Cycle A Wilsons Prom Camp

Catherine meets a wallaby on the Cycle A Camp
Capturing MECS

How do you capture the engagement, passion and creativity of what happens on any given school day here at MECS, let alone a whole year? From Kinder to Year 12, from excursions to camps, from individual learning to whole school activities, from staff to students, from playing to praying, from one term to another...our experiences are so rich in their diversity.

During our most recent workbreak at the beginning of this term, staff participated in a ‘prayer walk’ around the school. Broken into small groups, they were led in reflection and prayer for the different sections and activities of the school. It was a moving time of petition and celebration as we dedicated all that we do to seeking the Kingdom of God in education.

Perhaps a brief reflection of each ‘station’ will give you a sense of some of the things we are grateful for this year.

Kinder
Our Kinder continues to be a fabulous ‘beginning place’ for our young children and their families to be introduced to the building blocks of good learning – play, curiosity, discovery, establishing routines and building relationships. We are thrilled with the sense of community that has been established within our Kinder so quickly and for the expertise and passion of our early years’ educators. Our playgroup, Busy Bees, also contributes much to these ‘first steps’ being such a great introduction to MECS.

Primary School
As our young students mature, we are thankful that they do so under the guidance and encouragement of our great teaching staff and learning assistants in the Primary School. There are so many opportunities to grow and learn, not only in skills and knowledge, but also in character as our students work and play alongside one another. In addition to the rigorous academic learning that goes on, the Primary School culture places significant emphasis on the development of essential life skills for students – cooperation, self-control, restoration and may other skills required to live in harmonious community. This past year again saw many of the intentional steps toward this, with programs like Drama for Everyday Life, Kids with Courage, Empowering Girls and Positive Boys. We are also excited about the implementation of our fabulous Indonesian program this year and believe this will open up new doors of service and hospitality in the future.

Middle School
As students take more responsibility for their own learning, our Middle School program and staff provide a safe, nurturing and innovative environment. Again our intentional approach to whole of life education is evident in our Year 7 & 8 Cycle program, and our Year 9 Open Village program, all of which encourage thoughtful investigation of a range of topics, challenging our students to think about how to respond to the world around them as Christian people seeking to serve the Lord. The specialist programs continue to build key knowledge and skills in numeracy, literacy and science, as well as music, sport and drama. As throughout the whole school, we recognise that one of the biggest influences in effective learning is the relationship between student and teacher; the culture of the Middle School scaffolds the development of strong pastoral relationships with the students, reflecting the fact that each child is wonderfully created in God’s image.

Senior School
As young adults, our Senior School students are stretched, challenged and encouraged even further to analyse and respond to worldviews presented to them in culture and curriculum, through experiences such as the Year 10 Centre Trip. Students are exposed to and guided through some of the bigger issues in our society, allowing them to grow in understanding and formulating an intentional response. The Senior School staff support the students as they travel the VCE journey, providing them with the foundational truth that their ATAR score is not what defines them, nor is it the only goal of education. We desire that our senior students leave MECS with a clear sense of who they are in Christ and an understanding of what will give them joy and purpose in the years to come. We also trust that we have given them the skills and knowledge to pursue their vocational pathways!

Gym
Our students have so many opportunities to use their bodies in physical activity at MECS. Whether it be in their weekly PE classes, in their inter-school sports carnivals or just playing some games at lunchtime, we desire that they will honour God with their skills, abilities and good sportsmanship. We want to equip them with skills that they can take out into their extra-curricular community based sporting clubs, demonstrating a Godly approach to physical activity and competition. As they learn about all aspects of well-being, we pray they will make wise and healthy choices that would see them strong in mind, body and spirit.

Library
Our library plays a central role in teaching our students the skills of discernment in the way they gather and use information. It is filled with resources to explore our world, celebrate the diversity of language, or lose oneself in an imaginary world. It is a place of welcome for students at all times of the day, and is always busy during lunchtime.

