

EMMAUS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL.

"A School of Faith, Hope and Love."

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY, 2017.



Annual General Meeting
December 12th. 2017.

Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Brendan Maher, attest that Emmaus Catholic Primary School is compliant with:

- All of the requirements for the minimum standards and other requirements for the registration of schools as specified in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 (Vic), except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2016 school year under the Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth) and the Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)

November 2017



EMMAUS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL "ESSENCE STATEMENT"

A School of Faith
in God, the word of Jesus Christ and
the power of relationships
and community.



A School of Hope
where we actively seek out all that is
pure, just and worthy of praise
in an innovative, futures
oriented learning environment.

A School of Love
where all are made to feel welcome,
respected and accepted.



School Overview- Principal's report.

It is with genuine sadness that I present my final "Annual Report" to the community of Emmaus Catholic Primary School. The past eleven years have been a genuine pleasure and whilst there have been many challenges over the course of the past eleven years the joy and satisfaction I have felt as we have created our magnificent school far, far outweighs any difficulties along the way.

The words, "thank you" seem somewhat inadequate as I try to summarise my feelings at this significant time in the life of Emmaus and my career path.

Thank you children, each and every one of you, who have learnt and worked with us over the course of our ten years together. It has often been noted that we have seen our school grow from a student population of 21 in February 2008 to what will be a total student population of 375 for the start of the 2018 school year. Our success in attracting enrolments has been quite exceptional and this is in no small part to the care, professionalism and sense of welcome that has been offered by our staff team, our parent community and of course the children in our school.

Children, you inspire the adults in our community! Your ability to lead us in prayer, to make us laugh, to always try so hard to 'author your own future' and to welcome many, many new students along the way is exceptional. You are the future of our nation and the world and I know I leave Emmaus knowing that our world is in good hands with such wonderful leaders as you shaping the future!



The parent community at Emmaus has always been superb! From the original 16 families who comprised our school in 2008 to the 224 that will be here in 2018 you all continue to ensure that this is a school community 'of choice' for many in and around Ballarat. It is always a pleasure to encounter you on the path as you bring your children to school, to work alongside you at a working bee, to see you engaging with our students in learning spaces, to meet with you in learning conferences or support group meetings and to have you helping our students buy their mothers or fathers day gifts. This is a parent community that tries to find tangible ways to support

our school and in doing so leave it a better place for those that follow. Thank you all so much for everything you have offered the Emmaus community and me over the course of the past 10 years.

I especially like to thank and congratulate all members of our Community Leadership Team (CLT). This team of people meet on the second Tuesday of every month with a view to gaining first hand insight into all facets of school life at Emmaus. Whilst parents represent one of the six 'arms' of the CLT their attendance at our monthly meetings ensures that they are alert to all dimensions of school life.

This team of parents, led in 2017 by Kara Meyer, helps shape the directions we take as a school and I am indebted to each and every one of them! Thanks especially to Kara for your wonderful support in this important role that you have fulfilled on behalf of all parents in our school. Well done!

I have been truly blessed to have worked with such a wonderful staff team over the course of the past ten years. From our first teacher at Emmaus, Jacqui Luscombe and Doris Milesevic, our wonderful Administration Manager, both of whom were appointed for the 2008 school year from, to each and every colleague over the course of the past ten years, thank you!

Together we have seen so many moments of celebration and the inevitable times of sadness. It has been a genuine honour to be apart of them all! From wedding celebrations, numerous births of babies and sadly the occasions of loss of a loved one this staff team has felt very much like an extension of my family. Thank you for your commitment to create this wonderful school community and we look forward to hosting you in Yarram in the future.

2017 saw Emmaus Catholic Primary School commence the year with 354 students coming from 208 families and supported by a staff team of 38 wonderfully committed and dedicated teachers with administration, teacher assistant and maintenance staff.

The core objectives that drove the direction of our school in 2017 as identified in our Annual Action Plan were ...

