Presentation at the Year 11 Formal

Cassie & Sam at the Year 11 Formal
School Fees and Funding

“Back to the bad old days”: post-Gonski school funding negotiations off to a fiery start” so said a headline in The Age on 23 September. Before I go exploring the matter of government funding, let me make a few comments about school fees at MECS.

Last week we published our 2017 school fees in the newsletter. There wasn’t space to offer any commentary, but if you did the maths you would see that the increase is 3.3%. This compares with an increase of around 4% for 2016, and increases of 5% annually for quite a few years before 2016. The Board is very conscious of affordability issues and so we have been working to achieve lower increases. The 3.3% increase is directly aligned with the ABS’s Education Price Index (EPI).

For the first time in many years we have seen the EPI drop from its long term average of over 5% to 3.3% (still more than inflation but not as much as before).

Of course increases in fees need to be kept as low as possible to allow for affordability. Where affordability becomes a challenge, a mechanism exists so that some help can be provided to those families who are committed. When families have shown they are committed they can apply for assistance through a confidential fee assistance process that assesses the level of need (contact Craig Goldsmith in the office if you need details on how to apply).

The level of our fees also relates to how much government funding we will receive. In 2017 we estimate that 62.2% of the school’s income will come from government funding (both Commonwealth and State). That’s a slight increase over previous years where it has been around 61%. This small increase has enabled us to achieve a fee increase lower than our long term average. This brings us back to where we started – the argy bargy concerning government funding of independent schools.

Let me start with some observations about Commonwealth Government funding. The system as we have it now is only a partial implementation of the so-called Gonski recommendations (e.g. there is no independent body to establish how much funding should be received by each school). The current funding model has provided funding certainty for us and will do so up until the end of 2017. But we do not really know what happens after 2017 – there needs to be a solution to that. There is a politcal stoush about that solution because the original plan would have seen very large funding increases in 2018 and 2019. The evidence of the stoush can be seen in phrases such as “stealing money from schools” (Bill Shorten on the government’s plans) and ‘corruption’ at the heart of the Gonski funding model (attributed to Simon Birmingham). This fight muddies the water concerning finding a long term sustainable solution to a very complex education funding situation across Australia.

Can I encourage you to pray a blessing of wisdom on Simon Birmingham as the Minister for Education & Training and all the State Ministers for Education.

Whatever is said about government funding of non-government schools, the fact is that students at Independent schools receive significantly less government funding than students at Government schools. Approximately 15% of Victorian students are enrolled in Independent schools. Combined State and Commonwealth Governments save around about $900 million dollars per year because Victorian children are in an Independent school.

Now for one last point (otherwise I could go on and on). One aspect that is getting a lot of attention is the determination of the so-called Gonski funding model. For many years there have been claims (some justified) that ‘wealthy private schools’ have been overfunded. With the implementation of the Gonski funding model, this issue was not resolved because the Prime Minister at the time, Julia Gillard, promised that no school would lose funding. Looking close to home, when it comes to MECS and Ranges TEC, the amount of funding that the school receives is below the SRS. In other words our school is not an over-funded school.

As your watch/read about the discussion on school funding in the months ahead I would encourage you to keep the following principles in mind:

**Choice** – Every parent has the right to choose the type of education for their child (see our Victorian Education Act); we recognise that along with **Choice** comes the **Cost** parents need to sacrifice for that choice.

**Sacrifice** – Your sacrifice should be acknowledged as a major saving to the public purse.

**A Minimum** – In a society where the State insists on compulsory education and recognises the parent’s right to choose, there should be a reasonable minimum contribution for every Australian school student.

**Means Testing** – Whatever the model, a fair and reasonable ‘means tested’ model will balance a parent’s capacity to pay with their ability to make a choice.

**Address Inefficiencies** – The inefficiencies caused by the split between Commonwealth and State funding should be resolved.

**Accountability** – Whenever government contributes it is more than reasonable that they can expect to see schools give account of their use of funds.