Administration Building
Our non-teaching staff continue to go ‘above and beyond’ in the ways they serve our community and make it possible for our teachers to go about their daily tasks. We are so blessed to have administrative, financial, community relations, educational support and property staff who are all so committed to seeing this community flourish in all aspects.

Playground
The playground reminds us that teaching our students how to play ‘well’ is just as important as any other learning that happens at school. We are grateful for the safety our students enjoy and for the beautiful grounds that we can play in. We also know that all our excursions and camps are providing opportunities to learn how to ‘get on’ with others, to resolve conflict and build enduring relationships. We are committed to making sure that these experiences stay key to the way we ‘do’ education here at MECS.

So many parts, making up a fabulous whole! Hopefully you can see how staff were moved and encouraged as they progressed around the school, considering these, and many other things. Hopefully this reflection will also encourage you to join us in thanking God for another great year at MECS in 2015! We continue to seek and honour Him in all that we do!

Narelle
MECS Principal
SKETCHER’S SCOOP

Preps’ Big Night Out
This Friday evening our Preps get to enjoy their ‘Big Night Out’! This is to celebrate the completion of their first year at school. They will get to stay up a little bit later and enjoy a range of activities and fun games here at school, before going home in their pyjamas. We hope they have a fabulous night!

Middle School Camps
It was great to hear that all our staff, students and volunteers returned safely from their various camps last week. A big thankyou to our students for engaging in these experiences so enthusiastically, and to all our teachers and volunteers who put in the ‘extra yards’ at this busy time of the year. Personal highlights for me on the Year 9 Canberra camp were seeing the complete set of ‘Ned Kelly’ paintings at the National Art Gallery, going to Yarralumla, the home of the Governor-General and shaking the Prime Minister’s hand at Parliament House when he stopped to speak to some of our students! This newsletter (and next week’s) is full of pictures from the camps which will provide an idea of the diversity of each camp experience. Yvonne, our Camp Coordinator does a fabulous job into the classroom

Inviting stories into the classroom
What makes learning memorable for you? Is it something visual that you associate with it in your mind, like picture or movement? Is it a process that you commit to memory so you can repeat and practise? Each of us use learning tools to help us retain and understand what we learn; one such tool is the use of story.

When your child gets home from school, in the years before their teenage attitude claims them up from talking about their day, how often do they come home with stories about what their teacher did or said? And rather than listing the times tables they have memorised or the 3 key learning objectives that were written on the board, how often did they link a story, illustration, picture or memory with the learning that took place?

When Jesus came to earth to proclaim the good news of God’s kingdom he didn’t come with a list of objectives to cover, a best-selling instructional text book to read, or for that matter a 66 slide PowerPoint presentation. Instead he came with stories. Parables and analogies that in themselves helped reveal the wisdom of God and challenge the hearts and lives of those that could hear. How many times, as a parent, have you used a story or illustration to help instruct your child?

It is in the same way, within the classroom, that drama and storytelling is such an effective way of learning. I can think of times where students have struggled with mathematical concepts, confusing their obtuse angles with their acute ones. But when these angles were given personalities, woven into a story that helped the students create mental images, suddenly, they were able to commit their learning to memory to be more readily accessed and understood.

So maybe think about story in your lives. Is it being invited in to be used as tools for learning? And have you got the right questions, rather than the answers, as keys to unlocking the wisdom within it?

Ali
Middle Primary Cluster Leader & Teacher

Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars Program
Congratulations to Brenton (present Year 10 student) on being selected to participate in this program hosted by The University of Melbourne. Brenton will have the opportunity in 2016 to participate in a range of events and activities that will support his VCE studies. Over 1800 applications were received for this program, so indeed we congratulate Brenton on this honour.

Gratitude to the Board
As we near the end of the year, it is an opportunity to thank the members of the Board who work tirelessly throughout the year. As a governance Board, their main job is to make sure the running and direction of the school is aligned with the core vision and mission of the Association. This means that at our monthly meetings, a particular area of the school comes under discussion and we check that our governance policies are being adhered to. On behalf of the whole MECS community, we want to thank and acknowledge the service of lan (Board Chair), Lisa (Vice Chair), Louise (Board Secretary), Bretlyn (Board Treasurer), James and Steve. We are thankful that such a productive and supportive relationship exists between the Board and the Executive.