1. To bring all in the Emmaus community to a deeper appreciation of the Catholic identity of our school.

2. To strengthen student and teacher capacity to engage with in deep learning through our engagement in the Professional Learning Community process.
 - Focus on building shared beliefs and practices.
 - Improve student learning in Mathematics.

- To further enhance student capability in writing with continued emphasis on spelling.

3. To build leadership capabilities across the school.

- Greater level of parent engagement.
- Building 'teachers as leaders' capability.

A core objective of mine as principal of Emmaus Catholic Primary School has continued to be centred on helping all staff, parents and children in the Emmaus community to come to a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for the connection of our "common story." It seems to me that whenever concerns arise, the genesis of the problem is very often because one or more of us have lost sight of the story of Jesus on the Road to Emmaus.

We continue to stress that as we engage in our 'journey' to become the best school we can be there will always be times of 'apprehension.' For our staff team, parents and children the challenge is for all of us to grow in an appreciation that in working through periods of apprehension we discover that we can 'resurrect' ourselves, we can have new knowledge and skills 'revealed' to us and that in doing so we are better able to gather 'eucharistically' to move forward with 'faith, hope and love,' and the greatest of these is love!

In recent times I came across the thinking of scripture scholar, Jose Pagola in his book "Jesus – An Historical Approximation." In considering the challenges we face as Catholic schools in this age and embracing the communities with whom we work I found the following reflection extremely insightful.



“Jesus apparently does not quote the scriptures from the text of the Hebrew books that were kept in the synagogues. The people did not know Hebrew and no one had the books at home. Jesus quotes a more popular and less exact form of the Bible, following commentaries or translations which were written in Aramaic so the the people could understand the Word of God. But he does more that repeat the text. He adapts the biblical language and images to his own experience of God. He reads and recreates everything from the viewpoint of his faith in the irruption of God’s reign.

Then people know that Jesus is not a teacher of the law. He has not studied with any famous teacher. He does not belong to nay group dedicated to interpreting scriptures. Jesus moved among the people. He speaks in the plazas and fields, along the paths and by the lakeside. He has his own language and his own message. To convey his experience of God's reign, he tells parables that open up a new world to his hearers..... His direct and precise sayings urge everyone to live life in a different way."

Pg. 236-237.

As a Catholic school surely there can be no greater challenge than how it is we can find ways to open dialogue with our community. This dialogue must be characterised by mutual respect and trust. Likewise it must be identified by the total removal of judgement and fear of criticism. The days of our Church trying to dictate the manner in which we live our lives are long gone. Our challenge is to find ways that our community at Emmaus can remain proud of it's Catholic identity whilst acknowledging the diversity of views that exist within.

Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To bring all in the Emmaus community to a deeper appreciation of the Catholic identity of our school.

Achievements.

The continued reflection on the place of “Faith Dialogue” in our school community remains an opportunity for growth that we haven’t yet truly grappled with. For many in our community conversations or reflections about faith are somewhat ‘removed’ from our day-to-day reality. It remains a commitment on our part, as noted in our most recent school review, to ...

a) Engage the Emmaus community in finding ways to live the Gospel of Jesus in a contemporary context and

b) Deepen and enliven the Emmaus understanding of the school's beliefs and vision ensuring that there is a shared understanding of the school's pedagogical framework that facilitates student led learning.

This challenge is made even more relevant when we consider the deep hurt and pain that many in our own community and broader society feel in relation to the manner in which our Church has responded to the sexual abuse of children that has been so widely reported upon through the “Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.”

It has been both heartening and inspiring to see the way our teachers have worked so hard to ensure that the Religious Education (RE) they teach at Emmaus is ‘connected’ to the world that their students live in. The students in Nyereeka, our senior school, have this year engaged in a process to see the teaching of a “Heroism Project” drive the learning and teaching in their level of the school. Thus, instead of ‘balkanising’ the teaching of RE the Heroism Project has allowed children to engage in various “Awakenings” units in a far more fluid manner and in doing so connecting the learning of RE content and the embedding of faith into the day to day learning tasks that children engage in.