*Dr Gerry B*

**Administration Manager**

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<th>Four year old kinder</th>
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<td>Foundation</td>
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<td>Senior School 3rd child</td>
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Maximum fees per family $16,630

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Three year old kinder $1,660

Four year old kinder $2,170

Foundation $3,558

Primary School 1st child $5,930

Primary School 2nd child $4,447

Primary School 3rd child $3,558

Primary School 4th child $3,558

Middle School 1st child $7,850

Middle School 2nd child $5,887

Middle School 3rd child $4,710

Senior School 1st child $8,780

Senior School 2nd child $6,585

Senior School 3rd child $5,268

Maximum fees per family $16,630

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In a society where the State insists on compulsory education and recognises the parent’s right to choose, there should be a reasonable minimum contribution for every Australian school student.
**SKETCHER’S **

**FOCUS**

**SCOOP**

**Association EGM**

Even though I was not able to attend to the EGM because I was in New Zealand with other Principals on a study tour, Pam, the State Executive Officer of CEN schools in Victoria, sent me this lovely email. “Just thought I’d drop you a line to say how well your EGM went last night – what a lovely bunch of people. I learned so much about how a high functioning Association works and being there and chatting with your people has given me lots of ideas. Great food, great people, great agenda!” What a lovely encouragement. We look forward to welcoming more of our parents into the Association over the coming year as we work together on making sure the vision and mission of MECS continues strongly into the future.

**Year 11 Formal**

Last Friday, our Year 11 students enjoyed a fabulous night at their Formal. We were very proud of the way they presented themselves – not only were they dressed beautifully and appropriately for the event, but each gave a short speech about their aspirations for the future, or their reflections on their time spent at MECS. They also displayed with enthusiasm the dancing skills they have been working on. It was great to see the venue filled with family and friends, all there to support them as they move towards adulthood. Congratulations to our Year 11 Coordinator, Adam, SS Admin Assistant, Val and the organising committee for bringing together a delightful evening.

**Farewell Year 12s**

This week is the last week of classes for our Year 12s. We look forward to times of celebration as the week goes on, but most importantly, we want to wish them well in the future. We thank the graduating class of 2016 for all they contributed to our community here at MECS and pray that they might find great joy and purpose as they serve others and continue to seek God in the days ahead. May the seeds that have been planted in this place, bear much fruit in the years to come!

**School Camps**

Term 4 sees a flurry of camps as we head towards the end of the year. Our Middle Primary students head off in early November and in Week 7, our Middle School students scatter in various directions: the Year 9s to Canberra and the Year 7s & 8s to either Inverloch or Wilsons Prom. Our camping program is an integral part of the way we ‘do’ education here at MECS, but we could not do what we do without the amazing support of our parent helpers who are out there hiking, cooking and running activities! Many of our parents use their holiday leave to be part of these experiences and we are truly grateful and blessed to have the support of our parent community.

**Working Bee**

We are back into working-bee season and so we are looking forward to seeing a number of you here this Saturday! Our Property Manager, Pete, will have a range of jobs for us to get into from our regular maintenance jobs, through to more seasonal tasks. We could not maintain our grounds and facilities without the support of our community, so once again, thanks for putting in your bit!

**In my last article, I focussed on the character of the VCE. In just over a week, our students will be faced with the key assessment part of the VCE, the written examination. It is important to acknowledge that our VCE Performance (Music and Drama) students have already had their performance exams. Depending on the study, the written examination can contribute 35% (Performance Arts) or 50% (Humanities) right up to 60% (Mathematics and Sciences) of the study score. Students who perform pleasingly in their examinations do so because they prepare well. They have engaged in on-going revision right throughout the academic year and taken all practice examination opportunities seriously.

This leaves the critical few days before the examinations begin. What can one do in this time to optimise performance? I would suggest that now is the time to be completely familiar with the format of the paper, for example, its component structure, breakdown of marks for each part, equipment required (pencil, pen, calculator, dictionary) to complete the paper and the total time allowed. This information has been supplied by the teacher. Then, it is most advisable to undertake at least 7 past papers under strict examination conditions. Once each practice paper is completed, it should be marked using the examiner’s report and then, amend revision notes accordingly. Allocate plenty of time for the journey to the examination centre so that a traffic hold up is not a cause for panic.

