Learning

In 2016, the College continued its focus on achieving improved student outcomes. Analysis of WACE and NAPLAN results have shown that the College has made significant improvements in the areas of literacy and numeracy. There has been considerable value adding occurring, which has been demonstrated by the excellent improvement of our NAPLAN results from Year 7 to Year 9. This has indicated that the level of student performance has increased over the first two years of secondary education. In 2015, 25% of Year 12 students finished in the top 10% of the State. This also indicates that the students are essentially punching above their weight.

The College has continued its focus on improving collaboration between staff to improve results, through the program called the Collaborative Learning Project. This project has been administered by Dr Lynn Sharratt from Ontario and the Catholic Education Office. The College recently hosted some 70 teachers from within the system, to view the very positive changes to practice which are occurring at the College.

We are very proud of our involvement in this project. I would like to recognise the work of Mrs Sara Jennings in this regard.

The College has also implemented a coaching program for its teachers, so that there is peer to peer review and evaluation of performance. The teachers have embraced this opportunity and there has been significant positive feedback as to its benefits. We will continue this process into 2017. I would like to thank our teachers for the extra things that they do for our students. They provide excursions, trips, extra tutoring and many other opportunities to encourage student learning.

Engagement

Our Parents and Friends group has increased in size this year and they continue to work hard to support the College and their children’s learning journey. Through their fundraising activities, they have been able to continue the process of air-conditioning the College, as well as providing other resources, such as a fit out of the Media room. I have been particularly pleased with this innovation, as it has had a solid take up from our students.
This year we had a Harmony Evening, which we do periodically, to recognise the diverse and welcoming nature of our community. I would like to thank Mrs Clare Kanakis, in particular, for her hard work in organising this outstanding event.

Students had the opportunity of travelling to Europe for a Rugby tour. As well as being successful in their matches, the students had an excellent time visiting Italy, England and Ireland. They represented the College well and returned with many fond memories. I thank the staff members who gave of their time, for the students on this trip. Our Netball girls travelled to the Eastern States for a tournament and this was also a very successful trip and I want to thank the staff involved. The Rugby and Netball programs continue to add much to our College.

Another particularly interesting project was the development of a historical guide to housing in the Leederville area. This project was led by Mr Frank Egan, who liaised with the City of Vincent to update the town's register of interesting housing. The students won an award for the website, which they produced to store the photos and information about the project.

The College engaged with the Aboriginal community by hosting the education of 50 to 60 students from Years 7 to 12. Many of the students come to the College from the Perth area, although there are approximately 25% who come from other parts of the state. It is pleasing to note that 9 students completed Year 12 this year and they all graduated. We are hoping that 5 of the 9 will proceed to university education and the others have already commenced vocational education options.

The College continues its work in the region of assisting refugee students to establish themselves in education in Australia. This year, some 40 to 50 transferred to mainstream classes. Many students, engaged in the process of learning English, remain at the College to complete their secondary education. I would like to commend the work of Mr Gregory Lowe and his team. He carries out quite inspirational work in our New Arrivals Learning Centre.

Accountability

The College Board has worked hard throughout 2016 to provide the best educational environment possible for our students. I would particularly like to commend the work of Mr Garrick Smith, who has completed his term this year, as Board Chair. Garrick does not have students at the College but he has made an impressive contribution to our community, despite the fact that his children have proceeded past school.

I am delighted to report that part of Garrick’s legacy will be the refurbishment and modernisation of the St Mary’s building. This work will commence in Term 2 2017. It will require some flexibility from our students as the work is completed over Terms 2, 3 and 4. We are very excited about the opportunities which this work will provide for our students into the future. It is important to recognise the efforts and contribution of the Catholic Education Office, the Federal Government and the State Government in assisting the College with this project.

The Building and Maintenance Subcommittee of the College Board has continued its work in improving the College facilities in 2016. Further air-conditioning, painting, carpeting and furniture have been provided for the students.
I particularly want to recognise the generosity of Anna Taphorn, a parishioner of the St Mary’s Parish. Anna left some of the money from her estate to provide assistance to students facing financial difficulty in attending the College. She also directed that money from her estate be used towards student resources and we have been able to provide a Year 12 Seniors Room, which gives students the opportunity to study, relax and engage with each other, whilst not in formal classes. This has been a wonderful innovation and was warmly welcomed by the students.

**Discipleship**

In 2016, the College’s Evangelisation Plan focused on the Year of Mercy. Pope Francis directed the Church to give due attention to the Year of Mercy and this provided an excellent fit for our College, given our Mercy Sisters Heritage. Throughout Term 1, each year group participated in a small pilgrimage to the Redemptorist Monastery in North Perth, where they had a prayer service and made a symbolic offering. The Pope was keen that pilgrimage be part of the year’s activities.

As part of this focus, the College sponsored Miss Shannon Smith to attend World Youth Day in Poland, during July. Shannon has been sharing with staff and students, the impact the experience had on her. She particularly enjoyed the company of Bishop Don Sproxton and Archbishop Timothy Costelloe, who chaperoned a group of young people from Perth to Poland.

The College also sent two young people to the Young Mercy Students Conference, in Sydney. Bianca Monterosso and Rosie Curnow represented the College at this event.

The College had a series of fundraisers throughout the year and the College made donations to:

- The Brother Ollie Pickett Wheelchair Project
- Edmund Rice and Mercy Sisters Missions
- St Vincent de Paul
- Legacy

As part of the College’s service program, students engaged in the winter sleep-out appeal, which raised funds for St Vincent de Paul. Students slept out on the cold verandahs in the middle of winter, to make a symbolic gesture of solidarity with people who are homeless. Homelessness is a very visible and increasing phenomenon in our cities throughout Australia. One only need go to a retail centre to be confronted with people in the severest of circumstances. Our young people are bothered greatly by the vision of homelessness and are disturbed also by the conditions which bring about this confronting issue in our community. They have demonstrated a willingness to do what they can, towards a very challenging issue.

**Mr Declan Tanham**
Principal