A similar methodology has been experimented with at other levels of the school and therefore given the reworking of the Awakenings Curriculum that is taking place systemically at the moment in the Ballarat Diocese I am very confident that the Emmaus staff team is very well placed to engage in future RE instruction in a more holistic manner.

I congratulate our teaching staff for their preparedness to open their minds to alternative possibilities in the delivery of Religious Education at Emmaus. I look forward to further refinement of the learning and teaching culture in relation to this most significant realm of our school life.

It is worth noting that our parent community has taken a significant step this year in considering the Catholic identity of our school. The highlight of this process took place on November 2nd when Emmaus Catholic Primary School hosted Mr Francis Sullivan, the CEO of the Catholic Church's "Truth, Justice and Healing Council," a gathering that was attended by over 100 people. This was truly significant event in that it was constituted by representatives from our four parish schools, the broader parish community and numerous parishioners from other Ballarat parishes. It was as a result of parents on our Community Leadership Team to open conversation in our community about the place of faith in our lives that this wonderful night took place.

In considering how we might engage our community in this important topic it became evident to us all that there was a proverbial 'elephant in the room' when it came to conversation about faith within the context of the Catholic Church. That being, the anger, hurt, distress and confusion that so many people feel about their faith in the light of the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Our Church has been found sadly wanting at the Royal Commission in it's response to historical child sexual abuse.

Not only did we hear from Francis Sullivan, who was quite superb in his presentation, we also heard from Eileen Rice, Principal of St Alipius Parish School, Ballarat East, Mr John Crowley, Principal of St. Patrick's College Ballarat and father Peter Sherman, Parish Priest of St Alipius Parish, Ballarat East.



Each of these panel speakers spoke with passion and emotion when considering their respective roles in recent years and with enthusiasm for what it is we do in schools today to ensure that our students are always safe and nurtured as 'full human beings.' When coupled with the insights of from a survivor of sexual abuse the sense in the room was that we needed to keep this conversation going in order to ensure that the disgrace of the past is never revisited.

The desire and commitment of the community to engage in conversation about our common faith is something to be celebrated at Emmaus and I commend all to continue to do so knowing that it will have a very positive impact on the faith lives of our children.

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

In accordance with our 2017 Annual Action Plan we have worked this year on enhancing our practice in the following four realms of Learning and teaching. Our endeavour has been to ...

1. Improve curriculum mapping assisting transition through all levels.
2. Review the overall assessment schedule for the school.
3. Use of data to drive / inform improved student learning.
4. Build teacher capabilities to engage students in purposeful project based learning.

Achievements

Of particular note the staff team need affirmation and congratulations on their efforts to embrace the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) journey / pathway to improve student learning. This has been a truly significant and insightful process for us to date commencing in February when the entire staff team gathered in Ararat with teachers from all over the Ballarat Diocese to begin considering how we can enhance our practice to achieve higher standards of learning for all learners.

The six core questions of PLC are ...

1. What is it we want students to know? (curriculum)
2. How will we know if our students are learning? (assessment)
3. How will we respond if our students are not learning? (instruction)
4. How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are already proficient?
(instruction)
5. How will we increase our instructional competence? (teacher development)
6. How will we coordinate our efforts as a school? (school leadership)

Our staff team decided that we wanted to focus our energies on the learning and teaching of Mathematics with a specific emphasis on mathematical strand of place value. To this end each level team created what we called 'essential learnings' in place value and in turn devised a 'learning cycle' to measure our success or otherwise as teachers. Without exception children in our school achieved outstanding results over the course of the place value learning cycle with results measured by specific pre and post test data.

Our teachers did a brilliant job of devising their first learning cycle, under the leadership of our Assistant Principal, Georgia Cann and four level Leaders, Michelle Jessup, Shelley Ryan, Julianne Hampson and Kate Edmends.