Finally, it is important to remember that examination results do not define your child. They are but one measure of a very narrow form of performance. There are many, many past students (my daughter included) who performed poorly in their VCE examinations but have gone on to become very faithful and productive members of God’s kingdom.

**Dr Roger F**  
VCE Coordinator

We would like to introduce our new Director Ric. Ric currently teaches Year 10 at Ranges TEC and VET Horticulture on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. Ric has been part of the Ranges TEC staff team since it began in 2012. He brings a wealth of experience not only in the last 5 years at Ranges TEC, but also as a Youth Pastor and Nurseryman in the many years before that. We welcome Ric to this huge task and believe he has the skills and passion to continue the Ranges TEC journey.
Friends of MECS

Cook Off Day

On Monday a group of our amazing parent and grand parent volunteers cooked up a storm and filled our Community Freezer with over 50 meals.

If you have received one of these meals I am sure you will agree that they are a blessing and delicious as well!

Special thanks to Eva who headed up the team and to all the wonderful cooks. We couldn’t do these days and bless our community with meals without you all.

Nicoe
Community Relations

Association EGM

Last Thursday night a group of around 60 Association members and some guests gathered for our annual dinner & EGM. We enjoyed a delicious meal prepared for us by the talented Hannah and started the meeting over dessert and coffee. We welcomed some new members into the Association - Robert & Fiona, Helen Bst and Pieter and Elze. The Board was thankful for and acknowledged the service of Alison (on staff since 1989) and Sue (on staff since 2004) as long term staff members at MECS and to Phil, Director at Ranges TEC for the past 4 years. We wish each of these people God’s richest blessings as they move on from the MECS community.

Pam, State Executive Officer of CEN was our special guest and gave us an introduction to herself and her role.

We enjoyed an update on building plans for the next few years and had a look at the draft budget for 2017.

The Board has recently released a Strategic Plan for the 2017 - 2019 period. The 5 points on the plan were discussed and explained to the Association and some great conversations and idea sharing come out of the discussions. If you would like to know more about the Board’s Strategic Goals please chat to an Association Member or alternatively, copies of the goals are available from the office.

If you would like to know more about Association membership please contact me through the office.

Nicoe
Community Relations
**Cycle A Practice Hike 1**

We went on a practice hike on Wednesday, to practice for Wilsons Prom Camp, where we will be hiking. The hike was about 10 kilometres, 5 there and 5 back. We hiked from school to Silvan Dam, where we set up our tents and cooked lunch on camping stoves. The hike was challenging but we made it in the end.

*TJ*

On Wednesday October 12 the Cycle A classes went on a practice hike to Silvan Dam. The hike to Silvan Dam lasted all day and the overall distance was around ten kilometres. The hike was very tiring but the views and experiences with friends was worth the hike. And in a few weeks we will be hiking Wilsons Prom but until then I’ll be practicing.

*James*

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**Year 11 Mock Wedding**

On Tuesday October 11, our small Year 11 Legal studies class of 6 left for a garden wedding in Healesville. Inspired by our learning of marriage and the legalities that follow, we performed a mock wedding complete with white dress, flowers, rings and a wonderful celebrant, John. After a slightly awkward, but enjoyable ceremony, we had the pleasure of asking John the many questions that played on our minds regarding divorce, marriage and his political views. So despite the chilly day, our class was grateful for the fun but odd experience and the knowledge we obtained.

*Emmi-lee*

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**Wrestling Nationals**

How fun was it to watch the Aussie compete in the 2016 Rio Olympics? My favourite was the Freestyle Wrestling. We have been training freestyle wrestlers here at MECS for 15 years now. Two of our MECS Freestyle Wrestlers had an extraordinary school holidays. During the 3rd week, two MECSican wrestlers and their coach went to Adelaide to train for the National Youth Wrestling Championships. On Saturday October 8, Jack and Jacob took on wrestlers from all around Australia. The boys recorded 5 wins, 4 by pin, and both won their divisions. It has been around a decade since 2 MECS wrestlers have won gold at the National Championships in the same year. Their effort and sportsmanship were a credit to their school and their faith. They also demonstrate that success can come from years of persistence.