After School Care - 2016
Have you thought about using this service next year? Did you know that with government rebates a session is costing the average MECS family between $7.50 and $11? (Depending on your assessment and rebate amount).

We have been running this service since Term 2 this year. The families that use it are very happy and the kids love going!

We are conducting a review of the future viability of this service, and it would really help us to know if you are planning on using the After School Care program next year. Could you please let me know your intentions asap via email or calling the office. Thanks.

Nicole
Community Relations Officer
MECS Notes

Christmas Primary GT - Prep Nativity Play
You are warmly invited to the Prep GT on Monday December 14 at 9.30 am in the gym.

We hope to see parents, grandparents and special friends to celebrate the end of the year and the Christmas season with our Preps and the rest of the Primary School.

What a wonderful thing that at MECS we can declare that Jesus is the reason for the season!

Please note that the starting time is 9.30 am and the venue is the gym, rather than the usual 9am in the PUMP room.

We also warmly invite all our parent helpers to join with us for a ‘thank you’ morning tea after the GT on Monday 14 Dec at 11am in the main staffroom. We would love to acknowledge the way in which you have supported our classrooms and our school in so many ways this year.

Di
Assistant Principal - Primary

Friends of MECS

Stationery Helpers
Thank you to all the people who helped with the packing this week.

Helpers are still needed on the following days:

Tues 8 Dec 12noon - 3pm (sales)

Thurs 28 Jan 8.30am - 12noon (sales)
Thurs 28 Jan 1pm -3pm (pack up)

If you can help on any of the above days, even if it’s only for a few hours, please contact me. Thanks.

Evelyn

Orientation Day Tues Dec 8

Next Tuesday, December 8, is Orientation Day for all students going into Prep – Year 10 next year. All students will spend the day in their 2016 year level, having the opportunity to get to know the classrooms and teachers, and the new students that will be joining their year levels in 2016. All students need to bring their usual snacks and lunch.

Student Information:

Here are the specific instructions for each year level:

2015 4 year Kinder children: Come straight to the Prep classrooms, hang your bag on any hook and then come to Prep O where we will all start the day together.

2015 Preps: Go straight to the JPS classroom, and hang your bags up outside the JPS or JPT classrooms. When the music starts, students will line up outside the JPS classroom, ready to head into story time with Viv and Kaye. Parents are asked to wave their children off from outside the classroom and depart promptly to allow the children to commence this exciting day. Mrs Viv Theunissen will spend the day in JP, as one of the new JP teachers in 2016.

2015 Year 1s: Go straight to the JPRH classroom, and hang your bags on any of the hooks. When the music starts, students will line up outside the JPRH classroom, ready to head into story time with Daniela.

2015 Year 2s: Go straight to the MP classrooms and sit and wait on the bottom 2 steps outside the MP rooms. Keep your bags with you. You will need your pencil case.

2015 Year 3s: Hang your bag on your usual hook, then sit and wait on the top 2 steps outside the MP rooms.

2015 Year 4s: go to the SP classrooms, hang your bag up on any of the hooks outside the SP classrooms, then head to the PUMP room for some SP activities.

2015 Year 5s: Hang your bag outside the SP rooms as usual, then head to the PUMP room for some SP activities.

2015 Year 6s: Go straight to the understorey, and bring your bags with you.

2015 Year 7s: Go straight to the understorey, and bring your bags with you.

2015 Year 8s: Go straight to the Year 9 Open Village rooms. Make sure you have paper and pen with you.

2015 Year 9s: Go straight up to the Senior School and go to the Theatrette for a period 1 start at 9:00am. From there you will receive a timetable for the classes you will have that day, as well as go on a Senior School tour. Students will need to bring writing materials and a workbook to use for note-taking in classes. Bags will be kept in the Theatrette during the day.