Each team is now engaged in creating further learning cycles in other maths strands and it would be fair to say that there are many 'learnings' that have evolved from cycle one that will improve each and every learning cycle into the future. I congratulate Georgia on her leadership of the PLC journey to date, Michelle, Shelley, Julianne and Kate, our four level leaders and the total teaching staff team for their dedication to the process we have engaged in to date. Well done all!

One of the more pleasing byproducts of the PLC process is that it has allowed us to sharpen our focus on other facets of school improvement in the area of Learning and Teaching. The preparedness of the staff team to engage in 'coaching' / 'mentoring' processes to enhance practice has been commendable and has been facilitated by our level leaders. In doing so we have made reference to one our adopted 'gateways,' namely, the creative deployment of staff, to improve student learning. Importantly our level leaders have not purported to be 'experts' in all facets of learning and teaching. They have been wonderful facilitators of learning opportunities for their colleagues and in the process have not only won the respect of their peers but also sharpened the focus of all teachers in our community.



Much work has been undertaken to more effectively reflect on data in our school. Again, the reflections on our first PLC learning cycle has allowed us to use both pre and post data to measure the growth of our students and ensure that challenge is given where it is required and support offered to those who require it.

The effective 'storage' of data and it's accessibility to teachers has been something we have grappled with for some time. I have often found myself reflecting on the 'why' behind some of our data collection. Without writing a thesis about this, my concern emanates in a concern that in collecting vast amounts of data, reflecting on it, storing it to allow for expeditious access for

colleagues, etc are we inadvertently detracting from teaching time? Are we suggesting to young teachers that unless something can be measured it is of lesser value? Is there a risk that our vocation and profession of teaching is ever so gradually disempowering itself so that ultimately teachers will be fearful of making what they might have previously perceived as informed, considered judgements.

Data that informs our teaching is crucial and must always be collected. Our challenge as educators is to ensure that we find the right balance between enough and too much data so that all teachers who enter this brilliant vocation always feel inspired to teach. They know what children need to learn, in all domains, what to do when children require added support or challenge and ultimately what steps to follow, including who to observe, in order to improve their craft.

We at Emmaus Catholic Primary School want to see our children feel confident in themselves as learners. We want to see their Faith in God nurtured and developed. We want to encourage all children to have a deep respect for one another and all of human kind, based in the teachings of Jesus Christ. In doing so the dignity of the human person will always be prominent in their thinking and actions in years to come. We want to see our students respecting their God given bodies by being healthy and fit members of the community. We want to see them thrive artistically and academically and we desire all of these qualities and traits in our children as we aspire to see every student at Emmaus Catholic Primary School be the 'authors of their own future.'

Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

1. Increase opportunities for student voice.
2. Greater engagement of students in self and peer assessment.
3. Deepen and expand students, staff and parents understanding of 'growth mindset'.
4. Redesigned protocols and processes around special education with Level Leaders managing students within their respective levels.

Achievements.

Our continued focus on the wellbeing of all students is something that as a school we feel great pride in. The availability of Level Leaders to 'meet and greet' students as they arrive to school each morning, particularly those who present as being somewhat vulnerable, is a huge support to not only the children themselves but also the teaching staff in general.

I witness countless examples of teaching staff meeting students, even in the turning circle to assist them in the transition from home to school. I hear teachers involved in support group meetings sharing significant insights into the children in their care clearly indicating genuine knowledge of their students. I hear the phone calls after school from teachers who are 'touching base' with parents about the wellbeing of children in their care that ensure strong and open lines of communication between home and school.

On three days a week we have our school counsellor, Misty Duncan engaged in conversations with children, parents and staff with a view towards supporting our students to in turn support themselves in dealing with the issues that matter to them at that point in time. I am indebted to Misty for the work she does in both supporting and challenging the children in our school in order to help them achieve their potential.