These gold medals were the reward for years of dedication. Both boys virtually never miss an opportunity to train. Jacob and Jack have given up over 177 lunchtimes over a combined 9 years to develop their wrestling. Jacob has trained during lunch an astonishing 75 times, lifted weights at around 20 Lifting Lunch Clubs, wrestled in 28 MECS tournaments and 5 national tournaments. Jack has trained during lunch 26 times, lifted weights at around 20 Lifting Lunch Clubs and wrestled in 8 MECS tournaments and now a national tournament.

Congratulations to our 2016 National Youth Wrestling Champions, Jack and Jacob.

*Adam*

Teacher & Wrestling Coach
Last Friday our Year 11 class along with some Ranges TEC students enjoyed a wonderful evening at The Karralyka Centre. During our Formal we presented three dances and a speech towards a crowd of friends and family. It was a great night that will be remembered.

Joslyn

The Year 11 Formal was a night to remember filled with wonderful speeches, lovely food and even better dancing. Students from both MECS and Ranges TEC danced with partners throughout the night. As well as the dancing each student presented a speech speaking about their past, their schooling at MECS or their aspirations for the future. The scene was colourful and bursting with happiness. As the night progressed some went home but others stayed to keep on dancing. Everything about the night was truly amazing and gave us many memories that will never be forgotten.

Emily

Siennah & Daniel

Joslyn

Lily & Cameron

Malcolm & Lena

Chandelle

Paige

Jasmine & Kwame

Jordan

Mikayla & Jordan MCs

Annie

Cailan

Jacob & Chloe

Joslyn

Lily & Cameron
Foundation Athletics

We could not have asked for better weather to celebrate our Foundation children and their special talents in their first Athletics afternoon. The children worked hard in the weeks leading up to the special day to practise the skills needed across a number of events. There was a short sprint on the oval, a beanbag shot put, vortex javelin throw, tunnel ball and relay. The Foundation children did a wonderful job in trying to remember what they had to do for each of the events, even if that meant that we had to re-do some events using our first try as a practice. Thanks to so many parents and students for coming out to watch and for cheering on our Foundation students. It certainly was a highlight to see the children going home with bright smiles after doing themselves proud.

Bec
Primary PE Teacher

Bunnings came to Kinder!

Last Wednesday Emily and Loretta, two of the activity coordinators from Bunnings in Bayswater came to our Kinder as a response to a letter Cherie organised asking for help with the development of our garden. They came with many plants, a mandarin tree, soil, veggies, watering cans and children’s digging tools. Not only were these items donated to the kinder, but the ladies helped us to clean up our garden beds and plant everything into the appropriate places... even though it was raining! We are very thankful to Bunnings and we look forward to watching our garden grow!

Wendy
Early Years Coordinator
### MECS COMMUNITY NOTICES
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### Hearts for Justice

You are invited to the Hearts 4 Justice movie night ‘Trade of Innocents’ this Friday Oct 21, 7.30pm for 8pm start at Blackburn Primary School, 185 Whitehorse Road, Blackburn. Enter via Surrey Road carpark.

RSVP to Cassie cnation@mecs.vic.edu.au.

Fundraising for Destiny Rescue: rescuing and rehabilitating women and children from human trafficking.

Come, enjoy some delicious nibbles and hear some incredible rescue stories. There will also be some beautiful Destiny Rescue jewellery available to purchase.

Entry is free, and there will be a chance to donate on the night if you feel you’d like to.