Parent Information:

Morning tea: We will be hosting a morning tea from 8.45am in the main staffroom for new and current parents. We hope you can join us for a cuppa and a chat.

Schoolwear: Will be available from the office (not the canteen as in previous years)

Stationery: Will be available for collection from the SS Study Centre between 9am-3pm. Enter the Senior School from Gate 2 (32 Hawkins Rd) and follow the signs.

JPT 3D Art

Josephine - Silver Sea

Boaz - Erupting Forest

Thomaz - Rocky Reef

Friends of MECS

Thurs 28 Jan 8.30am - 12noon (sales)
Thurs 28 Jan 1pm -3pm (pack up)

If you can help on any of the above days, even if it’s only for a few hours, please contact me. Thanks.

Evelyn
To dear Narelle and the MECS community,

After much anticipation, we recently had our final Term 4 Christmas evening together. As the sun set, our small communities of Gawa and Banthula gathered together to celebrate God’s blessings and faithfulness to us. It was a peaceful night of carol singing, dancing, thankfulness and gift giving! We were thankful for the blessings God has lavished on us this year, despite our hardships, and for the hope that we have in Him for 2016 and beyond.

The children, and their families, sat expectantly waiting to receive their precious gifts. We told the story of where the gifts had come from, how far they had travelled and the love that was put into each single gift parcel. It speaks so powerfully for the love that exists in the body of Christ that extends beyond the horizons to places we can’t see or imagine.

Please be assured that the love, hope and joy that you placed in your Christmas parcels has travelled all the way from Mount Evelyn along roads and rail-lines, even on a train that derailed at one point, reaching Darwin before being put onto a barge to navigate across the Arafura Sea to Elcho Island and then up a very bumpy, dusty road all the way to Gawa. Your love, hope and joy has been unwrapped and shared amongst the children and families of our communities here. These Christmas parcels are often the only Christmas gift that children from our school will receive and they are treasured, cuddled and cherished! The beautiful drawings and notes and handmade gifts were such a special addition and reminded our children that others have put love and time into their gifts.

We are very blessed and thankful to have received these beautiful things. Our staff were thrilled to also receive some very special treats!! Wow!! How very special to have such treats especially in Gawa!! Please thank those who contributed and pulled this together.

Please extend our thanks for the hard work and generosity to all those involved in the process at any stage. We are thankful for your support and partnership in the gospel across many miles, but all for the one Kingdom and Lord.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Philippians 1:3-5.

With our kindest regards to you all,

Karen and the Gawa team

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Jared (MECS class of '09) is now into the second year of his Ph.D at Deakin University and has just written his first scientific paper. This has been accepted for publishing in the journal Aquaculture and will appear in print next year (Volume 452, 1 February 2016, pp. 128-133). The paper is titled ‘Effects of commercial diets and temperature on the growth performance and stress response of hapuku (Polyprion oxygeneios)’. For those of you who are interested, the hapuku, hapuka, or whapuku is a wreckfish of the family Polyprionidae, found around southern Australia, Chile, Tristan da Cunha, and New Zealand at depths between 30 and 800 m. Its length is between 60 and 180 cm, and it can weigh up to 100 kg.

Jared is doing his research at the School of Life and Environmental Sciences, Centre for Integrative Ecology, Warrnambool Campus. We are thrilled with the news of this publication and offer Jared our warmest congratulations!

We would like to congratulate Kate (MECS class of ’07) on being awarded a 6 week internship in the Indonesian Media Industry. Kate was one of 25 Media and Communications students chosen from over 100 applicants from all over Australia. The internship, which starts in January, is based in Jakarta and will involve Kate gaining experience from working for either the ABC, Reuters or the Australian Embassy. Kate is currently in her second year of studying Media and Communications at Swinburne University in Hawthorn. It has taken some time for Kate to find a career focus but she is now enjoying pursuing her passion by studying journalism. Congratulations Kate.