The overarching mantra of Emmaus Catholic Primary School has been, "We are the Authors of our own Future" since we began our school in 2008. It is never more relevant than in the context of "Student Wellbeing" and the ongoing development of a 'growth mindset' attitude. The viewing of challenges as opportunities remains a feature of our work at Emmaus and in remaining strong to this focus we are able to give more than lip-service to the

It has struck me in recent times that we can very often engage in very important and insightful conversations with parents *about* their children yet these conversations might not be *with* children. In order to ensure that our students feel that they can genuinely be the 'authors of their own future' it is crucial that they be engaged in Support Group meetings wherever it is both appropriate and possible. In doing so we have taken significant steps in supporting all children to find a voice in the development of their Individual Learning Plans. Listening to children articulate their learning to a point in time and aspirations as future learners adds a degree of legitimacy in the expression of 'Student Voice' in our community.

This has happened at both beginning of year and mid year Learning Conferences, Support Group meetings, general conversations about student wellbeing and learning and even when we have encountered those inevitable conversations where student behaviours have caused us to meet with parents. At each and every opportunity we have taken steps to ensure that the voices of children be heard in the adult dialogue so that whatever course of action we need to follow is inclusive of of 'student voice.'

I congratulate and thank our four level leaders, Michelle Jessup, Shelley Ryan, Julianne Hampson and Kate Edmonds and Assistant Principal, Georgia Cann for the outstanding job they have done in 2017 to work as a team in order to support our students, parents and one another. It would be fair to say that at the start of the year the notion that we would have a team of five managing the challenging realm of Student Wellbeing in our school was greeted with some scepticism. It is now a template for other schools of how student wellbeing can be managed and this is entirely due to

the diligence and professionalism of Michelle, Shelley, Julianne, Kate and Georgia and the staff team more broadly.

The manner in which our team of teachers, with the support of counsellor, Misty Duncan, monitor the wellbeing of all students is a great credit to each and every one of them. The effort that goes into Individual Learning Plans (ILP's) and the presentation of Student Support Group (SSG) meetings is an enormous support to our parents, many of who can feel somewhat anxious about the engagement of their children in day to day learning at Emmaus. I thank all staff for their efforts in this crucially important realm of school life.

School Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

1. Create formal opportunities for student/parent (grandparent interaction), such as students teaching grandparents ICT skills.
2. Build links with the broader community.
3. Provide regular communication of a variety of practical ways that families can be actively involved in school life.



Achievements.

The efforts of the Emmaus Catholic Primary School community continue to be exemplary! I wish to thank and congratulate each and every parent, grandparent and friend of Emmaus who has accepted the invitation to be a part of school life at Emmaus over the course of the 2017 school year. All contributions are enormously appreciated!

This year the Community Leadership Team (CLT) have done an outstanding job of representing the interests of the Emmaus parent community in each of the six arms of school life they lead.

The word "Leadership" was one that has been debated in the past as some parents were a little uncomfortable in being described as 'leaders' of their particular CLT arm. Yet without exception they have each done an outstanding job of facilitating a significant number of wonderful community events and initiatives. Thank you all.

To Kara Meyer, the Chair of the CLT thank you so much for your incredible contribution to the life of our school. Kara has done a wonderful job of making sure our meetings always ran like clockwork and the voices of all facets of the Emmaus community had a voice. Thank you for your support, your unwavering efforts and friendship Kara.

Anna Sims has been the Secretary of the CLT for this year and been incredibly efficient in this role. Anna has always kept detailed and clear minutes of our meetings thus ensuring that matters arising from previous meetings are always able to be recalled and revisited where necessary. Thank you Anna for your ongoing support.

Our 2017 CLT was comprised of the following parents in the noted arms.

- **Faith and Catholic Identity** - Kara Meyer and Kara Linayao.
- **Relationships and Community Building** - Bree Atkinson and Sam Gent.
- **Fundraising** - Brooke Morrish, Claire McAteer and Amber Molloy (until the middle of the year when Amber and her family shifted to Geelong)
- **Grounds / Development** - Brad Sward and Jennifer Kelynack
- **Adult Education** - Anna Sims and Jason and Theresa Fletcher
- **Welfare and Wellbeing** - Carly Reynolds, Emma Mumford and Lisa Reeve.

