to any successes I have had since that time.’

KATLIN HARPER [‘89]  
(NEE HEXTER)  
OWNER OF RHUBARB ENTERPRISES  
(HOMEWARES BRAND)

‘My time at Fintona was truly special. I always felt such a strong sense of pride and striving to achieve amongst my peers and teachers. I felt a sense of being a part of a wonderful environment which supported my creativity.’

NICOLE HEDMAN [‘91]  
(NEE RHODES)  
FORMER PRINCIPAL ARTIST WITH THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET, AND CURRENTLY DANCING WITH THE ROYAL SWEDISH BALLET

‘The atmosphere at Fintona was such that it was simply assumed we could achieve anything we wanted. No-one really spoke about this – rather, it was an expectation we breathed in from our environment – from our teachers, the Principal, the beautiful buildings and garden surroundings, and of course, in the everyday interaction between each other.’

JENNIFER JOHNSTONE [‘80]  
(NEE TOOGOOD)  
ENGLISH CO-ORDINATOR, FINTONA GIRLS’ SCHOOL

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Even in the very beginning, more than a century ago, Fintona girls were taught to aim high. To do what they do well. This is still the case today. Our graduates leave us with a strong sense of self, an engaged and articulate view of the world and the capacity to make a valuable contribution to society. Today’s graduates join the network of Fintona alumni that is spread across the globe.

We know from experience they will remain connected to the place where their ambitions blossomed. Some will return and share their experiences with current girls through our Careers and Work Experience program. Our alumni continue to excel beyond the school gates. Across a diverse range of professional fields, they work hard, set themselves challenging goals and achieve great personal and career success. We are immensely proud of our Old Fintonians!

‘I can honestly say how grateful I am to the teachers who inspired me, to the supportive and solid friendships that I formed and to the philosophy, principles and morals of the School itself, which enabled me to achieve so many of my goals, to be confident and successful in my endeavours.’

Cyrma Hearn [‘92], VETERINARY SURGEON
DISCOVER FINTONA FOR YOURSELF

The best way to learn about the special attributes of Fintona is to visit us. We invite you and your daughter to attend one of our Tour Mornings, meet our inspiring Principal, take a tour and chat with our students and staff. We would also love to see you on Open Day or at our Twilight Open Evening. You will find enrolment information and an Application for Admission form with this Prospectus. More information on our tour dates, fees and charges and curriculum can be found as part of this Prospectus, on our website, or by contacting our Registrar on [03] 9830 1388.

Fintona Girls’ School is located at 79 Balwyn Road, in the eastern suburb of Balwyn (Melways Map 46 Ref D8), less than 100 metres from the corner of Whitehorse and Balwyn Roads. Our school is only 11 kilometres from the city and is easily accessible by bus, tram or train from the eastern, northern and north-eastern suburbs. Our Junior School Campus is located at 80 Balwyn Road, Balwyn opposite the Senior Campus. For the convenience of our students, there is a school bus that services the north-eastern suburbs and travels from Eltham through Templestowe to the Balwyn/Camberwell area.
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