If you are unable to make it on the night, but would like to donate towards the cause, please visit: https://give.everydayhero.com/au/hearts4justice-movie-night-fundraiser

Cassie
Receptionist

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### Toys for Sale

Sat 22 October, 9.30-11am, Mount Evelyn Toy Library, 44 Birmingham Road, Mount Evelyn, cash only. The toy library is a clear out of some of our toys with prices starting from 50c. Toys will be sold on a first come, first serve basis and all money raised will go towards purchasing new toys for the library.

**Rental/house sitting accommodation required**

A family starting new to MECS is looking for a house to rent or house sit for a few months, beginning anytime in the near future. They need a 3 bedroom house, anywhere between Healesville and Mt Evelyn. References are available. Please contact Serena, srsmith8@yahoo.com.

### Apple Man

The Apple Man is coming on Friday Oct 28 and the following varieties will be available: Granny Smiths, Fujis, Royal Galas, Pink Ladies and Green Pears. Apples $10 a bag, Pears $8. Please put the correct money in an envelope with your order written on the front, and hand it into the office before 10.30am on Friday Oct 28.

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### Calendar

**2016 Term 4 Week 2: 17 Oct - 23 Oct**

- **Fri 21 October**
  - K4 Responsible Pet Education Program
  - Year 7 Immunisations

- **Sat 22 October**
  - Working Bee 8am - 1pm including Morning Tea

**2016 Term 4 Week 3: 24 Oct - 30 Oct**

- **Mon 24 October**
  - Year 9/10 Volleyball
  - Cycle A Practice Hike number 2
  - SP Hooptime Regional Finals
  - Primary GT - Ed Support Enrichment

- **Tues 25 October**
  - JP Connect Morning Tea 8.45am
  - Staffroom

- **Wed 26 October**
  - VCE Exams Begin - English

- **Thur 27 October**
  - Year 7/8 Volleyball
  - VCE Psychology Exam
  - Year 7, 2017 Orientation Family Evening

- **Fri 28 October**
  - Unit 2 Drama Excursion
  - VCE Biology Exam
  - VCE Further Maths Exam 1

**2016 Term 4 Week 4: 31 Oct - 6 Nov**

- **Mon 31 October**
  - Pupil Free Day
  - VCE Further Maths Exam
  - VCE Business Management Exam

- **Tues 1 November**
  - Cup Day Public Holiday School Closed

- **Wed 2-4 November**
  - MP Merricks Lodge Camp - Plants

- **Wed 2 November**
  - VCE Methods Exam
  - VCE Dance/VET Hospitality Exam
  - VCE PE Exam

- **Thur 3 November**
  - VCE Drama Exam
  - VCE Methods Exam
  - VCE HDD Exam
  - Footsteps into Foundation Orientation
  - Session 1, 2-3pm PUMP Room
  - Centre Trip Presentation Night 7.30pm
  - Theatrette
  - Year 4 Kids with Courage Parent Information Session 7.30pm Staffroom

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### Lost

**Lost necklace**

Blue/green leaf pendant on a silver chain. Please hand in to the main office if found.

**Lost necklace**

Blue/green leaf pendant on a silver chain. Please hand in to the main office if found.

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### Next Working Bee

**This Sat - 22 October, 8am-1pm Morning Tea included**

**Notes sent home this week and on Website**

- Cycle A Term 4 Newsletter (last week)
- Year 12 Grad Dinner Letter (last week)
- VCE Exam Info Powerpoint (last week)
- Cycle B Inverloch Camp Letter
- Year 6 Grad Invitation Letter
- Working Bee Reminder Letter
- Year 7 8 Interschool Volleyball and Tennis

- Tough Sista MP Year 4 Letter (last week)
- Year 12 Grad Requests for Seats (last week)
- MP Term 4 Newsletter (last week)
- Year 9 Canberra Camp Letter
- MS Detention System Notice
- Kids with Courage update
- Year 9 10 Interschool Volleyball and Tennis

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**Calendar**

- Cycle C Term 4 Newsletter
- Year 7/8 Graduation
- MS Detention Notice
- Year 11 Graduation
- VCE Exam Dates
- Cycle B Interschool Drama
- Year 7/8 Interschool Basketball