To all of the parents noted above I thank you most sincerely for all that you have offered our school, not just in your respective leadership roles but also more broadly. You have been a wonderful CLT to work with!

Regina Kaye and her team of helpers in our Canteen have not only fed huge numbers of children every Friday but have also generated a significant amount of money into our budget. Thanks so much Regina and canteen team for your incredible support of our school!

Parents at Emmaus have continued to find ways to reach out and support our school in countless ways over the course of 2017! We might on occasions feel as though it is 'the same people all of the time doing the jobs needing to be done' and yet when we consider the amount of support we have enjoyed from our community ...

- in the meeting of crucially important school fee payments,
- who coordinate, cater for, attend and help ensure the success of Mother's Day and Father's Day events,

- who actively participated in the Sacramental Program,
- from the 50 mums (approx) who have readily offered their time to ensure that we have full canteen roster each week for the children,
- in the form of meals sent home to parents in need at a point in time. This roster has been magnificently supported by some 50 families and has been an enormous helping hand to families in need.
- from the wonderful parents who continue to coordinate the canteen and ensure it runs brilliantly,
- at our our regular Community Leadership Team meetings, (the second Tuesday of each month) when parents come along to hear about all facets of school life at Emmaus,
- at our Ten Year Anniversary Supper Dance,
- when parents send emails or make phone calls to offer a word of thanks for the efforts of our staff team,
- we are truly blessed!

No doubt there is room for improvement in the manner in which we engage our parent body and yet I am certain that Emmaus Catholic Primary School is very well placed to continue to thrive as a vital place in the Mt Clear community in 2018 and beyond.

An ongoing challenge for us at Emmaus will be in the continued establishment of effective modes of engagement for more parents in our community. How can we creatively engage with the adult community in our school acknowledging that on the one hand people genuinely want to be involved in school life when in reality they are very 'time poor?' What opportunities exist for us to embrace the diversity of skills and abilities that exist in our community and tap into them? Who facilitates this process and when? There are many questions and yet the reality is that the Emmaus Catholic Primary School community is a rich seam and one that we look forward to tapping into more effectively.

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

1. Greater role clarity re all leadership positions.
2. Develop improved coaching protocols across the school.
3. Open communication across the school is specific, focused and consistent.
4. Develop a consistent and appropriate whole school approach to the use of data.

Achievements

Given the expressed desire of all staff to have a greater degree of clarity re the respective leadership roles in our school (Insight SRC - School Review data 2015) it has been a significant focus of ours to not just offer greater clarity in leadership but also to devolve it more effectively.

To this end much work has gone this year into the formation of leadership beliefs and practices across the entire staff team. At the end of the 2106 school year we engaged the services of Ray McLean, and “Leading Teams,” along with two of his colleagues, Jake and Clara to encourage a deeper sense of shared leadership and responsibility for the overall direction of our school. Ray worked extensively with the Staff Leadership Team to help us formulate our shared vision and perspective as to how we were currently situated and where we were headed as a staff team and school more broadly. This allowed the level leaders particularly to use this knowledge and dialogue to inform the manner in which they worked with their respective teams.

The two whole staff professional / personal development days with Ray were exceptionally powerful in providing all staff with a genuine sense of ownership for the direction of our school.

After much soul searching, conversation, deliberation and to some extent, ‘word-smithing,’ we arrived at a ‘trademark’ that represents in three words what we aspire to be every day in our workplace. We have stated that at Emmaus we try to be *Genuine, Committed and Courageous* in the manner we work and learn with one another, the children in our care and the parents of our community.

These three words have become much more than just a staffroom display. We ensure that at every staff meeting we hear staff share insights about their colleagues and how those individuals or teams have displayed the trademark in their regular practice. This has proven to be a highly effective, yet simple mechanism to allow staff members to affirm in a legitimate way the behaviours of colleagues that they have admired from afar.