Dr Roger F
VCE Coordinator
Cycle A Wilsons Prom Camp

Nicky
Cycle A Teacher

Cycle A Wilsons Prom camp was an educational experience! My highlight was on the way to Sealer’s Cove, there was a beautiful, little creek. It felt so good to take off our shoes and socks and just rest our blistered feet in the cool, running water. If I had to describe Wilsons Prom in one word, it would be unique.

Hope

My highlight from Wilsons Prom camp was when my group went on a day walk to Waterloo Bay. We got to go into the crystal clear waves. Back on the beach, Jamie got transformed into a (beautiful?) mermaid.

Hamish

One of my highlights was going to Pillar Point. The view was beyond amazing and I just felt at peace. Also spending time with my friends is always one of my highlights every camp.

Mikayla

My first highlight for Wilsons Prom camp was going with my group for a walk to Waterloo Bay. Even though the walk was hard, it was all worth it; the water was so clear and the sand was so soft.

My other highlight would be when I got back from my hike. It was awesome to see my other friends again. I still had to wait for them all to return, but when they did, it felt great!

Haydn

My highlight was getting to base camp. I was really tired and reaching base camp was a huge relief. It felt nice that I had achieved a lot.

Tim

Our highlight was having a proper toilet and having a shower! It was at base camp that we had a shower and toilet. In one word, camp was a challenge. For Kiara - it was hard to live for a week without my hair straightener and blow dryer; for Britt - it was hard to go without a shower for a day & half. Kiara also found it hard too, but otherwise it was pretty good!!!

Kiara & Brittany

Our highlight of camp was seeing all the wildlife and nature, especially at Little Waterloo where we saw dolphins, seals, wallabies and even a wombat that ripped through our tent. But overall the feeling of completing a three day hike was the best.

Ashlin, Georgia & Patience

Our highlights were wildlife and getting to pat a possum as well as a wallaby! We saw a pod of dolphins 10 metres away when we were at Waterloo Bay and we called them over with our primal roar! It was camp (tiring but exciting).

Oscar & Daniel

My highlight on camp was probably one of the most obvious things. It was when I got to relax and spend time with my friends. When I was at base camp there were a few things we could do: we played card games, had a few rounds of cricket and threw a ball around. We also went down to the bridge to do some water drawing.

Chenei

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Chenei
Year 10 Work Experience

Last week saw a number of our Year 10 students participate in the Work Experience program.

Students arranged their own Work Experience positions, some of which included placements at a pharmaceutical company in the laboratory, the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, a hospital (nursing), a vet, a graphic design company, an aid organisation, a finance firm, and a detection systems business.

It was a delight to contact the students during the week to check how things were going. All students were happy and comfortable in their work environments and the employers had glowing things to say about their willingness to work hard, follow instructions, act in a friendly manner and socialise with other staff members.

Many students discovered more about themselves; their strengths, things that they find challenging and the type of careers they might be interested in pursuing in the future. At least two students were offered casual employment out of the experience which they were thrilled about.

Work Experience is something that is highly valued and supported here in Australia, in comparison to other countries. It presents a vital opportunity for young people to get a foot in the door to the world of work. We strongly encourage all our senior secondary students to undertake two Work Experience placements during their time at MECS.

Amelia
Careers Coordinator

For my second week of work experience, I went to the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service in Preston, which is a government-funded organization that provides free legal services to members of the Aboriginal community. They work with all types of law, ranging from Criminal law to Civil law and family law. In the time I spent there, I did a range of tasks, which included listening to recorded police interviews and transcribing them, arranging calendars of important dates for the lawyers, and scanning client files to find records. As it so happened on one of my days there, one of the senior lawyers needed to get an important document to the Supreme Court Registry in Melbourne. Seeing as I had finished my work for the day, I gladly agreed and took the file up to the city. Going through the security gate, surrounded by all kinds of lawyers dressed in flashy suits, and handing the document to the stern-faced lady over the counter to have the document approved, is definitely an experience I will cherish for the rest of my life.

AJ

Year 5 IMAX Excursion

The day at IMAX was full of excitement. We hopped onto the bus and drove for about an hour into the city, then the Senior Primary Year 5s got into small groups and walked into the Melbourne Museum. There were many interesting things like dinosaur bones and small sugar-bag bees. After that we ate our recess food.