The other significant leadership formation initiative that we have taken on at Emmaus this year has been noted above in this report when I spoke about our “Professional Learning Community” (PLC) journey.

The focus in PLC, whilst being curriculum centred, has allowed all staff to work collaboratively to help lead improvement in student learning in the area of Mathematics. All staff have accepted shared responsibility for the mathematical learning of their students whilst also celebrating with one another the growth that all children have made. The level of collaboration that PLC requires has been extremely beneficial for the Emmaus staff team.

The frequency of coaching / mentoring sessions between staff has definitely increased over the course of the 2017 school year and importantly it hasn't always been driven by level leaders. As staff have seen colleagues encountering success in their teaching we have begun more effectively in a) seeking the insights of colleagues and b) offering them. Well done to all teaching staff on your efforts to build your capability as a teachers.

The same can be said for our administration team. It has been wonderful to see the way Michelle has now skilled herself to manage payroll and the accounts in our school due entirely to a) Michelle's willingness to accept this challenge and b) Doris' outstanding ability to share her knowledge and skills. Both Michelle and Doris would have struggled to engage in this process had it not been for the support of Cathy Coffey who kept our office afloat whilst Michelle was being up-skilled by Doris.

Well done to the three of you Doris, Michelle and Cathy!

Students in our school have been provided with numerous opportunities to explore their leadership potential. In particular our senior students have done a wonderful job of facilitating significant school events like our New Families Information Session in October, having also conducted our initial enrolment tours at the commencement of the school year. In order to expedite the initial enrolment 'meeting' process we have chosen for some years now to cluster parents into groups of about 6-8 families. The senior children have led those parents contemplating enrolment into Emmaus on these tours and without exception have done themselves and our school proud.

All children at all levels of our school take active roles in the leadership of weekly liturgies. On every Monday morning we begin our week in prayer, usually with a significant number of parents present. For children from all year levels to stand in front of sometimes up to 400 people is significant in terms of their leadership development. We are always proud of their efforts when we pray together whether that be in the form of Monday morning whole school liturgies or in the children's cluster groups!

As noted above the Emmaus Community Leadership Team has continued to model wonderful leadership and management across our school as noted above.

In Conclusion.

As is so often the case at the end of the school year there are a number of farewells that need to be made to colleagues who are moving onto new ventures in education.

Jenna Mitchell has worked with us at Emmaus since the commencement of the 2015 school year and in the three years she has been with us had made a huge impact on the lives of the children she has taught. Jenna is a quiet yet reflective teacher who has grown immeasurably in her ability to hear the perspectives of others and make informed and considered responses.

Jenna has been much loved and respected by her students and their parents and will be a big loss to Emmaus whilst being a wonderful addition to the Sienna Catholic Primary School team. All the very best Jenna and thank you so much for all that you have offered Emmaus over the course of the last three years.

Like Jenna, Taylah Whelan joined the Emmaus team in 2015 and similarly has had a huge impact on our school. Taylah has proven herself to be a fine teacher and it has been my consistent pleasure to marvel at the maturity and astuteness of her insights as we engage in professional learning activities, in learning conferences or in support group meetings. Taylah is next year moving to Point Lonsdale as she and her husband Kurt finish their new home but assures all of us that she will happily come back to take as much emergency teaching work that we can throw her way! Thank you Taylah for being such a wonderful colleague and friend over the past three years to us all.

Shelley Ryan's stay at Emmaus has been somewhat short and yet in just twelve months she has endeared herself to all of us in the Emmaus community. Shelley brought both great teaching skill and a warm, engaging manner to our school for the past twelve months and will no doubt be a wonderful staff member at St Mary's Catholic School Clarke's Hill where she will take up a teaching role in 2018. Thank you Shelley for all that you have offered Emmaus this past twelve months and we wish you every success in your new beginnings in 2018.

Cathy Coffey has worked with us at Emmaus for the past two years and has been an important part of our administration team with Doris and Michelle. We were very keen to see Cathy continue to work with us at Emmaus at an increased full time equivalent for 2018 and beyond however this wasn't possible due to family considerations and her work commitment to St Columba's Primary School, Ballarat North. Thus, it is with regret that we need to farewell Cathy from the conclusion of this school year. Thank you Cathy for your friendly and enthusiastic manner in your vitally important reception role. You will be missed Cathy!

Miranda Pearse has been our Speech Pathologist for the past twelve months at Emmaus working two days a week. This service has proven to be invaluable for children, their parents and staff alike as we aim to support children with many and varied speech related issues. Unfortunately Miranda has decided that she would like to take the opportunity to travel in 2018 and has thus resigned her position at Emmaus. This is a huge loss to our school, not just in the sense of losing someone of Miranda's technical expertise, but because Miranda has become valued member of the staff team and will be missed! Safe travels Miranda!

The past eleven years have been the highpoint of my career in education. The building of Emmaus Catholic Primary School has been such a privilege, one that I have never taken for granted and one that I will be eternally grateful for.

I have noted it many times before that I am quite sure the significance of the creation of a new school to educate the children of the wonderful city of Ballarat has been greatly underestimated by many in the broader community. There is nothing that is more significant than the education of the future of our nation, our children. It is these young people who will be the educators, the builders, the doctors, the nurses, the leaders of tomorrow.

What an honour it has been to assist so many young people to support them to become the 'authors of their own future.' As noted earlier in this report the children in our school have been an inspiration to me for ten years now. From those who began our school and lived through the strangeness of being students the first new school in this city for nearly 20 years to our most recent arrivals who have embraced the culture of our school with open arms. All have been wonderful people to learn and work with and I cannot thank you enough!

The parent community of Emmaus has been truly committed, supportive and pastoral to one another and our staff team. The willingness of parents in our community to embrace all facets of school life at Emmaus, the learning and teaching structures in our school, the manner of parental involvement and the desire to enhance the Catholic identity of our school have made you all unique.

Word of mouth is always the most important 'marketing tool' that we have at our disposal. Clearly the parent community of Emmaus Catholic Primary School have spoken highly of *their school*. Thank you all. Our school has evolved into the place that it is today due in no small part to the commitment of the parents in our community. Thank you all for the friendships we have formed, the professional conversations that have been had and the care you have always shown for me and the entire staff team.

We live in challenging times as 'church' so to witness the way in which this community has flourished is a source of enormous pride for me. Thank you all!

Thank you to the School Governors that I have been privileged to work with. Sister Mary Nuttall and Fr Adrian McInerney shared the role of Governors for the first ten years of our existence as a school and this year Mary has continued in the role with our newly appointed Parish Priest, Father Peter Sherman. Each of these wonderful people have been enormous supporters of Emmaus and me. Thank you so, so much Mary, Adrian and Peter.

Thank you to the staff I have been blessed to work with since initial appointments of Jacqui Luscombe (nee Vanderkley) and Doris Milesevic were made in late 2007. What an outstanding group of adult role models we have provided for the children in our care over the course of the past ten years! All teachers, administration staff, our school counsellor, teacher assistants, grounds staff and cleaners have been wonderful examples of what it is to be respectful and caring human being.

Our staff team, parent community and student body have always made every effort to model the words of St Paul that adorn one of the walls in our school ...

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. That is let these things occupy your mind.”

Philippians 4:8-9.

In a world that is so seemingly preoccupied with challenges it has been an honour and pleasure to work with so many educators who genuinely aim to promote all that is good in our world and with the children in their care.

I will miss you all more than you can know and thank you for making me look good when things could have easily gone awry! I wish you all much happiness and success in your teaching careers and sincerely hope that you remain as committed to Catholic Education and all that it is capable of achieving.

I look forward to meeting you again, maybe when you venture to South Gippsland and particularly, Yarram. God bless you all.

Brendan Maher.