Then, we walked next door and into IMAX. We had to go down lots of steps to get down to the screen. But the actual screen was HUGE! No wonder we had to go down so many steps! The movie was called ‘The Forces of Nature’.

When the movie was finished, the Year 5s ate lunch and played a few games before going back to school. The day was exhausting but fun.

Jasmine
Year 5 Student
### Bunk Beds for Sale
Bunk beds $80. They can convert into two single beds. Includes frame, slats, ladder and safety rails.

Please contact Ian on 0428 133 189.

### Items for Sale
- Mini trampoline with handle, purple spring cover surround, $25
- ‘Glide’ Balance Bike, brand new in box, $50
- Hay, small square bales, $5 each. Available from Yarra Valley.

Call Elissa 5966 6059 or 0419 504 001.

### Baysitter wanted
Baysitter wanted weekly on Wednesdays to care for a 2 year old girl (and occasionally her 5 year old brother). Starting in Jan 2016. If interested please call Mrs Wilson on 0434 942 074.

### Library Books Needed
Woolaning Homeland Christian College, an Indigenous Boarding School located 2 hours from Darwin, has a wonderful library building, but very few library books. If you have books at home in good condition which you would like to donate to their library please bring them to the office. The students at Woolaning are aged between 12 and 18 with varying literacy levels. Non fiction books are always popular. If you have any questions please call Caz Nyhouse 0409 793 951.

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### Calendar

**2015 Term 4 Week 8:** 30 Nov - 6 Dec

- **Mon 30 Nov - Fri 4 Dec**
  - Year 11/12 2016 Orientation
- **Fri 4 December**
  - Prep Big Night Out
- **Sat 5 December**
  - Working Bee Including Breakfast 7am-1pm

**2015 Term 4 Week 9:** 7 Dec - 13 Dec

- **Mon 7 - Fri 11 December**
  - Year 12 2016 Orientation
- **Mon 7 December**
  - SP Indonesian Food Taster
- **Tues 8 December**
  - Orientation Day (Prep - Year 10) Parents’ Morning Tea from 8.45am in the Main Staffroom
  - Stationery Pick-up 9am-3pm SS Study Centre Schoolwear Sales 9am-3pm Main Office
- **Thur 10 December**
  - MP Indonesian Food Taster
- **Fri 11 December**
  - MPB/SPD Indonesian Food Taster Year 6 Graduation

**2015 Term 4 Week 10:** 14 Dec - 20 Dec

- **Mon 14 December**
  - Year 11 Fit to Drive
  - Primary Christmas GT 9.30am Gym
- **Wed 16 December**
  - Indoor Sports Day
- **Thur 17 December**
  - Reports Issued
  - Last Day Term 4, Finish at 2pm
- **Fri 18 December**
  - School Closed from 12noon

**2015 Summer Holidays:** 21 Dec - 31 Jan

- **Wed 23 Dec - Sun 3 Jan**
  - School Office closed from 3pm Wed 23 Dec and will reopen on Monday 4 Jan
- **Tues 26 January**
  - Australia Day Public Holiday School Closed
- **Thur 28 - Fri 29 January**
  - Year 12 Camp

**2016 Term 1 Week 1:** 1 Feb - 7 Feb

- **Mon 1 February**
  - School Begins
  - Welcome Back Morning Tea 9am Main Staffroom

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**Notice Deadlines:**
- **Year 9 Service Elective Notices** (last week)
- **Preps Big Night Out Letter** (last week)
- **Year 12 2016 Invite Mentor Letter**
- **JPT Class Party Notice**

**Working Bee Dec Letter** (last week)
- **Year 12 2016 Orientation Camp Letter**
- **Year 8 Health and Puberty Session**

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**Final Working Bee 2015**

**This Saturday 5 December**

7am-1pm - Breakfast Provided

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**Newsletter Deadline:** 11am Tuesday on published week.

Email articles (images attached as jpg) to the Newsletter Office

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